



# Drive Up Standards

# NEWSLETTER

Connecting School Bus and Transit Workers From Coast to Coast

WWW.DRIVEUPSTANDARDS.ORG • WWW.TEAMSTER.ORG



There is a common trend among Silicon Valley companies to outsource service jobs to contractors. From Apple to Google to Facebook, many of the tech world's biggest names use outside contractors to transport their highly paid employees to and from work. The workers employed by these contractors tend to have low pay, few if any benefits, and work long and irregular shifts.

Drivers at Facebook, who are employed by Loop Transportation, face these same concerns, and that is why they recently voted to join the Teamsters to improve their working conditions. The 86 drivers are now members of Teamsters Local 853 in San Leandro, Calif.

Cliff Doi is a driver for Loop Transportation. Like many of his co-workers, Doi begins his morning in darkness and it ends in darkness. During his long work days, Doi navigates the congested highways and roads in the Bay Area. He also spends a portion of his day in

## Facebook Drivers "Like" Teamsters

*Drivers With Facebook Contractor Loop Trans. Win Teamsters Local 853 Representation*

between shifts, waiting to transport the highly paid Facebook employees to and from work and home.

"We can't continue 16-hour days, having drivers sleeping in the cold in their cars while we wait five hours to be able to start our next shift. It's inhumane," said Doi, who cites the "abusive split shift" as his primary reason for voting in favor of joining the Teamsters. "With our union, we can find solutions to these problems."

"We're ready to get to work at Loop to help these drivers better their lives and the conditions they face at work," said Rome Aloise, International Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 853. "These companies need to step up and stop demanding the lowest bid contract. They need to all agree to pay their contractors an amount that allows the union to negotiate for decent wages and benefits. Of all the industries in the world, the tech industry can afford to compensate those that help make them successful."

In a letter to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg dated October 2, Aloise wrote, "This is reminiscent of a time when noblemen were driven around in their coaches by their servants. Frankly, little has changed; except the noblemen are your employees, and the servants are the bus drivers who carry them back and forth each day."

Aloise's letter and the stories of the Facebook drivers drew worldwide attention, and there was overwhelming and positive media coverage of the drivers' vote to form their union with the Teamsters.

The letter to Zuckerberg, as well as the stories of drivers, can be seen at <http://teamster.org/facebook-drivers-deserve-union>.

## Teamster Seamster Hats Off To Lettie Nash



Lettie Nash, member of Teamsters Local 191 in Bridgeport, Conn., believes the holiday season is a time for giving. That's why the Connecticut school bus driver annually gives a

thoughtful, handmade gift to each of the 40 students who ride her bus to and from Crabtree Elementary School in Norwalk, Conn.

Since 2012, Lettie has been warming the heads and hearts of children in the Norwalk community with winter hats that she crochets by hand. She says the popular colorful headwear make students who ride other buses jealous.

"I love my job because I love my kids, and they love me, too," said Lettie, who recently received an award from business and community leaders in recognition of her positive impact on the children of Norwalk. The bond with students is so strong that Nash has a difficult time losing them to other bus routes, claiming that one of the hardest parts of her job is when children go off to middle school.

"I hate when they leave, but I still see them around town and they always come say hello and give me a hug. And there's always a new batch of kindergartners for me to spoil after they leave," said Nash, adding that she can't wait to surprise this year's kindergartners with their first handmade hats, which she hopes will help them brave the freezing Connecticut winters as they make the walk to and from the school bus stop.

Lettie's busy schedule crocheting for the community isn't limited to children's sizes. She also makes hats, scarves and gloves for friends and family, and blankets for the local homeless shelter. "I crochet wherever I go and love to learn how to make new things. Next year I'm hoping to learn how to make some shawls," said Nash, who says she refuses to accept any money for her crocheted gifts, insisting that gratitude is more than enough reward.

Hats off to Lettie and the students of Crabtree Elementary, the most fashionable bus route in all of New England!

## You Have Rights, Weingarten Rights!



By Gary Briscoe, First Student driver, Teamsters Local 695 shop steward, Verona, Wisconsin

Stop! Do not enter that supervisor's office without first speaking with your union steward about your rights. Your right to union representation is guaranteed by the U.S. Supreme Court in a case referred to as the Weingarten Act or NLRB v. J.

Weingarten. This act guarantees the employee the right to ask for union representation any time he/she has been called to a supervisor's office for an investigatory interview, questioning or disciplinary action(s).

As a union-represented employee, it is your obligation to inform the employer that you want to speak with your union representative. The exception to this rule is employment by First Student as members of your Teamsters local union. The Teamsters National Master First Student Agreement clearly states the "Company shall advise employees of their right to union representation whenever the Employer meets with the employee about grievances or discipline or to conduct an investigatory interview." Make sure the company lives up to the contract.

Don't be a hero and inform management that you do not need union representation. That could be a costly mistake. Anything you say, any question you answer and any comment can be used against you in determining if discipline is considered or applied. If you are alone in that office, and have no witness, you may be credited with something you did not say, or your comment or answer may be misinterpreted.

The union steward and/or business agent has one purpose for being there with you and that is to see that your rights are upheld, and you are protected, to the extent of advising you in some situations not to or how to answer a question.

Your union representative can speak on your behalf, guide you in properly answering the supervisors' questions, prevent you from making admissions, some of which you may not even know you are making, and possibly help you control your emotions and keep from further exacerbating the situation.

Representation is a major benefit of being a member of the Teamsters Union. Use it!

For more information on your Weingarten rights, visit: <http://ibt.io/9281>. Clip out your Weingarten rights, below, and keep it with you at all times as a reminder of your and your co-workers' rights!

### ***My Weingarten Rights:***

*"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative or steward be present at this meeting. If this discussion could lead to my being disciplined and you deny my request for representation, I choose not to answer any questions."*

## Following the Rules

By Irma Robinson, First Student driver, Teamsters Local 633, Belmont, N.H.

Many of us are likely familiar with selective enforcement of the rules: How many of us know that employee who seems to always skate by without ever being affected or disciplined? We all know that happens and live with it, unfortunately.

Now what about when the opposite happens? You know you may have broken a rule and, in fact, know that this rule is NEVER enforced. But then you find out that when you do it, you get called on the carpet for it. What do you do at that point? Yup, you

know you broke this unenforced rule, yet it's laughed off when someone else does it. Sometimes for your own sanity you just have to let it go.

However, what about getting blamed for an incident, only to have someone step up and admit to the infraction? And you find out the issue is no longer a big deal when it was someone else and not you? What do you do? Do you get mad that management failed to discipline the person who did it? Of course not. Okay, maybe a little frustrated.

Managers are human and sometimes make mistakes. But it irks the heck out of you that you were blamed without management using tools at their disposal.

You can take steps to stop the harass-

ment. Workplace bullying should not be allowed. If you feel that your every move is being scrutinized, discuss the incident with your steward and/or business agent and file a grievance. Management cannot enforce rules for one or two employees while ignoring others who break them. That is bullying and harassment.

Our contracts specifically spell out that harassment will not be tolerated. We have cameras and GPS. This could work in your favor, as well. You are not only helping yourself, but also your brothers and sisters, by standing up and not allowing management to pit employees against one another.

Say something, do something! Be safe and take care folks!

## Organizing News: A Winning Streak



School bus and transit workers nationwide continue to organize with the Teamsters to drive up standards!

Here's a look at our recent wins, made possible by our tenacious and supportive stewards, our dedicated union representatives and office staff and, most importantly, all of our hardworking Teamster members.

It is because of you that we close the final quarter of 2014 on such a high note. We wish you a happy new year in 2015. We look forward to growing our union and our strength in the year to come!

- September 24, 2014. (Chicago, Ill.) – 100 First Transit para-transit drivers, dispatchers and schedulers in Chicago recently voted to join Teamsters Local 727 representation.
- October 4, 2014. (DETROIT, Mich.) – 29 First Student school bus drivers and monitors in Adrian, Mich., have voted to join Teamsters Local 1038 in Detroit.

- October 24, 2014. (OAKLAND, Calif.) – 150 First Student school bus drivers for the Oakland Unified School District in Oakland, Calif., voted 15-1 margin in favor of representation by Teamsters Local 853.
- November 6, 2014. (FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.) – 76 drivers at Keolis Transit America Inc. voted unanimously to join Teamsters Local 769 in Miami.
- December 2, 2014. (CHICAGO, Ill.) – 104 school bus drivers and monitors who transport children to Chicago Public Schools for Paige Bus Enterprises voted overwhelmingly, 59-16, in favor of representation by Teamsters Local 777 in Lyons, Ill.
- December 4, 2014. (SOUTH EASTON, Mass.) – 60 School bus workers at the Abington, Mass., First Student yard voted 38-8 to become members of Teamsters Local 653 in South Easton, Mass.

Congratulations to the 519 new Teamsters members at Keolis in Florida; First Student in California; First Transit and Paige Bus in Illinois; and First Student in Massachusetts and Michigan.

## ATTENTION: *First Student Teamster Members!*

Our National Master Agreement with First Student is set to expire March 31, 2015 and negotiations will be starting January 27, 2015. Keep an eye out for updates and news on the process as we work to strengthen the provisions in our Master Agreement that helps to raise standards across the board. Contact your local union for more information.



## Congratulations, Martin Murphy!

*Unite the Union Member Honored with 2014 Steve Edwards Award*

Steve Edwards inspired union members around the world to join together in the fight for workers' rights. Edwards was a former bus worker, British union activist and advisor to the Teamsters' global school bus campaign. Following his sudden death in 2012, the Steve Edwards Award was established to provide learning opportunities for union activists who share Edwards' vision of building global partnerships to improve working conditions worldwide.

The 2014 recipient of the Steve Edwards Award is Martin Murphy from Unite the Union, the Teamsters' sister union in the United Kingdom. In November, Murphy traveled to the United States to meet with Teamster school bus workers. Martin met with school bus workers to learn about their jobs and the issues they face, so that he can return home to share his experiences with his fellow union leaders and co-workers. In doing so, Martin is continuing the legacy of solidarity that Edwards worked so hard to build.

### Q1. What did you experience on your trip?

*Murphy: I arrived at the Teamsters headquarters in Washington, D.C., and from there I traveled to meet with school bus workers around the country. I met with drivers and monitors in Santa Rosa County, Florida, who told me of their ongoing battle with management at Durham School Services. These workers voted overwhelmingly to join the Teamsters two years ago but are still being denied their union rights. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has ruled in their favor repeatedly and yet the company still refuses to negotiate with the Teamsters Union. How much money must these delay tactics cost? Surely it is cheaper, better and safer for all to have a happy workforce.*

### Q2. What are your impressions of working conditions in the U.S.?

*Murphy: The laws used to weaken the unions are far worse in the U.S. than in the U.K., especially in states that are right-to-work. I met with many Teamsters from different states who explained how hard it is to simply get union recognition. It's a massive uphill battle in most places.*

### Q3. Do you find there are any striking similarities between the labor movement in the U.S. and the U.K.?

*Murphy: Yes, of course. Our fight is the same. Durham is the second biggest employer of school bus workers in the U.S.,*

*and they are owned by National Express in the U.K., one of the largest employers of drivers in all of Europe. When I visited the Durham yard in Florida, workers talked of the same problems currently plaguing bus conditions in the U.K. – broken seats, stop signs, lights, lenses, air conditioners and old and faulty tires. In addition to safety problems, we also share similar mistreatment from management. Although it's an unfortunate source of common ground, sharing the same anti-union employer means our challenges and opposition are one and the same, and it allows for more solidarity between the two unions and within the labor movement.*

### Q4. As this year's winner of the Steve Edwards Award, is there anything you'd like to say to fellow activists?

*Murphy: I hope to honor Steve's legacy by continuing to work closely with the International Transport Workers' Federation and its affiliates to strengthen the alliance's commitment to workers worldwide. Steve believed all people should be treated with dignity, and with this in mind, he always fought for workers. It was a real privilege to be invited by the Teamsters. My time in America was truly a great experience and reinforced my belief that union members of all backgrounds and nationalities believe in the same values. Together, we must continue to hold multinational companies accountable for the safety of our children and improve job conditions for workers of all nations.*

To watch a full interview with Martin, visit our homepage at <http://driveupstandards.org>

**On behalf of Teamsters everywhere: Congratulations, Martin!**



**SIGN UP FOR UPDATES—  
TEXT BUS TO 86466**

*(message and data rates may apply)*



Join us on Twitter! @DUstandards



"Like" us on Facebook.

[www.facebook.com/teamsters](http://www.facebook.com/teamsters)

**Have a question or story idea? Email us at [driveupstandards1@gmail.com](mailto:driveupstandards1@gmail.com)**