

## Statement from Zev Yaroslavsky

Member, MTA Board of Directors

September 17, 2000

It is time to dispel some of the myths around these contract negotiations:

**First, this strike is not simply about overtime.** This strike is quite simply caused by a union that is unwilling to address critical issues to the MTA's future...and a union that refuses to work with us to reduce our operating costs, which are the highest of any transit agency in the region.

**Let's look at the facts:**

The MTA has made more than dozen proposals on how to reduce our operating costs by finding efficiencies, including reducing overtime, expanding our entry-level wage category and increasing the use of part-time workers in peak times. They have all been rejected without a single meaningful alternative offered by the union.

The MTA has asked for information on how the \$75 million in taxpayers' money we've given the unions over the last three years for health coverage is spent, to see if we could find efficiencies without impacting our workers. The unions have refused to provide that information - despite the fact they are legally obligated to do so. We want to know what they're doing with the taxpayer's \$75 million.

**Second, our negotiators are fully empowered to reach an agreement.** To suggest otherwise is simply to create a smoke screen and avoid the real issues.

**Third, it is fully within the union's power to send out employees back to work and begin bargaining again.** To suggest that a mediator is the only one with authority to re-start the negotiations is ridiculous. Our negotiators will be at this hotel ready to bargain at 10 a.m. on Monday. We hope the union will be, too.

I call upon the unions to start dealing with the issues, stop creating a smoke screen and get back to work.

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