

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!

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BUILDING THE UNION

Teamster Women Enter Careers in the Trades

Joy "JT" Ferguson's first construction experience was driving a 51-ton truck. The hardworking member of Local 959 in Anchorage, Alaska, quickly rose through the ranks to become a step-up foreman, and credits her success in large part to the opportunity afforded her by a Teamsters Union apprenticeship program.

"Without the training I received through the Teamsters apprenticeship program, I wouldn't have been able to get the job I have," said Ferguson, a mother of five. "I hope to see more Teamsters apprenticeship programs implemented elsewhere."

Ferguson is one of a growing number of Teamster women who are joining careers in the trades, which includes working as construction drivers, surveyors, plumbers, electricians and more.

Apprenticeship programs and pre-apprenticeship programs introduce more women to the trades, can last several years, and provide hands-on expertise to help participants grow in their fields.

Cheri Lipps is the apprenticeship coordinator at the Alaska Teamster Training Trust, which oversees several apprenticeship programs and offers a pre-apprenticeship program specifically for women interested in careers as construction drivers.

"It's a way for them to explore what the industry is really about and to help women find a way to successfully get into the industry," Lipps said. "What they find is not just a job, but a career."

Trades Meeting

Debra Chaplan knows the value of women in the trades coming together for education and empowerment. For 14 years, Chaplan, a member of Local 853 in San Leandro, Calif., coordinated an annual conference for women in the building trades and construction. As Director of Special Programs for the California State Building and Construction Trades Council, Chaplan was tasked with organizing each conference held in California since 2002. The conference participants have grown from 200 to nearly 1,100 in that time.

This year's conference will be led by North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) and held April 29 – May 1 in Chicago.



"There will be a caucus for women in each union, so there will be a Teamsters women's meeting and about 40 workshops on what it is to work in the trades and construction, and how that's different from other jobs," Chaplan said.

"It's a great opportunity for Teamsters and all women who attend," said Iliana Flores, Southern Region Training Coordinator with the Teamsters Training and Development Department, who teaches workshops at the conference. Flores, the Teamster representative on the NABTU Tradeswomen Committee, was proud that Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa signed onto a resolution in support of women in the trades, which was introduced at the 2015 conference.

The resolution recognizes the important work that women are doing in the building trades and paves the way for concrete goals to increase the number of women in the trades and the resources available to them.

"The Construction Division supports and welcomes women in construction, as well as the pipeline industry. A large number of Teamster women have taken advantage of our pipeline training programs in West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania, and we expect more to upgrade their skills in future training classes," said Bubba Davis, Director of the Teamsters Building Material and Construction Trade Division.

Thanks to apprenticeship programs, and an emphasis on women in the building trades, more women are learning about union careers and building strong futures.

TEAMSTER WOMEN LEADING THE WAY

Once a year, we all come together at the Teamsters Women's Conference. We catch up on all of the great work we are doing in our local unions to make our communities, our union and our world better for working people. However, it is in the time between our conferences where the hard work takes place, and I am so proud to share with you the latest look at what Teamster sisters are doing to make a difference.



In this issue of the newsletter you will read about a topic that deserves some attention, and that is women in the trades. Women in the building trades and construction go through long and rigorous apprenticeship programs and, upon completion of the programs, go to work in a field where the numbers of women are growing but still lag behind that of men. Thanks to programs like the ones offered through the Teamster Training Trust in Alaska, more women are learning about the trades and are entering new careers that come with all the benefits of Teamster representation.

We are also continually impressed with the work of our Canadian Teamster sisters. You'll read in this newsletter about the union's advocacy for pregnant workers in a case that is making its way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

As we look forward to Women's History Month in March and International Women's Day on March 8, we should always be proud of the Teamster sisters who have blazed the trail for us. And we should never forget that while there is always still more work to do, as union sisters we are able to provide a better quality of life for our partners and our families, and we are uniquely positioned to help other workers achieve their dreams. After all, that's what being a Teamster is all about!

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.

TEAMSTERS SET SIGHTS HIGH IN CANADA



Canadian Sisters Work for Progress

Teamsters in Canada are active with a number of initiatives and efforts to improve the lives of women and their families.

Make it Mandatory: Teamster youth in Canada have launched an important social media campaign on mental health. The campaign seeks to raise awareness and make mental health support in the workplace mandatory. As women also often act as caretakers, they are disproportionately impacted. The campaign has already reached over a million people through social media and its website www.makeitmandatory.ca.

Taking Pregnant Workers' Rights to the Supreme Court: Teamsters Canada is fighting for working women, bringing forward a case for review by the Supreme Court of Canada. The union claims that pregnant women working under federal jurisdiction who can't perform their duties, and whose employers do not accommodate them with other tasks, should receive benefits from the Workers' Compensation Board.

"If a woman can't fly as a flight attendant because of the air pressure, or a nurse can't stand for hours in a hospital and expose the fetus to bacteria and illness, she can't work. If her doctor says she cannot continue in that position during pregnancy, she can ask her employer for accommodation, but if it's unavailable, she goes without pay. That's not right," said François Laporte, President of Teamsters Canada.

Laporte explained that women working under provincial laws in Québec receive benefits, however, in Canada, workers in trucking, rail, aviation and other essential industries fall under federal law.

"Two women can be neighbors, and one is protected and the other one isn't. It's injustice and we are fighting to change that for all women," Laporte said.

Teamsters in the U.S. are also standing in support of pregnant workers. The Teamsters Union supports the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act to help ensure employers provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant women and end discrimination in the workplace that forces pregnant women out of their jobs.

Women on the March: March is Women's History Month in the U.S. and Teamster women will be celebrating throughout the country, while Teamster sisters to the north will join us in commemorating International Women's Day on March 8. Women's History Month is celebrated in October in Canada. Teamsters Women's Caucuses in Québec and Ontario are organizing conferences to celebrate International Women's Day. More than 800 women will have a chance to meet and share their experiences with other Teamster sisters.

2016 Teamsters Women's Conference

Loews Hollywood Hotel

Hollywood, California

Sept. 22-24, 2016

Registration and other information to follow.