



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

For more information contact:

Dorothea Manuela: 617-922-5744

Don Boehner, President, UAW Local 1596: 781 326-5747

Chuck Turner: 617-635-3510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMITTEE FORMED TO DEMAND JUSTICE FOR HECTOR RIVAS AND TO DEFEND HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR WORKERS, STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Wednesday, November 15, 2006 9:30am Curley Room, 5th Floor, Boston City Hall

On March 9, 2006, Hector Rivas, a veteran mechanic for the Boston Public School buses and a United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1596 member, died while at work as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning. Drivers found him unconscious that morning in a service truck at First Student Inc.'s Freeport Street facility in Dorchester. According to the September 9, 2006, U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) citation against First Student, Rivas was exposed to carbon monoxide (CO) 11 times the OSHA permissible level. OSHA's September 12, 2006 News Release states that, "OSHA's inspection found that workers at the Freeport Street bus yard were exposed to high carbon monoxide levels when the jump-starter was in use. The company failed to identify and evaluate this CO hazard and did not install adequate ventilation or other controls to reduce CO levels. Employees were not trained about CO hazards and protective measures." On April 18, 2006, another mechanic was injured as a result of an accident involving a modified airlift.

As a result of the fatality and injury, OSHA cited First Student, Inc. with one alleged "willful violation" (their most serious charge) and eight alleged "serious violations" of health and safety standards. Based on OSHA's jurisdiction, they limited their investigation solely to First Student, Inc., the corporation that provides management for the City of Boston's school bus transportation pursuant to a multi-million dollar Vendor contract. The City or its representatives, among others with potential responsibility and/or liability, were not a part of OSHA's investigation.

These most recent tragedies highlight serious concerns regarding health and safety policies and practices in effect in our school bus yards. There are many serious questions that must be addressed regarding Mr. Rivas' death as well as other safety related issues. Justice demands that those responsible must be held accountable. We must assure that there are no future tragedies. Safety in the workplace as well as on the school buses must be our top priority concern. "Willful" disregard for safety and health cannot be tolerated, as it places the health and safety of workers, students and the community in jeopardy.

With this mission in mind, a broad Committee has been formed to seek justice for Hector Rivas and to defend the health and safety of workers, students and the community. The Committee includes representatives of the Rivas family, City Councilors Felix Arroyo, Chuck Turner, Charles Yancey and Sam

BOSTON CITY HALL ♦ ONE CITY HALL SQUARE ♦ BOSTON, MA 02201

PHONE (617) 635 - 3040 ♦ FAX (617) 635 - 4203

WWW.CI.BOSTON.MA.US

Yoon, UAW Local 1596, United Steelworkers (USW) Local 8751, as well as clergy, labor and community activists. The Committee is calling for an independent investigation into the death of Hector Rivas and a full review of safety policies and practices related to Boston school bus transportation.

Press conference participants will include City Councilors Felix Arroyo, Chuck Turner, Charles Yancey and Sam Yoon; Javier Ortiz, step son of Hector Rivas; Dorotea Manuela, Chair, New Mission High School; Bishop Filipe Teixeira; Casandra Clark Mazariegos, Rosa Parks Human Rights Day Committee; Don Boehner, President UAW 1596; Frantz Mendes, President USW 8751; Tony Hernandez, Organizer Painters and Allied Trades D. 35.