



Elections have consequences; this time they're good

As nearly 6,000 workers at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama are voting in a union representation election, on February 28, President Biden released a remarkable video statement supporting the right of workers to join unions — perhaps the most forceful support of unions from a U.S. President in nearly a century.

“I have long said that America wasn’t built by Wall Street; it was built by the middle class...and unions built the middle class. Unions put power in the hands of workers. They level the playing field,” Biden said in the opening to his two-minute statement. “They give you a stronger voice for your health, your safety, higher wages, protection from racial discrimination and sexual harassment. Unions lift up workers, both union and non-union and especially black and brown workers.”

The statement asserted that the National Labor Relations Act is about encouraging unions, not just tolerating them. “Every worker should have a free and fair choice to join a union. The law guarantees that choice. And it’s your right... No employer can take that right away.”

In response, Joint Council 7 President Rome Aloise stated in a letter to Biden, “For the last 46 years I have been organizing and negotiating for workers and union members, and your video—the frankness, the honesty, the total commitment and sincerity of your words, actually brought tears to my eyes. I never thought I would see a President of the United States make such a bold and honest statement to workers about the value of union representation.”

So far, Biden is backing up his words with action. From leadership appointments to overturning Trump anti-union executive orders, the Biden administration has been busy restoring calm and caring to the agencies that oversee working conditions and unions.

Biden’s \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan is already providing the funds to keep cities and states solvent, direct payments to taxpayers earning \$80,000 or less (\$160,000 for couples), a child tax credit, and free COBRA. The plan also bolsters union pension plans and extends unemployment insurance.

Key agency appointments

On Day One in office, Biden fired Trump’s anti-union NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb, a move widely applauded by unions. In his place, Biden appointed Peter Sung Ohr to serve as Acting NLRB General Counsel. Ohr was a regional director for the NLRB and has a long history of pro-worker decisions. He took immediate action to overturn some of Robb’s anti-union decisions.

Biden quickly picked Jennifer Abruzzo to take the permanent position, which needs Senate approval. She has a long history of working for the Labor Board and for unions.

In a novel move, Biden appointed a labor leader to lead the Department of Labor—Marty Walsh, the Mayor of Boston. Walsh previously led a Laborers union local and headed up the Boston Metropolitan District Building Trades Council.

Biden selected a Steelworker to lead OSHA and named the former head of the Minnesota Building Trades Council to head up the Wage and Hour Division. He has also made new appointments at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Federal Labor Relations Authority, and other agencies.

Unlike in the previous administration, none of these appointees are determined to dismantle the agencies they are charged with leading.

Strengthening laws that protect workers

For the first time, after a year-long fight by unions, OSHA was ordered to create a COVID safety standard. This will not only create a uniform standard for safety during COVID, but it will also allow workers a new avenue to protect themselves from bosses who refuse to put proper safety procedures in place. He also instituted a federal mask mandate for everyone involved in interstate travel.



Teamsters rallied for pension relief that was just included in American Rescue Plan.

Other immediate changes that Biden instituted by Executive Order include:

- strengthening the federal government’s Buy American Provisions;
- implementing a \$15 minimum wage for federal contractors;
- reinstating federal diversity and inclusion training;
- allowing federal unions to bargain again;
- enabling workers to refuse dangerous work and still qualify for unemployment insurance, such as with a COVID-19 outbreak.

These are just some of the advances President Biden made in his first month in office. While it is a good start, Biden has a lot more on his agenda to be completed over the next 47 months, including a major infrastructure project, a minimum wage hike, and the passage of the Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which will both expand workers’ rights on the job and protect the right of workers to choose union representation.

COVID stimulus saves pension plans

Included in the \$1.9 trillion COVID stimulus plan is the Butch Lewis Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act of 2021. Unions have fought for several years to pass this very pension fix but were blocked by then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). This bill will go far to strengthen troubled union pension plans, including the Central States Teamster plan, ensuring that millions of retirees and active Teamsters will receive the pension benefits they earned through years of hard work.

“This legislation will address the multi-employer pension crisis by providing a lifeline to plans in critical financial status ... without cutting the earned benefit promises made to our nation’s retirees and working families,” said Aloise, who serves as a Trustee on the Western States Pension plan, which is currently in strong shape. “We were afraid that the weak plans could bring down the whole system,” he adds, “Now we have some room to breathe.”



Annual Joint Council 7 Harry Polland/ Bob Morales Scholarship Program – Applications Due

Joint Council 7 is pleased to announce the Annual Teamsters Joint Council 7 Harry Polland/Bob Morales Scholarship Fund. This program will provide \$1,000 to the child of one member in each of the following affiliated Local Unions: 70, 87, 137, 150, 315, 350, 386, 431, 439, 517, 533, 665, 853, 856, 890, 896, 912, 948, 2010, 2785, GCC-District Council 2.

Eligibility

Applicants are eligible for scholarships to attend a college, university, or trade school when they or their parent or legal guardian (proof may be required) is an active member in good standing of one of the previously-listed Local Unions. Elected officials and employees of Teamsters Local Unions and Joint Councils, and their families, are not eligible.

Criteria

Grade point average of 2.0 (based on a 4.0 system) upon high school graduation.

How to Apply

Applicants must complete an application and return it to a Joint Council 7 office or to the office of any of the Local Unions affiliated with the Joint Council (see above) by no later than July 1, 2021, along with the following:

1. High school or college transcript through most recent semester.
2. Resume of school and/or community activities.
3. Two page handwritten or typed essay on "The Importance of Labor Unions."
4. Recent photograph of applicant.

Where to Get Applications

Applications may be obtained from your Local Union or from the Joint Council 7 office.

Joint Council 7 is proud to support the higher education of Teamster families!



**Joint Council 7
TEAMSTER**

USPS 395-880
ISSN 2154-2643

The Joint Council 7 Teamster is published four times per year (January, April, July, October) by Teamsters' Joint Council 7: 150 Executive Park Blvd., Suite 4400 San Francisco, CA 94134; 415-467-2552.

Periodicals Postage Paid at the San Francisco, CA mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to: Joint Council 7 Teamster: 150 Executive Park Blvd., Suite 4400, San Francisco, CA 94134-3317



Light at the end of the long COVID and Trump tunnels

Finally, some upbeat news to report after a year of pandemic shutdown and horror stories about the over 500,000 deaths in our country from COVID—too many of them our members. We've seen story after story about the hardships many of you have had to endure due to the COVID collateral damage to jobs, the economy, and to many of the companies you work for. However, things are finally looking up.

Members who have been out of work are being called back. A sense of "normal" is coming back, with restaurants opening, movies, sporting events and the like, emerging from the shutdown, all of which supports our members who work in those industries. With vaccines being distributed at a higher rate, hopefully by the summer, we will be able to move forward and put this horrible time behind us.

Pension save finally passes Congress and gets signed into law

For those members who ask "what good is my vote," recent events should start to answer that for you. For the last two decades, the Teamsters Union, under the Hoffa administration, has been trying to find a solution to shore up the many endangered pension plans across the country. This affected retirees and members who were still working and making on-going contributions toward those plans. The solution we fought for—the Butch Lewis Act—is finally law.

Of course, most members in Joint Council 7 are covered by the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Trust Fund. This plan, which takes care of more than 500,000 retirees and active members, has never been in trouble and is flourishing with more than \$50 billion in assets. However, other pension plans, some of which affected our GCIU sisters and brothers, were on the verge of being insolvent.

For years, the leadership of our union sought to save the endangered pensions. We may have struggled internally as to how, but everyone had the same goal: to save the pensions for our members across the country.

I must admit, I had my doubts that the government would ever do the right thing and save the promise of retirement for millions of union workers. I am glad to say that my doubts were proven wrong when our new President, keeping his campaign promise to us when the Teamsters endorsed him, included pension legislation in the American Rescue Plan. Despite the fact that **every Republican** voted against your pension, the Butch Lewis Act passed and became law on Thursday, March 11, 2021. This will save the retirement of millions of workers whose pensions were devastated by company bankruptcies and closures, corporate greed, and the problem of having more retirees than active members.

Strengthening Workers' Rights

A second promise that Biden made was to update and improve labor laws that have not been amended in

any significant way in 80 years and were made much worse during the Trump administration.

In March, the House passed the Protecting the Right to Organize Act or PRO Act. This crucial law was passed along party lines, with only a few Republicans supporting workers' rights to organize and form a union. The PRO Act is now before the Senate. Passage will be a huge lift, as it needs support from 10

Republican senators.

For those of you who came into our union by going through an organizing campaign, you know how difficult it was to endure the range of employer threats designed to fool you into giving up your rights.

This legislation will actually put teeth into labor law and fine employers for violations of that law while giving unions more equal access to the workers.

Most importantly, the PRO Act will guarantee a first contract for workers who vote for union representation. In the past, workers would vote to join a union and the employer knew they would suffer no penalties even if they violated the law to avoid negotiating a contract. With passage of this law, first-time contracts will be mandated. This is huge! If workers know they will get a contract, they will vote for a union, and employer threats will be hollow.

As a union member, your first concern when voting should be your ability to make a decent living, support your family, have decent healthcare, and a pension that allows you to retire with dignity and enjoy the fruits of your labor. **Nothing is more important than your livelihood when you vote!** While we've surely suffered some major disappointments from Democrats, we saw during the Trump years that the Republicans are out to destroy your rights as a worker, from Right to Work laws to defunding the NLRB, to deliberate attempts to destroy our pensions. Remember this when you vote.

In closing, I welcome our new Joint Council 7 Executive Board, which took office on February 1, 2021.

- Rome Aloise, President (Local 853)
- Dave Hawley, Secretary-Treasurer (Local 137)
- Carlos Borba, Vice President (Local 315)
- Peter Nunez, Recording Secretary (Local 431)
- Jason Rabinowitz, Trustee (Local 2010)
- Jeff Berdion, Trustee (Local 386)
- John Bouchard, Trustee (Local 350)

The Board is well-diversified both by the industries where our members work and geographically. We will continue to be one of the most respected Joint Councils in the Teamsters Union.

Please stay healthy, continue to follow the protocols until we rid ourselves of COVID, and move forward into a new, somewhat changed, life.

"After the Plague comes the Renaissance."



Politics matter!

As this paper goes to press, the U.S. Congress just passed legislation unlike any we've seen in our lifetimes. As reported in this issue's cover story, the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan (ARP) will protect Teamster pensions in struggling plans—a victory the union has fought long and hard for through 20 years of Democrat and Republican administrations.

Thankfully, our Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Fund is in strong shape but, to keep it that way, we need to help our brothers and sisters in the Central States and over 50 other Teamster funds. Those Teamsters worked hard for their retirement benefits, and thanks to this legislation, they will get what they were promised.

Additionally, the ARP will shore up hundreds of thousands of Teamster jobs in public services, transit, airlines, rail, and other transportation industries. It provides more access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for workers everywhere, unemployment benefits, and direct payments to struggling households. It helps contain health care costs, expands tax credits for families with children, and provides a critical lifeline to local and state government services that we all rely on, from schools to public transit and more. In short, it is remarkable. Not a single Republican voted for the ARP, yet some were quick to take credit after it passed for the help it provides.

At the same time, the House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act) which expands workers' rights to join together in unions and collectively bargain, strengthens enforcement against employers who violate federal labor laws and closes some of the loopholes employers use against workers and their unions. Now it goes to the Senate, where it faces a tough battle. With 50 seats in the US Senate, the Democrats can't afford to lose a single vote. In the event of a tie, Vice-President Kamala Harris would cast the tie-breaking vote. The Teamsters have known and supported since her first run for public office in 2003, and in cases like this, it helps to have friends!

If passed and signed into law, the PRO Act could help tilt the balance of power between workers and corporations back toward our side. We've all seen how far things have gotten out of whack. We feel it on the job every day.

Over the last year, I had the privilege to represent the Teamsters on the State of California's Future of Work Commission, a 21-member body appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom. We were charged with looking at the current and future state of jobs in California and charting out some paths to a better future. We heard expert testimony demonstrating something we all know: that income inequality has grown as the number of workers in unions has shrunk. And that if we are going to do something about it, then we need to

shrink corporate power by growing worker power. For decades now, we've been screaming this out to anyone in power who would listen, but not getting enough help from the people we need it from. The Commission issued a report this month and it puts the largest state in the country on the record saying we need to help workers join together in unions and crack down harder on corporations that resist that. That's the first time

I've seen state government anywhere take that position, and that's exactly what the PRO Act will do on a national level.

President Biden promised that if he got elected, he would be the "most pro-union president in history." He already unwound some of

the last President's worst anti-worker actions in his first two months of office. With the help of Democrats in Congress, he has a chance to do a lot more.

This is why we do politics. Why every two years we take the time to sit down and interview people who are running for office as we did with Kamala Harris all those years ago. We endorse the ones we like and urge our members to vote for them. We recruit our own members to run for office. We make phone calls, send text messages and letters, and knock on doors to get out the vote. And we contribute a lot of money to their races, because, until real campaign finance reform passes in this country, it takes a lot of money to win.

All of this requires Teamsters to be involved. Not only do rank-and-file members need to get out and vote; they also need to volunteer on things from text messaging and making phone calls to interviewing candidates, processing paperwork, and more. These efforts are supported through our independent political action fund, called DRIVE—Democrat Independent Republican Voter Education.

DRIVE is a completely voluntary contribution that comes from your paycheck. You need to authorize it or it doesn't happen. Many members give a couple of dollars every paycheck, the cost of a loaf of bread or gallon of gas. Maybe it doesn't seem like much, but it all adds up. If it means saving your pension, your job, and your union, doesn't that seem like a good investment? Your shop steward or business agent can help you sign up for DRIVE today.



Contact your shop steward or business agent to sign up for DRIVE!

Local 665

Honoring a sister during Women's History Month

Peggy Aleman joined the Teamsters Union in 1987 when she became a school bus driver for First Student, serving children with special



Local 665's Peggy Aleman

needs in the Santa Rosa school district. During her two-plus decades of employment there, Peggy remained a union member while serving as both shop steward and Local 665 dispatcher.

Following a union merger, Peggy was elected as a trustee on the Executive Board of Local 665, and in 2014 she became the first Member Services Representative for the Local. This position allowed Peggy to offer her knowledge and skills to the wider membership, assisting with wide-ranging issues including unemployment and disability insurance, benefits enrollment questions, membership orientation and the contractual grievance process.

During the current COVID pandemic, Peggy has been the essential worker providing guidance to members affected financially, and for those with concerns regarding health and safety.

"Peggy is often the first person a new member will meet upon arrival at the local's Santa Rosa union hall," says Secretary-Treasurer Tony Delorio.

"Sister Peggy is liked and admired by members both old and new, taking on the role as a "pair of shoulders" to lean on during difficult times," Delorio adds. "She genuinely cares about each and every member at Local 665, is a strong believer in union principles, and is one of the biggest cheerleaders at events and rallies."

"Local 665 is grateful to Peggy's large and extended family for sharing with us her love and wisdom, which she extends to the entire membership throughout each and every year," Delorio says.

Local 665 presented Peggy with a plaque at their March membership meeting and hopes to honor all of the sisters in the many crafts and worksites that the local represents.

AROUND THE LOCALS



LOCAL 87

Bringing in new members

After a months-long fight that included layoffs, election challenges by the company, and several unfair labor practice charges filed by the union, on February 16, 2021, 22 Sierra Transport LLC drivers based in Bakersfield voted to join Teamsters Local 87.

"This huge victory was won despite the pandemic and the Trump NLRB," says Secretary-Treasurer John Moralez. "Clearly, the Sierra drivers really wanted union representation because they stood strong through all kinds of employer shenanigans."

The Settlement Stipulation includes returning the five laid-off employees to work and ensuring that the employer pays out more than \$76,000 in back wages to those who were wrongfully laid off. "Now our challenge is to get the drivers a good first contract," Moralez adds.

...

In February, the four employees at AAVA Dental in Bakersfield also voted to join the Local and, in November, they ratified their first contract. "These new members will now enjoy Teamster benefits," Moralez says.

...

Local 87 is still in negotiations with XPO Freight Logistics for a first contract for the 19 drivers based in Bakersfield.

"We have a strong group and they are holding their ground as the talks grind on," says Moralez, who adds that the union has signed an MOU for a wage increase and has agreed to an interim grievance procedure.

As a result of the union drive in Bakersfield, the company has made some minor improvements for drivers in nearby locations who are not yet part of the union. "Our union supporters see right through those short-term bribes; they are focused on bargaining power and longevity," Moralez adds.

LOCAL 350

Teamsters Local 350 supports \$100 million settlement for Recology ratepayers

In March, San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera announced a \$100 million settlement to be paid by Recology to its ratepayers in connection to an ongoing investigation into alleged corruption committed by former Director of the Department of Public Works, Mohammed Nuru. The following is an official statement from Teamsters Local Union 350 Secretary-Treasurer John Bouchard on the settlement.

"Teamsters Local 350 is proud of the work our members do at Recology to help protect public health and keep our city beautiful," he said. "We were angered to hear about the alleged corruption within the Department of Public Works and that a member of management at one of our largest employers was allegedly involved. We believe it's the right course of action to refund the customers through this settlement."

More than 10,000 Teamsters who live in San Francisco are among the ratepayers anticipated to be reimbursed in the settlement.

Bouchard added, "The alleged actions of Recology management should not reflect in any way on the hardworking Teamsters who show up every day at San Francisco homes and businesses to keep our city clean. We expect Recology management to fully 'own' this incident, and that this justifiable resolution will in no way negatively impact our members who continue to be the lifeblood of this company."

Teamsters Local Union 350 represents 900 sanitation workers at Recology throughout San Francisco, providing professional recycling and trash removal services to hundreds of thousands of San Franciscans each day.

LOCAL 890

Helping members and community cope with COVID

Teamsters Local 890 has continued to be active in helping members and the wider working community cope with the difficult times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Led by Principal Officer Crescencio Diaz, Local 890 has worked with local County Supervisors, growers, the Shippers Association, and the local health system to make COVID-19 vaccines available to Teamsters and other essential workers. Through these efforts, Local 890 ensured that food processing and agricultural workers are in Tier 1.

The Local also partnered with local nonprofits, such as Building Healthy Communities (BHC), to involve Teamster members in the COVID-19 project. "We are visiting worksites to register members for vaccinations and providing valuable resources," says Secretary-Treasurer Juan Cabrera. "In addition



Members who work at Taylor Farms inform working members and those with COVID-19 of valuable resources available. From left: Maria Castro, Jose Garcia, and Enedina de la Torre.

to educating members on their rights and available resources, our team is delivering medical supplies, food, and rental assistance for those who are COVID-19 positive and need to stay home."

LOCAL 533

Credit union opportunity

"Getting new benefits and services for members is an always important goal," says Secretary-Treasurer Debbie Calkins. "That's why Local 533 recently became a preferred partner with Sierra Pacific Credit Union, enabling members to join this credit union"

Calkins says that Sierra Pacific has the best money market rates in our town that she have been able to find. They also offer free notary services to account holders.

Local 533 members may apply on-line at SierraPacificFCU.org/533.

LOCAL 853

Solid new contracts

Fremont Universal: Business Rep Stu Helfer reports that his members who work at Fremont Universal Transportation just ratified a six-year contract extension that includes increases in wages, the Retirement Security Program (RSP), and protections against health and welfare increases throughout the contract term.

The 16 members got the contract details and voted to ratify the contract while outdoors with social distancing. The contract term starts on July 1, 2021.

Graniterock Construction: Members at Graniterock in San Jose and South San Francisco ratified a new three-year contract that, by bringing them into the Master Agreement, provides \$2.25 in wage increases. "We've only got 6 folks there now, but they're planning on hiring," Helfer says.

LOCAL 856

Hospital workers stand strong for a good contract



Eden Hospital workers' one-day strike leads to a good contract.

After long contentious negotiations, that included a one-day strike in December, front-line health care Teamsters Local 856 members at Sutter Health Eden Medical Center (EMC) in Castro Valley have ratified a new contract that increases wages and protects hard-fought contract language.

The 140 Teamsters 856 members at EMC include respiratory therapists, lab techs, imaging techs, and other health care professionals who have been on the front lines of the pandemic since its onset last spring.

“When negotiations began last year, instead of treating our members like the heroes they are, Sutter Eden Medical Center proposed draconian take-aways, including cuts to health benefits, retirement, funeral leave, and more,” said Matthew Mullany, lead negotiator.

In addition, Sutter Eden Medical Center’s lack of leadership at the upper management level resulted in chronic understaffing and shortages of PPE, which all led to patient care issues. Some workers even had to resort to using 3D printers to make their own PPE not provided by the hospital.

“Our whole department had become much more anxious since COVID-19 hit—it’s made our job

much more hazardous not only for us but also for our families,” said Jennifer Lemke, a respiratory care therapist, and shop steward. “It was devastating to be treated like this by Sutter,” Lemke, who

has worked at EMC for 33 years, said. In late fall, EMC Teamsters overwhelmingly rejected their employer’s contract offer, authorized a strike, and took to the streets in a demonstration of solidarity and strength.

“As Teamsters, we are willing to fight back when pushed. With the support of the labor community and full backing of local elected officials, Eden Medical Center Teamsters took the fight to Sutter and demonstrated they wouldn’t back down,” said Local 856 Principal Officer Peter Finn.

As a result, EMC came to its senses and agreed to return to the table and an agreement was secured.

“By standing together with strength and facing down a bully corporation, Eden Medical Center Teamsters won a fair contract that recognizes the hard work front-line Teamsters are doing to fight the pandemic,” said Finn.

“With dedication and solidarity we were able to take a stand and send a much-needed message to Sutter,” said Shop Steward and Medical Lab Technician Maleah Best. “Our patients are our priority and we continue to fight for them as well as ourselves,” she said.

LOCAL 2010

Cal State workers negotiate COVID-19 leave pay

Local 2010’s bargaining team for CSU workers negotiated another round of leave benefits for members to help maintain their jobs and livelihoods. Teamsters working at CSU campuses throughout California will now have access to 256 additional paid leave hours for use between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2021. This is twice the amount going to other CSU bargaining units that don’t have similar settlement agreements.

“Our union agreed that we are past the emergent phase of COVID-19 and that maintaining all CSU workers’ base pay is critical through the remainder of this pandemic,” said Skilled Trades Director Drew Scott. “This is about keeping people in their homes, with the power on and food on the table.”

Importantly, the agreement stipulates that Teamsters will not be required to use their accrued



Andrew Lowrimore CSU Bakersfield was grateful to save his sick leave after being exposed to COVID at work.

sick leave for time off work due to a work-related COVID-19 illness or exposure. The leave can be utilized when an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is seeking diagnosis; to care for an immediate family member with COVID or a child, if their school or daycare is closed, or due to a CalOSHA ruling.

“I just want to thank the bargaining team,” said Andrew Lowrimore, a Facilities Worker II at CSU Bakersfield. “You guys saved me 80 hours of sick time due to my COVID exposure at work. Thank you for all your hard work.”

Secretary-Treasurer Jason Rabinowitz said, “Our Bargaining Team did great work winning this agreement that will benefit our CSU members through the COVID surge and beyond. As long as we are facing this pandemic, Teamsters Local 2010 will continue to protect workers’ safety and jobs.”

LOCAL 315

Important new benefit

The 80 members at Napa Recycling and Waste Services recently ratified a new five-year contract with a valuable new benefit. For the first time in franchise history, the contract includes the Retirement Security Plan (RSP), fully covered by the employer.

“Knowing that they will now have medical coverage after retirement, an overwhelming majority of ecstatic members ratified this contract,” says Business Agent Dustin Baumbach. The contract also included increases in wages and pension as well as full maintenance of benefits for health and welfare.

LOCAL 431

Big arbitration win

Teamsters Local 431 recently won a significant arbitration involving construction along the Hwy 99 and Hwy 180 corridors. Along with Construction Chairman Stu Helfer and Business Agent Mike Pratt, Teamsters Union Local 431 prevailed against Security Paving. The arbitrator ruling for underpayment and trust fund contributions could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars. The award covered Kodiak Trucking’s performance of Teamster work when they blatantly chose to run non-union as well as underpay their employees.

“Since the grievance first began, Local 431 was able to get the affected employees more than \$130,000 in back wages on the Hwy 180 job and \$20,000 on the Madera job,” said Local 431 President Peter Nuñez.

LOCAL 517

Lots of new contracts

Local 517 has completed negotiations on several contracts and members have ratified them. Members at Land O Lakes in Tulare and at Ventura Coastal in Tipton now have new five-year contracts. The members at Bright Now Dental in Visalia and Myovich Trucking in Fresno have new three-year agreements. Those at the City of Farmersville Fire Department have a new one-year agreement.

“All of our negotiated contracts were a step forward for our members,” said Secretary-Treasurer Greg Landers. “By sticking together as one, we were able to establish significant gains for all contracts.”

California Teamsters Public Affairs Council

The California Teamsters are represented at the California Legislature and before state administrative agencies by the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council. Shane Gusman and Matt Broad are the Legislative Representatives and Stacey Swett is the Office Manager.

Per Capita Tax

All Teamsters affiliated with Joint Councils 7 and 42 support the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council through a per capita tax of 25 cents per member per month, from union dues. Thirty percent (30%) of this is set aside from which the Executive Committee makes campaign contributions (25% to the Political Action Committee and 5% to the Issues Political Action Committee).

Executive Committee

Rome Aloise, President of Joint Council 7 and Randy Cammack, President of Joint Council 42 serve as co-chairs of the Executive Committee, which supervises the staff of the Council.

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee shall consist of the Principal Officers of every local union represented by Joint Council 7 and Joint Council 42. The committee is responsible for the development of the Council's long-term political, legislative and education policy, screening candidates and making recommendations for endorsement for statewide offices.

Any questions about the California Teamsters Public Affairs Council may be addressed to California Teamsters Public Affairs Council, 1127 11th St., #512, Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: 916-446-0291, Fax: 916-446-9321. Email: stacey@teamsterctpac.org.



Biden administration ushers in change at the NLRB

by Sarah S. Kanbar

One of the first things the Biden Administration did after January 20 was to make sweeping changes to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the agency that oversees the conduct of work between unions and employers. On Day One, President Biden demanded the resignation and eventually terminated, the Trump NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb, whose term otherwise would not have ended until November. Robb was responsible for pushing an agenda that would do more damage to unions than any of his Republican-appointed predecessors.

For now, Robb has been replaced by Acting General Counsel Peter Sung Ohr, who is busy trying to fix the damage inflicted on the NLRB and unions by Trump.

Ohr issued Memorandum GC 21-02 that rescinded ten Trump-era memoranda intended to weaken union power. The Acting General Counsel's actions resulted in two particularly notable changes that will benefit unions immediately: the return to the traditional duty of fair representation standard and a halt on changes to *Beck* Notices and dues check-off revocations.

Duty of Fair Representation

Trump General Counsel Robb tried to paralyze unions

by reinventing the standard for the "duty of fair representation" of members by expanding what unions could be held liable for and by taking employers off the hook for breach of the duty of fair representation claims. Acting General Counsel Ohr has rescinded the Trump/Robb rules.

No increased detail in *Beck* notices or restrictions on revoking dues check-offs

Acting General Counsel Ohr also rescinded the Trump/Robb rules intended to make it much easier to become a "free rider," enjoying the rights of union membership without paying dues. With this change, the NLRB will no longer require unions to list the amount of a reduced "agency fee" in the *Beck* Notice provided to dues objectors and it

will not limit a union's ability to establish rules regarding the time period to submit a dues check-off revocation.

Additional changes from the NLRB are expected with President Biden's naming of Democratic appointee to the Board Lauren McFerren as the Chairwoman of the NLRB and with Republican appointee Board Member William Emanuel's term ending in August 2021.

Based on the firing of General Counsel Robb and the actions so far of Acting General Counsel Orr, Biden is shaping up to be the most union-friendly Democrat in the White House in the last 50 years.

Biden is shaping up to be the most union-friendly Democrat in the White House in the last 50 years.

Q&A about the COVID vaccine

How do I get the vaccine?

At press time, vaccinations are available to people over 65 years old, or people who work in education (teachers, school employees, school bus drivers) and in agriculture and the food industry, as well as people with underlying health issues. As more vaccines become available, the state will start lowering the age limit for vaccine eligibility.

To find out if you're eligible for vaccination, call your health care provider to schedule first and second doses, or register on MyTurn.ca.gov.

Can I still get sick even after I receive the vaccine?

Yes. While the vaccine has a high rate of success, no COVID-19 vaccine is currently 100 percent effective. While there is still a small chance you can contract COVID-19 even after vaccination, the vaccine will keep you from getting very sick, will keep you out of the ICU, and will save your life. Because of this, it is likely OK for small groups of vaccinated people to get together without protection in an "immunity bubble." However, wear your mask when you leave your house, even if you have been vaccinated fully.

Can I get someone else sick even after I've been vaccinated?

It's not yet 100% clear if people who are vaccinated can still transmit the disease to those who are not vaccinated. That's why it's critical for everyone to continue to maintain physical distance, wear masks, and wash hands until the U.S. has reached herd immunity. That could happen as soon as late summer or early fall if enough people get vaccinated.

With so many coronavirus variants, should I still get the vaccine now or should I wait for a variant vaccine?

Get vaccinated as soon as you are able. The vaccines we have now are still effective against the variants and we don't know when variant vaccines might be available. It is

possible that variant vaccines will be offered as a booster to the original vaccine in the future.

Should I still get the vaccine if I've already had COVID-19?

Yes. Evidence shows the variants can infect people who have already contracted COVID-19. Also, we are not sure how long immunity from natural infection will last (beyond a few months). Vaccine-induced immunity is more reliable. That's why it's more important than ever for those who have already had COVID-19 to be vaccinated, too.

How long will the COVID-19 vaccine protect me?

Immunization against COVID-19 will help protect you for the near future, but it's still not clear how long the protection will last. The current thinking is that immunity will last at least between 5 and 10 months, likely longer. As variants spread, booster shots may become increasingly necessary in certain geographic areas, or more widely.

When will life return to normal?

We don't know yet. Vaccine manufacturers are making and distributing millions of doses of the vaccines, but they won't all be ready at once. That's why certain high-risk groups are getting them first. While the vaccines are highly effective, we will only manage the pandemic if enough people take them locally – and globally.

Until then, it's important to remember the 4Ws: wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance, and watch the wind (pay attention to ventilation).

These answers were supplied by Dr. Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious disease specialist at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center to the group Our Health California. For more info, go to: ourhealthcalifornia.org.



IN MEMORIAM

LOCAL 70

Butler, Mike
Connolly, Howard
Diaz, Robert
Gomes, Edward
Gomez, Frances
Gutierrez, David
Rygg, Raymond

LOCAL 87

Anthes, Dick
Chavez, Arnulfo
Hernandez, Raymond
Mathis, James

LOCAL 137

Bowers, Veronica
Carver, Betsy
Nash, James

LOCAL 315

Babb, Steve
Britton, Nigel
Capuchino III, Alfred
Farias, Leslie
Guinta, Dennis
Johnston, James
Kelly, Chas
McEvoy, James
Olmstead, Frank
Phillips, Marcus
Saldivar, Isaac
Shives, Manny
Witting, Terry

LOCAL 350

Carrillo, Esmeralda
Colmenares, Alfonso
Romero, Ezequiel

LOCAL 386

Adams, Marshall
Ayon, Hugo
Cordova, Paul
Cuppett, Russell
Grijalva, John
Miller, Phillip

LOCAL 431

Borders, Gerald
Connley, Betty
D'Ambrosia, Guy
Licon, Robert
Munoz, Alejandro "Alex"
Olivares, Emiliano
Poblano, Salvado
Pratt, Al
Tamayo, Manuel
Woodard, Doug

LOCAL 517

Avila, Osvaldo
Compton, Cecil "Ed"
Herrera, Heriberto
Holguin, Jr., Frank
Martinez, Raymond
Tucker, Carl
Wyllie, Kris

LOCAL 665

Castaneda, Ramon
Cedillo, Oswaldo
Marte, Jesus
Melegrito, Arnel

LOCAL 853

Garcia, Alexis Pulido
Gomez, Ramon
Lopez-Estrada, Arick
Martinez, Javier
Padilla, Marie
Perry, Petra
Robinson, William Gareth
Strickland, Monique
Wall, Delbert
Warren, Jr., Rod

LOCAL 853 (GCC 583)

Clark, Stewart
Der Loo, Daniel
Fuentes, Roselyn
Gordillo, Mark
Kennedy, Charles
King, John
McConnell, Wayne
Maurine, Joseph
Meinzer, Rolf
Melchin, Anthony
Olewinski, George
Otteson, Hugo
Petersen, Gunther
Potter, Robert C.
Summeril, Steve
Tsui, Emma
Walker, Thelma
Werhane, Katherine

LOCAL 856

Ali, Zaved
Fowler, James
Wilson, Max

LOCAL 890

Ceja, Alicia
Zendejas, Maria del Carmen

LOCAL 896

Fierro, Eddie
Floro, Michael
Gomez, Eduardo
Kincaid, Steven
Munoz, Rudolf
Pletting, Donald
Rodriguez, Rosa
Rubio, Ashley
Ruvalcaba, Jesus
Torres, Juan
Vartanian, Fredrik
Walker, Louis
Zeuner, Tracy

LOCAL 912

Betancourt, Gloria
Cardenas, Cristobal
Garcia, Josefina
Jimenez, Pedro
Olivares, Ramon
Prieto, Jose
Rosales, Reynaldo
Urza, Jose

LOCAL 948

Carrasco, Angie
Carrasco, Raynaldo
Cervantez, Margarita
Elzy, Ryland
Gallamore, Vera

LOCAL 2010

Gonzalez, Paul
Telleria, Maritza

LOCAL 2785

Abrickas, Veronica
Canete, Robert
House, Richard

Gloria Betancourt, Local 912

Gloria Betancourt, a Teamsters Local 912 member and avid community activist in Watsonville, died



Gloria Betancourt

on February 13, 2021.

Gloria helped to rally her coworkers at a Watsonville cannery to go out on strike in 1985. Met with police brutality on their strike line, the majority-female strike committee bolstered the effort by organizing emergency food banks and financial relief funds for affected workers.

Through their effective strike, they not only secured the retirement and medical benefits that had been under threat during negotiations, but they also ushered in an era of reform in their union, amending rules that had previously excluded mostly immigrant seasonal workers from participating in union elections. They also got seniority lists re-structured to include women and Mexican workers, opening up opportunities to progress in higher-paid positions within their worksites. In 1988, Gloria and two other women ran for positions on Local 912's board. "Gloria was an important part of our Local's history," says Local 912 Secretary-Treasurer Steven Lua.

Gloria remained active in her community after retirement. She was a founding member of the Alianza, a non-profit which sponsors the bi-annual Fiestas Patrias event in Watsonville.

Gloria's memory will continue to inspire rank and file Latinx union members and women generally to assume leadership and advocacy roles.

Gloria's family set up a GoFundMe page, to help cover her funeral costs:
www.gofundme.com/f/gloria-betancourt

Glen Johns, Driver Instructor, NCTAT

Glen Johns, our respected Construction Driver Instructor of 16 years, retired from Northern California Teamsters Apprentice Training Trust (NCTAT). He died on December 8, 2020 at his home in Pioneer, CA.

Glen's experience in the Construction and Ready-Mix industries helped create and establish NCTAT's effectiveness as a training facility while he trained, mentored and prepared a large percentage of the Teamster members working under the Nor-Cal Construction Agreement to gain commercial driver's licenses and develop construction vehicle driving skills both on construction sites and at the NCTAT training facility.

Young UPS driver dies in truck accident

Rayland Elzy, Local 948

On Friday, February 5th, a tragic truck accident took the life of Local 948 member Rayland Elzy, Jr. He had been a UPS package driver out of the Visalia hub, and a Teamster since 2018.



Rayland Elzy

Elzy and his long-time girlfriend had just gotten engaged and were ready to start their future before this tragedy. "He was an energetic, young man who had a good heart, and had become a leader at

UPS," says Local 948 Secretary-Treasurer Luis Diaz.

A savings account has been set up to assist his young family—his fiance Arlene and 2-year-old son Rayland Jerome Elzy, III.

Donations can be made for them at Bank of America, 2502 W. Lark Ave. Visalia, CA 93291. Be sure to indicate the Rayland J. Elsy III/ Arlene Teresa Alexander Acct #3251-5182-2854.



YOUR LOCAL UNION PHONE NUMBERS

70 510-569-9317	431 559-486-5410	890 831-424-5743
87 661-327-8594	439 209-948-9592	896 707-644-8896
137 530-243-0232	517 559-627-9993	912 831-724-0683
150 916-392-7070	533 775-348-6060	948 559-625-1061
315 925-228-2246	665 415-728-0811	2010 510-845-2221
350 650-757-7290	853 510-895-8853	2785 415-467-0450
386 209-526-2755	856 650-635-0111	GCIU, DC 2 800-333-4388



COVID pandemic leads to relapse; causes increased need for alcohol and drug treatment

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, changes have occurred for many Americans in their relationship with alcohol and drugs. The pandemic posed unique challenges to those who use legal substances, those who also use illegal substances and those in recovery who endeavor not to use alcohol and other mind-altering drugs at all.

The ongoing stress, isolation, and uncertainty of COVID-19 have led to increased demand for mental health services across the United States for conditions like anxiety and depression. Studies show an increase in alcohol consumption, and misuse of opioids, stimulants and marijuana. **These survey results suggest that many people could be turning to and returning to drugs and alcohol to cope with pressures created by the coronavirus.**

Using drugs or alcohol to cope with life circumstances, such as stress or boredom, can become a habit that leads to a substance use disorder. When individuals use drugs or alcohol in an attempt to self-medicate and cope with symptoms of a mental health disorder, they can develop a co-occurring substance use disorder.

As early as April 2020, substance abuse treatment professionals were starting to see an increase in relapses. Experts voiced concerns about the secondary effects America was yet to see from COVID-19, namely, a rise in substance abuse throughout the pandemic and increased rates of addiction afterward due to the stress of isolation, boredom, decreased access to recovery resources, and unemployment. Anxiety, grief, isolation, financial worries, changes at home, school, and work, and an ongoing sense of uncertainty all posed threats to people with a substance use disorder as well as those at risk of developing one. CDC Director Robert Redfield, M.D. stated, “The disruption to daily life due to the COVID-19 pandemic has hit those with a substance use disorder hard. We need to take care of people suffering from unintended consequences.”

Preliminary evidence pointed to immediate increases in alcohol sales and demand for alcohol delivery. Alcohol sales rose by more than 55% in the first month of the shutdown. An analysis of 500,000 urine drug tests by Millennium Health, a national laboratory service, showed an increase of 32% for nonprescribed fentanyl, 20% for methamphetamine, and 10% for cocaine from mid-March through May 2020.

In May 2020, the Addiction Policy Forum sur-



veyed 1,079 people with substance abuse disorders nationwide, asking how they were being impacted by the pandemic. Twenty percent of the respondents reported that their own or a family member's substance use had increased since the start of the pandemic. In the same time period, it became apparent that drug overdose fatalities were increasing.

Overdose deaths were already increasing before the arrival of COVID-19, but an acceleration occurred during the pandemic. Synthetic opioids, primarily illegally manufactured fentanyl, appear to be primarily responsible for increases in overdose deaths, which increased by 38.4 percent in the 12-month period leading up to May 2020 over the previous year.

A November survey of 1,000 American adults asked about their use of drugs and alcohol in the past month. Some reported using substances for recreational reasons, to treat pain with a prescribed medication, or because it was part of their daily routine, such as having a drink with dinner.

Many respondents displayed higher rates of drug and alcohol use:

- 55% reported an increase in past-month alcohol consumption, with 18% reporting a significant increase. The highest increases were in states with the highest per capita COVID deaths.
- 36% reported an increase in illicit drug use. When asked why they decided to use substances within the last month:
 - 53% were trying to cope with stress
 - 39% were trying to relieve boredom
 - 32% were trying to cope with mental health symptoms, such as anxiety or depression

If more people are using alcohol and drugs in greater amounts, will more people need treatment or help before they lose their job?

With so many companies conducting alcohol and drug testing in cases of an on-the-job injury, Department of Transportation random testing, reasonable suspicion testing and pre-employment testing, some employees are at higher risk to be disciplined because of alcohol or drug use.

One expert is of the opinion, “With the COVID-19 pandemic seeming to begin to be decreasing in severity and more vaccinations being given, it is likely that people will resume more “normal” activities. Those who have been using increased amounts of alcohol and/or drugs to help cope are at risk for continuing use at the levels to which they have adjusted.”

Yes. It is expected that more people will need assistance for alcohol and drug problems.

If you, a family member, or a friend/co-worker might have an alcohol or drug problem or just want information about treatment, please call or have them call TAP or TARP at the numbers below.

TAP and TARP are available to Teamsters members and their covered dependents who are insured through participating Teamster Health and Welfare Trust Funds. Call TAP at 800-253-8326 or TARP at 800-522-8277.



LOCAL 350

Like father, like son in solid waste and recycling industry

“Watching my dad work as a garbage man since I was four years old and loving his job inspired me to follow in his footsteps,” says Pedro Ponce about his father, Toribio Ponce.

The Solid Waste and Recycling industry is one of those unique industries that can span generations within families—fathers working with sons, nephews/nieces working with uncles, cousins working with cousins. It becomes a proud family affair of hard-working men and women who help serve their community, build up the companies they work for, and empower the local union with its strong bond of family.

Pedro Ponce, a driver out of the San Jose unit of

California Waste Solutions, recalls those early memories with his father. “I remember when my father was working for GreenTeam and they allowed the drivers to take their kids. My dad would take me, and that’s when I knew what I wanted my career to be.”

Toribio, the dad, is a 25-year member who began his career in 1996 with GreenTeam of San Jose; he moved over to NorCal of San Jose in 2002, and in 2007 landed with California Waste Solutions.

“Growing up in a Teamster household gave my family and me the benefit of never having to worry about medical expenses, and I love the fact that now. As a Teamsters Local 350 member myself, I can give the same to my own family,” continues Pedro. “After



Toribio and Pedro Ponce work together at Cal Waste Solutions

many years of working on getting to where I’m at, I am proud to call my dad my co-worker, and have the opportunity to work by his side.”

Teamsters Local 350 thanks Pedro and Toribio Ponce for their diligence and years of service to company, community, and union.