

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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February 26, 2021

U.S House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.4 million Teamsters and their families, I urge you to support the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* (HR 1319) when it comes to the floor this week. We often say that the Teamsters Union represents workers from A to Z – that is, airline workers to zookeepers. Our diversity is a source of great pride and strength, but it also means that Teamster members have been deeply impacted by all facets of this pandemic crisis. *The American Rescue Plan* addresses many core Teamster policy priorities that are needed to protect and support our members through this crisis and bring our nation toward an economic recovery.

Through no fault of their own, the earned pension benefits of millions of retirees, and active workers, are being threatened. While multiemployer pension plans have been buffeted by economic turbulence over the decades, the financial challenges many plans face have been exacerbated by the pandemic and resulting shutdown of the U.S. economy. *The American Rescue Plan* includes a proposal, *The Butch Lewis Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act*, to address the challenges faced by the hardest hit multiemployer pension funds. *The Butch Lewis Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act* provides a path forward for financial stability and solvency for these plans. It will provide financial security for both workers and retirees. And, it will lessen the financial pressure on the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) which faces insolvency as early as 2026.

As America looks to reopen and rebuild, maintaining the solvency of the multiemployer pension system will be a key to economic recovery. The National Institute for Retirement Security has concluded that the \$44.2 billion in private

pension benefit payments paid to retirees of multiemployer plans in 2018 supported \$96.6 billion dollars in overall economic output in the national economy and an estimated \$14.7 billion in total tax revenue. The country can ill-afford a reduction in these revenue streams during the recovery period.

The past year has made evident to the world what we at the Teamsters Union have long known – Teamsters keep America moving. Teamster members are essential workers in every industry. Throughout this pandemic crisis, Teamsters have put themselves in harm’s way to protect and sustain American families. It is past time that our elected representatives enact a bold, truly comprehensive package of supports for essential workers and the most vulnerable among us. *The American Rescue Plan* does just that.

Many essential workers are still working in unsafe conditions, while sick or having been exposed to the coronavirus, and without access to quality personal protective equipment (PPE). *The American Rescue Plan* would provide \$10 billion to use the Defense Production Act to purchase, produce, and distribute equipment including tests, personal protective equipment, and vaccines. The bill also provides funding to support OSHA enforcement in high-risk sectors and expands incentives for employers to offer paid leave. Importantly, *the American Rescue Plan* recognizes that essential workers comprise about half of all workers in low-paid occupations and calls for an increase in the minimum wage to \$15/hr.

Over 200,000 Teamsters work in the public sector. *The American Rescue Plan* provides states and localities with funds to address revenue loss, not just unanticipated COVID-19 related expenses. This flexibility will help states to avoid mass layoffs and furloughs that would worsen the recession, delay recovery, and undercut public health response efforts. Significant support is provided to states and localities to expand vaccine distribution, testing and contact tracing. The bill also provides necessary funding to support in-person teaching, where it is safe to do so for teachers, staff and students, as well as expenses associated with equitable access to distance learning.

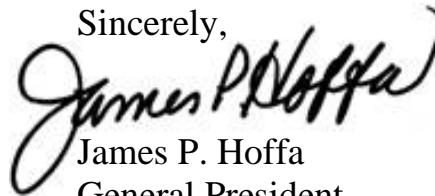
Over 600,000 Teamsters start their work day by turning the key of a vehicle. *The American Rescue Plan* supports transportation industries and workers with funding for transit agencies, airports, airlines and Amtrak that can be used to cover operating expenses including payroll costs and purchasing PPE.

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While the majority of Teamster members have been on the job throughout the pandemic, many Teamster industries have been hard hit by lack of consumer demand and mandated property closures associated with social distancing guidelines. *The American Rescue Plan* provides displaced workers with access to uninterrupted unemployment benefits as well as mortgage and rental assistance. The bill authorizes another round of direct payments to struggling households to help families pay for their everyday expenses. The bill also supports continued access to affordable healthcare through the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid and COBRA benefit extensions.

There now appears to be a light at the end of this tunnel, but our nation's recovery is still fragile. Every piece of the *American Rescue Plan* is key to building back and building back stronger. We urge you to support working families and help our nation to heal by passing *The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Hoffa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James P. Hoffa
General President

JPH/smcb