

COORDINATED BARGAINING

WHEREAS, Teamster industries continue to consolidate at increasing rates; and

WHEREAS, in industries where Teamster employers are consolidating, Teamster strength is best achieved through an appropriate national or regional “master” contract at a particular company or across an industry; and

WHEREAS, Teamster local unions increasingly bargain with large multinational or national corporations that have grown significantly through acquisitions and consolidation, increasing market share and corporate power through both union and non-union operations; and

WHEREAS, corporate mergers and acquisitions focused on increasing profits and dividends through creating synergies often result in difficult restructuring and streamlining that negatively impact Teamster members; and

WHEREAS, Teamster local unions have formed national bargaining units at a dozen major companies to negotiate in a coordinated manner on behalf of the individual local unions in an effort to best represent the membership; and

WHEREAS, Teamster local unions have formed regional bargaining units at dozens of other companies to negotiate in a coordinated manner on a regional basis in an effort to best represent the membership; and

WHEREAS, Teamster local unions represent 151,000 members at over 40 companies where 10 or more Teamsters local unions represent at least 1,000 members at that employer but do NOT have a national master contract; and

WHEREAS, at those same 40 companies there are hundreds of thousands of unorganized workers and those employers actively and aggressively oppose unionization when faced with a Teamster organizing drive; and

WHEREAS, these corporations engage in centralized, sophisticated union-busting activities and attacks on union contracts and members; and

WHEREAS, these corporations take advantage of the isolation of individual Teamster bargaining units in first contract negotiations, and multiple individual bargaining units and white paper contracts, to refuse to bargain in good faith, or to bring down industry standards or shift work to competing lower-wage, non-union facilities; and

WHEREAS, even where consolidation leaves existing Teamster bargaining units intact, it diminishes standards because the new corporate entity created by the consolidation fails to honor the existing Teamster contract; and

WHEREAS, local union collaboration through regional and national bargaining is key to maintaining unity and upholding strong contracts and industry standards; and

WHEREAS, the Teamsters have a long and successful tradition of skillfully bargaining contracts that set, defend and improve industry standards and also establish a fair representation process to strategically organize the unorganized units at the same employer; and

WHEREAS, coordinated bargaining respects the proud tradition of local union autonomy while increasing bargaining and organizing capacity of local unions through national planning and action.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED at this 30th International Convention that all appropriate trade divisions and conferences identify key companies in their industries and initiate a plan to engage in coordinated bargaining; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all local unions understand the benefits of coordinated regional or national contract negotiations and embrace coordinated bargaining and organizing initiatives at major Teamster employers or companies in a core industry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such initiatives will require local unions to act in a coordinated manner and, among other things, provide proper notice to employers of division/conference approval of CBAs, understand the strategic value of working under expired contracts, developing common contract goals, executing coordinated contract campaigns, bargaining to organize, lining up common expiration dates and understand the importance of successorship and protection of rights language; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the IBT will assist its conferences and trade divisions and department structures in educating local unions and their members about the reasons for, and the benefits of, coordinated bargaining and organizing strategies, as well as the means and methods for enforcing labor rights; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the power of local unions nationwide should be brought to bear in efforts to bargain for organizing rights at common employers.