

# RIGHT TO WORK IS WRONG – LET’S OUTLAW IT

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PRESIDENT JAMES P. HOFFA



A Republican-controlled Congress has taken aim at workers’ rights in 2017, including the ability to collectively bargain. But now a group of law-makers have said “Enough!”

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) are the lead sponsors of legislation introduced in late September that

would outlaw right-to-work (RTW) laws in the U.S. It is a fitting push back on efforts to curtail the ability of workers in this country to organize and stand united against their employers.

As of now, 28 states have passed RTW laws. While supporters claim that the law promotes job growth, history shows otherwise. The policy is a ruse that only

causes a race to the bottom for wages.

RTW states have a higher poverty rate than states with union rights. In fact, nine of the 10 highest poverty states are RTW. That, in part, is attributable to lower salaries and benefits. Those with no rights at work make almost \$1,500 a year less. They are also less likely to receive employer-based health insurance or retirement benefits.

That’s why it makes sense for elected officials to push back on these lousy laws. They strip unions of the ability to collect dues from all workers who benefit from union-negotiated contracts. Unions are forced to use their time and money to provide benefits to free riders who won’t pay their fair share.

Canada is now fighting to have language barring RTW laws placed in an updated version of NAFTA. That’s a good thing. Lawmakers must take a fresh look at these measures.



Teamsters Warehouse News

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# WAREHOUSE News

James P. Hoffa, General President | Ken Hall, General Secretary-Treasurer | Steve Vairma, Division Director

## TEAMSTERS STEP UP THE FIGHT AT SYSCO

Members Stand Together to Protect Workers’ Rights

Over the past several months, the Teamsters have stepped up the fight to win fairness for members and workers at Sysco.

In August 2017, leaders of local unions that represent Sysco workers met in Denver to form a united front in the fight against the company’s ongoing attacks on workers’ rights to organize and the company’s refusal to bargain first contracts in good faith and in a timely manner.

“This meeting is about sharing our resources and strength so that we are better prepared to take Sysco head on in our fight to win workers fairness, a more secure future and respect on the job,” said Steve Vairma, Director of the Teamsters Warehouse Division.

The local unions also discussed the company’s systemic violations of federal labor law, from a three-hour captive audience meeting in the face of a hurricane in Miami to unlawful

discipline and termination of union supporters during organizing drives.

In early March, Local 406 in Grand Rapids, Mich. had a major victory when an administrative law judge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) upheld 79 unfair labor practice charges filed by Local 406, and ordered Sysco to begin bargaining. The NLRB found the company repeatedly threatened and used intimidation tactics against workers for exercising their rights to freedom of association during a 2015 organizing campaign.

“This is great news for the Sysco workers who had to endure an unbelievable onslaught of threats and intimidation for exercising their federally protected right to organize,” said Ellis Wood, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 406. “I look forward to finally being able to negotiate a contract for the Sysco workers so that they can

address the issues that are important to them.”

Meanwhile, the union continues to protect industry standards by organizing and winning strong contracts at Sysco competitors. Local 630 is fighting for a first contract at Performance Food Group subsidiary Vistar, where men and women spent two months on an unfair labor practice picket line.

And US Foods Teamsters from Locals 117, 162, 483 and 690 were again victorious when their members voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new four-year contract.

“This is an industry-leading contract that provides strong, family wages, excellent health and welfare benefits, and retirement security for our members and their families,” said John Scearcy, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters 117. “Our bargaining committee did a tremendous job.”

## GRIT, DETERMINATION AND INNOVATION: BREAKING BARRIERS IN THE WAREHOUSE INDUSTRY

Warehouse Division Teamster members have faced countless challenges this year, from a seemingly endless stream of mergers and acquisitions to rough-and-tumble negotiations and increasing anti-union hostility as we organize new members.



As always, our members and local unions are turning these challenges into opportunities to strengthen and grow our membership across the warehouse industry.

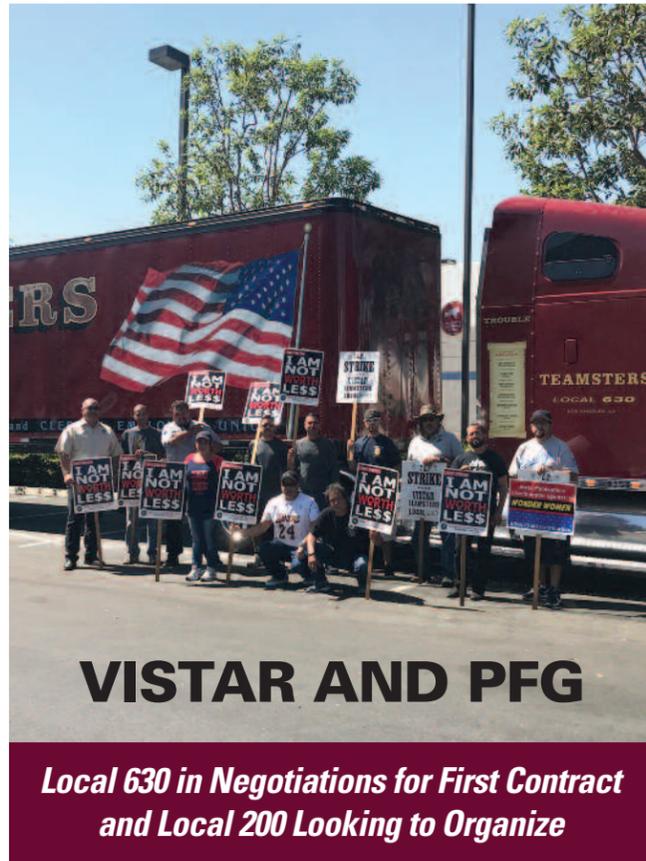
Our division is more vibrant and our members are more active than ever before. In the fast and ever-changing world of technology and its 24-hour news cycle, we know successfully taking on greedy, corrupt and law-breaking corporations requires creativity and innovation.

We're winning organizing campaigns at Sysco in deep-red states like Florida, Idaho and Arizona. Sysco's abuse of labor law has resulted in dozens of unfair labor practice charges, 79 of which prompted an NLRB complaint and bargaining order in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Local 166 won its recent organizing campaign at UNFI while Local 445 ratified a first contract with the grocery warehouse distributor.

As we continue to win elections and good contracts, we all face new challenges and obstacles. This is why I cannot stress enough the importance for all to be actively involved both in the workplace and the community.

The fundamental component to building Teamster Power in the Warehouse Division nationwide is to build and maintain relationships. We need to engage in our communities, reach out to our allies from a wide range of groups and take an active role in the political process. If we do this, I have no doubt we will continue to strengthen our division and be victorious.



### VISTAR AND PFG

*Local 630 in Negotiations for First Contract and Local 200 Looking to Organize*

In mid-August 2017, Teamster warehouse workers and drivers for Vistar Foodservice distribution facility—a division of Performance Food Group—went on strike for the second time in less than four months and are still holding strong as they approach almost 60 days on the picket line.

Vistar workers from Local 630 were forced to strike, alleging the company failed to bargain in good faith. They sought Teamster representation after years of what workers describe as ongoing pay discrimination. The company places women in the lowest-paying warehouse jobs, they say, where they earn less than \$13 per hour or even minimum wage.

"I want a union contract because we get placed into lesser-paying positions while doing much of the same work. I feel that Vistar has favoritism," said Rebecca Hernandez, a nine-year Vistar employee and single mother who is on strike.

Vistar delivers to multiple movie theater chains, state prisons, hospitals and other facilities across the country.

"We are tired of being disrespected just because we are women, so we are standing up for a living wage because this is about our families, our kids," Hernandez said. "We've given so much to this company so they could become millionaires. Some of us have been working for the company for as long as 15 years and Vistar refuses to provide equal pay for equal work."

### Teamsters and Costco Work Together



In September, members faced three back-to-back catastrophic hurricanes that devastated homes, communities, businesses and lives. The most recent, Hurricane Maria, made landfall in Puerto Rico and left the island in complete despair. Many lives were lost; homes, businesses, hospitals and roads were destroyed; and Puerto Rico itself was devastated.

With the fate of Puerto Rico unknown, and the Puerto Rican people in great need of help and supplies, the Teamsters took action. Locals 282, 210, 553, 817 and 295, along with Joint Council 16, collaborated with Costco—one of the largest Teamsters Warehouse Division employers with more than 17,000 Teamsters—to provide life-saving supplies, transportation, and a flight to Puerto Rico for 80 Teamster drivers and sanitation worker volunteers.

"We are the Teamsters. This is who we are and what we stand for. We're here for everyone that is in need. It doesn't matter if it's Puerto Rico, Texas or Mexico. We will help and do all that we can. This was a



great effort by all the Teamsters throughout the nation and by Costco, who had all the supplies ready to go in less than 24 hours. Everyone played a part to make this all possible," said Frank Lopez, business agent at Costco for Local 210.

Joint Council 16 raised funds to buy \$25,000 worth of supplies. Together, Costco and the Teamsters coordinated their efforts from prioritizing the needs of Puerto Rican residents, to the trucks that loaded the supplies, to the delivery to JFK and DHL (what airport is DHL?) airport and arrival in Puerto Rico, where Local 901 distributed the supplies to those in need.

"This act was a collaborative effort by both the Teamster Union and our Teamster employers. Everyone pitched in together to make sure all the supplies got to Puerto Rico and that the people receive the help they need. Everybody pitched in, both union and Teamster employers," said George Miranda, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 210 and President of Joint Council 16.