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House District 86

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House of Representatives State of Tennessee

April 20, 2023

James E. Jones, President
Teamsters Local 667

Dear Brother Jones:

This letter is to express my support of Teamsters Local 667, the sanitation workers and your fight for justice.

My heart goes out to the family of sanitation worker Patricia Moore who was crushed to death by a third-party work truck while working at the Shelby County Landfill March 30. My thoughts, prayers and support are with you and the sanitation workers who mourn her loss and grapple with the trauma triggered by her senseless, tragic and preventable death.

The events of the past month bear a disturbing resemblance to those 55 years ago following the tragic deaths of sanitation workers Echol Cole and Robert Walker. These horrific workplace accidents led to the Sanitation Workers Strike and the launch of the environmental justice Movement that drew Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Memphis. And now, our community mourns the loss of another sanitation worker who died in the line of duty.

I also find the reports that the sanitation workers repeatedly alerted Republic Services of the dangerous working conditions without remedy deeply disturbing. I am appalled by the allegations that Republic Services proposed that the union give up its safety incentives in the wake of Ms. Moore's tragic death. We are aware that sanitation workers endure harsh, dangerous conditions in the workplace and die on the job at rates higher than those of police and fire professionals. To remove incentives that promote a safer workplace, especially in the wake of the death of a colleague in the line of duty, is insensitive and untimely.

I stand in solidarity with the union as you courageously fight for a workplace that honors and protects the workers and pays wages that are on par with workers in communities similar to ours. I support your right to strike and to demand that Republic Services supports a workplace that not only recognizes the humanity of sanitation workers and justly rewards their service, but also safeguards their well-being.

Justice is a safe workplace where the dignity of all work is recognized. Justice is the only goal, the only answer. We must keep fighting for it. I hope that together we can achieve it on behalf of sanitation workers.

In love and service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin J. Pearson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin J. Pearson

House Representative District 86
113th Tennessee General Assembly