

TEAMSTERS READY MESSAGE, MUSCLE FOR 2016 ELECTIONS

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PRESIDENT JAMES P. HOFFA



Having an idea is one thing. Getting it done is another.

The Teamsters late last year introduced a package of legislative priorities when it unveiled "Let's Get America Working" (LGAW). And the union saw progress made toward those goals when Congress in December passed its first long-term transportation funding bill in more than a decade.

But not all of our proposals are going to slide through the process so smoothly. There are trillions of dollars' worth of infrastructure needs not only for roads and rails, but for the nation's energy and water systems. There is a need to protect the rights of workers to organize, and for better education and vocational training as well. And elected officials must ensure that everyday Americans can have a secure retirement.

Now, the union is debuting a new program for activists that will help make the LGAW platform a reality. "Building Teamster Political Power" is meant to get members involved in making these policies a reality. Locals will identify members who will be trained on how to talk about political issues and persuade their fellow Teamsters on the issues that matter most to this union.

By starting early, the Teamsters can have scores of trained political activists on the ground to participate in the union's 2016 election program. And we will need every one of them to push back on the message of the corporate candidates who are seeking to reward their contributors.

Remember—Teamster Strong, America Stronger!

PUBLIC SERVICES News

James P. Hoffa, General President | Ken Hall, General Secretary-Treasurer | Michael Filler, Division Director



Red Cross employees in Portland, Maine and Omaha, Neb., recently voted to join the Teamsters. The Portland blood donation center's 57 employees will now form a bargaining unit that includes collections technicians, collections specialists and mobile unit assistants. These employees are responsible for setting up and administering blood drives across the southern half of the state.

By voting in favor of Teamster representation on Dec. 22, these workers will fall under a National Addendum negotiated by a coalition of labor unions at the American Red Cross. With assistance from Local 340, Portland employees will negotiate a local agreement, and then vote to ratify the contract along with the National Addendum.

"The workers at the Portland Red Cross facility are most concerned over health care costs and working conditions. These and other issues will be addressed through improvements guaranteed by the National Addendum and the to-be-negotiated local collective bargaining agreement," said Local 340 Business Agent Ed Marzano. "The representational election was a landslide victory. Of the eligible voters, over three-quarters voted for the Teamsters. We welcome our new members and are looking forward to the start of negotiations."

Specialists and Technicians Join Local 554

Fifty-seven mobile Red Cross blood collection agents based in Grand Island and North Platte, Neb., selected union representation when the ballots were tabulated on Dec. 18, 2015.

The phlebotomists, collections specialists, technicians, mobile unit assistants and apheresis employees voted 39-13 in a combined election to join Local 554.

"Everyone is thrilled for these workers," said Scott Uteck, a business agent with Local 554. "They stuck together and their strength will be rewarded with their first contract. We congratulate them, and especially everyone on the organizing committee, for all of their hard work and dedication that led to this successful effort."

"We have a newfound confidence at work knowing the Teamsters have our back to negotiate and enforce a contract that protects our employment interests," said Courtney Sklenar, a Red Cross collection specialist based in Grand Island.

These new members also become part of the union Public Services Division. "The power behind the Teamster-led union coalition, and the first-ever nationwide agreement, are proof that organized labor can make a difference for many dedicated Red Cross employees across this country," said Michael Filler, Director of the Public Services Division.

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THE ONUS FOR BEING ACTIVE

The presidential primary season in America has shown that many voters are dissatisfied with politics as usual.

Income inequality, the rising cost of health care, and the affordability of college and technical training for loved ones, are some of the important concerns that many union members have.

Unchecked power by elected officials and their rich supporters hurt the common good. Rather than focusing on improved public services and a secure financial future, certain politicians and those possessing a majority of the wealth in the country spend a significant amount of time seeking to eliminate unions. Without collective bargaining rights or the ability to have the monetary resources to negotiate and enforce contracts, society begins to crumble.

Flint, Mich. is a perfect example. The governor and the state legislature were so preoccupied with destroying organized labor that they allowed citizens to be poisoned with contaminated water. Passing a right-to-work law, and one that prohibits employers from collecting voluntary member contributions to a union's political action committee, were more important to politicians than ensuring the safety and health of unknowing men, women and children.

When government fails by design or lack of oversight, some politicians use that as a basis to argue for the privatization of public services. Then profit overrides the public good.

Being involved in your union and your community are ways to maintain the checks and balances needed in our society. So, even if the Supreme Court decides to reduce the ability of labor to effectively represent its members, or governors and state legislators enact laws to do likewise, sustained and collective activism can cure an unacceptable and toxic status quo.



Teamsters to Launch Program to Build Political Power

New Member Activist Training to Begin in February



This month, the Department of Political and Legislative Action and the Training and Development Department will launch a new political activist program called Building Teamster Political Power. The goal of the program is to establish an army of engaged, active members interested in getting involved in politics—not only for the upcoming election, but for years to come.

For nearly a year, staff members from the Department of Political and Legislative Action have been meeting with Joint Council and local union officers and business agents to listen to ideas about how the Teamsters can improve on their already successful political program. The feedback received pointed to a need to focus on working family issues, and have consistent communication with members who have indicated that they are excited to be part of the Teamsters and believe in our political objectives.

All the ideas the union received have gone into the development of the Building Teamster Political Power program. Each local will be asked to identify members they would want to participate in Member Activist Trainings. At the trainings, members will be taught how to speak about political issues with fellow members, persuasion techniques to get around common objections and how to get involved in politics through their local unions and Joint Councils.

Working with the Training and Development Department, the union will complete trainings before the International Convention in June so there will be a group of trained political activists available to participate in the Teamster election program this cycle. After the classroom-style session, newly trained members will be asked to participate in a real world activity, like phone banking, leafleting or a rally.

If you are interested in participating in the Building Teamster Political Power program please contact the Department of Political and Legislative Action at 202-624-6800.

FRIEDRICHS VS. CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOC. CASE THREATENS WAGES

ANTI-UNIONISM IS REAL REASON BEHIND SUPREME COURT CASE

Everyday Americans are facing a real battle keeping their heads above water financially. While unemployment continues to fall, incomes aren't rising for most workers. So it is particularly troublesome that the Supreme Court seems to be setting its sights on lowering incomes for thousands of public sector employees.

Recently, the nation's highest court heard arguments on why several California public school teachers don't think they should have to pay reduced fees that cover collective bargaining costs of their contracts (Friedrichs vs. California Teachers Association). Those fees are not used

for political donations; however, the abolition of fair share fees by the Supreme Court in June of this year can lead to the demise of public sector unions in America.

Workers Deserve More

Hardworking Americans deserve more than to be shunted to the side by this nation's government. But that is exactly what will happen if the high court rules with the plaintiffs in this case. Union membership will likely further decline, wages will fall and fewer and fewer workers will have access to quality health care and retirement benefits.

A recent study showed that a reduction in union membership was responsible for more than a third of the 7.6 percent decrease in the share of workers in the middle class between 1984 and 2014. That's what's at stake with this decision.

The Teamsters and workers can't change the decision of the Supreme Court. But both can counteract any such a ruling by continuing to organize and pushing lawmakers toward policies that benefit workers. That's why the Teamsters unveiled their "Let's Get America Working" platform last year and why it will continue to fight to get it implemented.

