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**THIRD DAY**  
**WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION**  
June 28, 2006

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...Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton addressed the delegation via video as follows:

**HONORABLE HILARY  
RODHAM CLINTON**  
U.S. Senate  
(D) New York

Greetings, everyone. I regret that I cannot be with you in Las Vegas, but I am there with you in spirit. First, let me commend and thank your General President Jim Hoffa. You know, the Teamsters, organized labor, and the working men and women of this country could have no better friend, advocate and leader than President Hoffa. He's always willing to stand up for what's right, and I am so proud to call him my partner and my friend.

You know, your whole team in Washington is truly outstanding, from President Hoffa and

General Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel, to Mike Mathis, Chuck Harple, and the entire Government Affairs team. And in New York, I am really lucky to have the one, the only, Gary LaBarbera, Ron Lucas, and John Bulgaro as my Teamster partners. They never let me lose sight of what we're fighting for in Washington, and that is your membership and your families and our future.

You know, we've accomplished a lot because we've stood up together for the values we share, you know, the values of hard work, responsibility and opportunity. These are the values that unions have long stood for and the values that have made our country strong, helping families reach the American Dream. But now more than ever we have to stand up and stick together. You know more than anyone that the working people of this country face real challenges every day,

struggling to afford rising mortgage payments, filling their gas tanks, trying to keep up with skyrocketing health care premiums and decreasing pension benefits.

Yet, in Washington we have an administration that looks to undermine working families. And to even make things worse, the NLRB now stands against labor instead of standing for workers' rights. The Department of Labor now mandates cumbersome reporting from all union officials as the administration neglects corporate irresponsibility.

You know, this administration even took aim at Social Security and Davis-Bacon, but working together we stopped them in their tracks. And on Homeland Security this administration has not made the right choices. Since 9/11 it's estimated we've spent a record \$24 billion on critical aviation security improvements. These were essential following the attacks on our country, but there are other threats that keep being ignored.

I know there are some rail workers in the crowd today, and they can tell you we've not spent anywhere near the amount needed for rail safety. Current estimates tell us we have spent less than \$1 billion on rail and transit security compared to the 24 billion we spend on aviation security. That's like less than a penny per passenger in public transportation security improvements.

We've got to do more. We know threats exist to our rail estimates. We've seen it in Madrid and London. We've seen the anguish and pain in the eyes of the family members on the platforms. It's the same pain I saw in the thousands of families that lost loved ones in the tragedy of the attacks of 9/11.

You know, it's time we stopped just crossing our fingers or praying that nothing happens. We've got to make the investments to secure our entire transportation system: Rails, ports, bridges, tunnels, highways, you name it. Yet this

administration avoids making these critical investments in our security.

Just a few months ago the Senate voted to add more than \$600 million in port security funding. This was a bipartisan effort in the Senate. But despite that, the White House and its Republican supporters in Congress eliminated that money from the final bill. So we still have a fight on our hands to protect our country, to protect our families. Right now in Washington I'm working with a bipartisan group of over 40 senators to pass a bill that includes \$2.3 billion for capital security improvements across our nation. That's S-2791. It would increase security training for rail workers on the front lines. It adds needed funds for tunnel and perimeter protection, surveillance and evacuation improvements. It adds over \$400 million more for essential maritime and port security.

I ask that you continue to work with me on S-2791 and help me stand up to this administration to get the resources we need, not only for our passengers but for all of our workers whether in ports, on the rails or elsewhere in our transportation system. Working together, we can stand up and fight for what we believe. We can win, we can have an economy that works again for everybody, that protects your rights as workers, that invests in solutions to the challenges we face in our health care system, our pension system, that comes up with an energy independence agenda, and provides real security to protect our families and our vital infrastructure.

These are the values that built the American middle class. These are the values that protected the rights of working people and made our country strong. So as you leave this convention with new ideas, goals and optimism, let's remain focused on the basic idea. Let's make certain that you count and your work counts.

I guess I hope that what happens in Las Vegas does not stay in Las Vegas. Take it on the road. I want to be your partner in building a better,

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

stronger, larger labor movement and making the Teamsters Union bigger and better than ever.

I, too, want to stand with my friends to build a better and stronger New York and America. Thank you for everything you do for one another and for this nation. Enjoy the convention, enjoy Las Vegas, and God bless you.

(Applause)

**THE ANNOUNCER:** Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome General Secretary-Treasurer C. Thomas Keegel and Teamsters General President, James P. Hoffa.

(Applause)

...The Convention was called to order at 2:04 p.m., General President Hoffa presiding.

**GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA:** Welcome back from lunch. Nice to see you.

Organizing the competition is critical if we're going to protect the gains that Teamsters have made everywhere at UPS and elsewhere. Fed Ex is our non-union competition and it's Fed Ex we must organize. I would like to call on Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 63 in Covina, California, Randy Cammack, and Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 952 in Orange, California, Pat Kelly, to make brief remarks with regard to the Fed Ex resolution.

(Applause)

#### FED EX

**AT-LARGE VICE PRESIDENT CAMMACK:** Good afternoon, brothers and sisters. It's a wonderful opportunity for Pat and I to be able to share with you some thoughts about FedEx today. As you know, FedEx, like Overnite — organizing it has a great impact on our UPS members and, what people don't realize, on our DHL.

The part of FedEx that we're going to talk about has an impact, also, on our freight members. As Tyson Johnson said, freight in our organization is the cornerstone, the building block of what we've become over the years.

So organizing in freight — a lot of people don't realize that FedEx has stepped into the freight industry by buying Viking and buying American — Watkins just recently and is becoming a major competitor with our folks. So organizing that is tremendously important.

You heard Bruce Raynor talk about the corporate greed of Fred Smith who owns FedEx and his \$150 million salary and \$150 million in stock options. Today you're going to have the opportunity to hear from FedEx Freight members, some of the ex-Viking folks, who are going to tell you what it's like to work for a company that is competing with our good companies, our good union companies, and the difference and how they feel and why they want to join the Teamsters Union and why it's important to them and to our existing members that we all participate.

The International Small Package Division has a coordinated effort to organize FedEx and FedEx Freight. I know Tyson Johnson and the General President are a hundred percent behind that to back up and shore up with the Overnite card-check agreement. And with this FedEx Freight initiative, we're going to see the direction the freight industry has been turned around 100 percent. I have every confidence as a large freight local that that's going to occur.

Now, they've opened a web site called FedEx.org, if you'd like to key into that sometime and take a look.

But I'd like to now introduce — well, one more thing that I almost forgot. FedEx had a policy for years. It was "People, service and profit." That was their company slogan. Over the last few years they've taken one element out of their slogan, that's people. Now it's simply service and profit, and that's why we have FedEx Freight potential members here today.

With that, I'd like to introduce Pat Kelly.

(Applause)

**DELEGATE PAT KELLY, IBT Local 952,**

Orange, CA: I want to — before I start talking about FedEx, I want to personally thank the entire General Executive Board and our great leadership with Jim Hoffa and Tom Keegel that supported our brothers and sisters, that supported the UFCW in that epic strike in Southern California.

(Applause)

There's one other group that I want to thank, are those that went before us, the retirees and the people that went before the retirees that all paved the way for us to have a decent standard of living. Most of us would have nothing without those people and without the Teamsters Union. So I think we always have to remember the retirees.

(Applause)

But listen to this. We've got some good people here.

(Applause)

We have the people in this room that make the difference, and a lot of them are rank and file, and you know it and we know it and the world needs to know it. We've all experienced the differences that have taken place in the United States since a lot of us joined the union. We're dealing with globalization. We're dealing with deregulation. We have deregulation, we have containerization, we have all these different things going on. And now we're turning the corner in the trucking industry, and there's a lot of brothers and sisters — and you're going to hear from two brothers here today — that are going to help us make the difference.

We have a situation going on where there's a lot of lawsuits against FedEx. There are activities that local unions are doing, there's some wins, there's changes with the Labor Board with respect to the status of owner drivers and the bullshit scam that the government has insisted on having owner drivers that can't organize. I think the clock is ticking and we're going to

move on down the road and we're going to organize up the entire trucking industry. Aren't we?

(Shouts of "Yes" from the delegation.)

Now, I want to say it's my privilege to introduce a couple of guys that I've known for about ten years, we've worked with them. They come out of Viking Freight, they're domiciled in Fontana, California. There are several hundred workers that live there. The first one I want to introduce is a 30-year man, 30-year man who started out a long time ago and he stepped up to the plate, and you're going to hear a little bit of his story. And with great pride I want to introduce you to Cliff Armstrong.

(Applause)

**BROTHER CLIFF ARMSTRONG**  
**FedEx Freight Worker, Fontana, CA**

Good afternoon. My name is Cliff Armstrong and I hope to be a proud member of the Teamsters soon. I work at FedEx Freight, and in October I'll have 30 years in. We tried to become Teamsters in the past when the company was called Viking Freight. I want to become a Teamster at FedEx so that I can have a more secure retirement and a better life.

Right now we have a pathetic pension plan at FedEx Freight. I'm currently out on temporary disability with a bad back. FedEx uses our last five years on the job to calculate our pension, and they use our lowest salary of the five years in the formula. Because I'm on disability, I'll be penalized. They will use this year as the basis of the pension. Plus I won't get a pension until I'm 65, and it will be about \$1,100 a month. We pay about 150 to 200 dollars a month for health care. Seniority means nothing at FedEx Freight. My father-in-law is an ex-Teamster and his pension is far superior. The next time I come to the convention I hope to be a fellow Teamster. Thank you.

(Applause)

**BROTHER JOSE NUNOZ**  
**FedEx Worker, Riverside, CA**

Good afternoon. It is an honor to be with the brothers and sisters of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. I am here to represent FedEx Freight and my co-workers. My name is Joe Nunoz, I've worked at FedEx for 19 years, and I join my co-workers in saying that I hope to be a proud Teamster soon.

Speaking of the unfair pension system, I have a co-worker with 34 years on the job who will receive a \$630 monthly pension when he's 65. And also we do not receive retiree health benefits. We do have a 401(k) plan, but that is no guarantee. Just look at the stock last month, I've lost \$11,000 on the stock, and it is not fair that I have to gamble my retirement.

Also, we have an unfair productivity system or work measurements, which means that if you get stuck at a customer's location, it can result in having your hours cut or loss of overtime, or it can lead to having your route abolished. We do have employee handbooks, but they never follow them. Every terminal has its own set of rules so you never know what can happen.

With a Teamsters contract your rights are spelled out. So speaking on behalf of my co-workers, we look forward to joining the Teamsters soon. Thank you, God bless you.

(Applause)

**COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRPERSON CAM-MACK:** Just one quick comment and I'll ask Brother Kelly to read the resolution. It takes lot of courage for Joe Nunoz and Cliff to come to our membership meetings and talk to our members. But for someone who works for a company like FedEx or UPS Freight, whether they're in freight or the regular package division, to have an employer know that you've gone and spoke at a membership meeting or that they've come here to the convention at great risk to them and their families — when the employer finds out that they were here — you're going to

see not only them but other workers today and tomorrow that have courage beyond belief that people that are attempting to organize have to go through.

So if you would — and if they haven't left the room, could you give them for their courage, and their brothers, the courage they have.

(Standing ovation)

**COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRPERSON**

**KELLY:** One thing I want to say, Joe is a 19-year man. So we have got the senior people on the city board here, and I'll tell you, it's really inspiring between what we're doing with these folks and the historic event that took place yesterday on card-check recognition. I'll tell you, Brother Johnson said it, Tyson said it, you know where freight is going, it's going with the Teamsters Union, and it's a proud day for me.

(Applause)

I'm going to read this resolution, but I'm going to tell you I'm hoarse because I've been talking to some of the delegates about not squandering our dues, if you know what I'm saying, so you figure that out.

All right. The Federal Express. WHEREAS, FedEx has built its —

**GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA:** Mike 6.

**DELEGATE MIKE STAPLETON, IBT Local 385, Orlando, FL:** Mr. Chairman, I'm an elected delegate from 385, a proud Hoffa-Keegel Unity Slate supporter.

I move that we suspend reading of the resolution — everyone has a copy of it — so that we can get into discussion on this resolution, and I'd like to reserve the right to discuss.

**GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA:** Is there a second to dispense with the reading?

Back to 6.

**DELEGATE DAVE BAKER, IBT Local 421, Dubuque, IA:** Proud delegate for the Hoffa-Keegel Slate. I'd like to second the motion. Also note that I'm from Tom Keegel's Joint Council 32. Thank you.

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay. All those in favor of dispensing with the reading, signify by saying aye.

Anybody opposed?

We're going to dispense with the reading. Now we're going to move on. Why don't you move the acceptance of the resolution.

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRPERSON KELLY: Yes, Patrick Kelly, Local 952. I'd like to move that we accept this motion to move on.

...The following resolution was discussed by the delegation.

#### FEDERAL EXPRESS

**WHEREAS**, FedEx has built its fortune on some of the most anti-worker policies of any major corporation; and

**WHEREAS**, company statistics show that FedEx's Express Division is also hurting workers by disproportionately placing minority workers in part-time and low-paying positions; and

**WHEREAS**, California workers are standing up to FedEx Express' discriminatory practices with a lawsuit that has won class-action status; and

**WHEREAS**, FedEx, through its Ground Division, cynically classifies 14,000 drivers as independent contractors, thus shifting medical, fuel, truck maintenance, workers' compensation, and social security costs onto workers as well as avoiding overtime pay and paid vacation; and

**WHEREAS**, independent contractor status prevents workers from forming unions; and

**WHEREAS**, manipulating job classifications threatens workers throughout the entire shipping industry, as it drives down wages and benefits; and

**WHEREAS**, workers in more than 20 states are fighting back against FedEx Ground's greedy practices, filing class-action lawsuits that demand they be classified as employees,

and seeking unfairly denied back wages; and

**WHEREAS**, these lawsuits are resulting in damaging findings, with a California court ruling that FedEx Ground drivers should, in fact, be employees; and

**WHEREAS**, FedEx still refuses to reclassify drivers as employees, and is hiring teams of lawyers to try to maintain the low-road business model;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Teamsters Union will stand alongside the FedEx workers and support their struggle for dignity and fairness at FedEx; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Teamsters Union and FedEx workers will work in solidarity to secure the rights of all FedEx employees to freely join the Teamsters Union without pressure or intimidation.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 6.

DELEGATE MIKE STAPLETON, IBT Local 385, Orlando, FL: Mr. Hoffa, I'd like to speak on the motion if I could.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay. Give us a second and go ahead.

DELEGATE STAPLETON: Okay. Mr. Hoffa, first I'd like to say I'd like to thank the International for the effort they've made adding an additional staffer for this FedEx top-to-bottom organization effort. We participated in the nationwide campaign of leafletting and contacting these FedEx ground drivers. The response was overwhelming from these drivers, they wanted to be Teamsters. I've never met a more anxious group. As a matter of fact, they scheduled their own meeting and invited us after that to an additional meeting.

I know that we can succeed in this campaign, and the reason I believe we can succeed in this campaign is what I've heard here for the past two days. I've seen the success with the national campaign with Menlo CSI where we got a National Agreement, and all I had to do and did

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

was go down, sign them up, we're 100 percent, and now they're members.

I saw a national effort, because I was part of that effort, with 1,200 police officers where the International sent scores of organizers down to assist us in that effort, and we were successful there.

I saw another effort on an International contract today where we got UPS to agree to early negotiations, and then another national contract, thanks to national efforts and union member participation, on USF Best Way and on UPS Freight where we have a neutrality agreement, and my members are out there, excited about this potential.

So I know — and I want everyone to support this resolution if you truly believe. I do not want your support if you believe, like the delegate from New York, the wanna be secretary-treasurer on another slate, as she did on Monday — and these transcripts — that brother said we should look at these, he's absolutely right — transcripts where she says on page 106 that — and I quote her, "We can't take on and organize the corporations and we can't mobilize and excite our members to win if we have a top-down structure."

What I've seen for the past two days has proven that to be a lie. We can do it, we've proven we can do it, and I've asked for her to respond. If everything we've seen up here today and the last day and the day before are all untruths and all fictions of our imagination; or she just has a negative attitude, then she needs to be out there at the poker table gambling and not gambling here with our members' future.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 4.

DELEGATE BOB HAHN, IBT Local 952, Orange County, CA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm president of Teamster Local 952 in Orange County, California, a proud Hoffa delegate. I rise today to speak on behalf of this resolution.

Brothers and sisters, for the last several months we've been handbilling the various FedEx sites in Orange County, and they have come back with an overwhelmingly positive response to our talking to them and handbilling them. The FedEx workers in California and other places across the nation are rising up to the FedEx's illegal practices. They are challenging us at every turn, and they will not stop until they have spent enough money to try to stop us from organizing these employees to become members. It won't be easy.

But I do believe, with the leadership of James Hoffa, Tom Keegel and the guidance from the Small Package Division, and with the cooperation of the locals around this nation, we will be successful.

How great it is that after 16 years of being a UPS employee, a part-time employee and later on as a package driver, and 16 years as being an elected official at Local 952, I can now walk into a UPS facility, and when I take the shots from management and sometimes even from our own members about what are you doing going to do about FedEx, I can say, "Let me tell you what I — let me tell you what we are going to do about FedEx and what we are doing about FedEx."

Brothers and sisters, I'm telling you, this campaign is alive. It has wheels, it has movement. If we keep our shoulders to the wheel we can make it happen. With all your support we will help these FedEx workers gain a voice they have never had before.

I thank you. Go Keegel, go Hoffa. And I move, Mr. Chairman, that we go to a vote in favor of this resolution. Thank you.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: I agree. I think we should go ahead and vote this. We've had a good discussion.

(Shouts of "Vote" from the delegation.)

All right. Let's go ahead and vote it. All those

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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in favor of the FedEx Resolution, signify by saying aye.

Anybody opposed?

It passes unanimously.

Okay. We have a brother at mike 2, go ahead.

DELEGATE LEONARD STOEHR, IBT Local 728, Atlanta, GA: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to request a point of personal privilege.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Go ahead.

DELEGATE STOEHR: Mr. Chairman, I'm an ABF road driver. Mr. Chairman, as you know, we've had a lot of slander and assaults on each other's characters flying back and forth in here this week. It seems to me that personal attacks should be kept outside of this convention hall, and I think all of my brothers and sisters agree with me on that.

(Shouts from the delegation.)

Inside this hall we should all treat each other as brothers and sisters.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to request that we all do union business and discuss proposals on their merits as unions brothers and sisters —

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: All right. Keep it down.

DELEGATE STOEHR: — without any further attacks. I think our brothers and sisters deserve no less. Thank you very much.

#### DHL

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you.

(Shouts from the delegation.)

Okay. We're going to move on here.

You know that multinational corporations are successfully pitting workers against workers across the globe, and that's a major reason why we are having to spend so much time and energy holding on to what we've won over the last half century. To combat this, we are taking our fight global. Many of our corporations have contacts with many people that have organized

multinational corporations. DHL is a primary example of this. Working with our international labor partners we are confronting the multinationals and leveling the playing field as we organize and bargain with them.

Here now is a short news video story about organizing successfully with DHL workers in Youngstown, Ohio.

...A video presentation regarding DHL was shown to the delegation.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: You know DHL has been one of our biggest efforts that we've made, and we're very proud of the success we've had both with regard to organizing gateways and with regard to organizing ICs across the country. To tell us more about the story, please welcome DHL worker Al Cetina.

(Applause)

#### BROTHER AL CETINA IBT Local 986

Thank you very much. I am a DHL legacy worker and have been working with DHL for 23 years at the Los Angeles gateway office. I'm proud to say that I'm a Teamster and a shop steward now.

(Applause)

I have the pride and the dignity that I deserve as a Teamster. The 2700 DHL legacy couriers and 500 customer service representatives were non-union. They were all given pink slips and let go. Why? Because they had no protection. When Deutsche Post bought DHL and brought Airborne in, their couriers had the Teamsters Union's protection with a contract and they weren't fired. As a result, the DHL couriers were let go. We saw the writing on the wall, and we knew that we needed security and a contract.

We didn't know what the Teamsters offered but realized after what happened, what the strength of the union was all about. I educated myself about the Teamsters and what they



offered and how to bring in the union into Los Angeles Gateway. I fought hard to bring the Teamsters in so that we could secure our future with the union.

Jim Hoffa went to Germany and protected the Airborne members' jobs and made sure that Deutsche Post would not interfere with the organizing efforts. New York was the first gateway to unionize and we followed soon.

Without the protection of the Teamsters, we may have ended up just like the 1700 couriers that lost their jobs. We didn't want to experience the layoffs that DHL couriers did. It wasn't easy, but we did it.

I am proud to walk across the warehouse knowing that I have the protection of a contract with job security and better pay. For 20 years I walked through that warehouse with no security and no protection. And now I know that the Teamsters Union will always be there for me.

(Applause)

I'd like to thank my DHL friend Stefan Dulac — together we made it happen — 986, Bill Percy; the great leadership of Chris Griswold; the man who taught me dignity and the best organizer in the business, Don Thornsburg.

(Applause)

The IBT's best, Brad Slawson, Sr., a great negotiator who showed me how to make a company attorney cry, Chuck Knight.

(Applause)

Our Freight Director, Tyson Johnson; and the man himself, our General President, Jim Hoffa. Thank you and God bless the Teamsters.

(Standing ovation)

### **SISTER SUE McCULLEY IBT Local 377**

Good afternoon, brothers and sisters, and all honored guests. My name is Sue McCulley from Local 377 in Youngstown, Ohio, that the piece was just about at CNN.

To me dignity on the job was the most impor-

tant thing that we were fighting for for our negotiations. The original ICC that I worked for, they forced us to work very long hours, like you heard Rick say, sometimes 60, 65 hours with straight time, no paid holidays. Our wages were extremely low, extremely substandard. There was rampant favoritism. Some people got paid for not even showing up for work. They got everything you could imagine if you were a friend of the company, of the owner.

If you had to get a tow in the winter or if your truck broke down, you were told to pay it yourself. And if they had to tow you, there was a good chance that you would be fired.

Paychecks bounced. If you didn't get to the bank first on Friday, you were out of luck.

They collected payments for non-existing health care. People were paying and paying for health care and then when they went to the hospitals, they didn't have it because they were collecting their money and not paying for anything.

I was a Teamster for 27 years before working at DHL, and I immediately realized what having the Teamsters Union backing these workers could mean. I always kind of took for granted my union affiliation. I always had stepped into jobs where it was already organized. I just took it as a matter of fact, this is how you live. When I came to work here, it was like a slap in the face to me, like a dose of reality.

We overwhelmingly voted for the Teamsters in September of 2005. The vote was 42 to 1.

(Applause)

And since the Teamsters have been our representatives, the original ICC has been replaced. They came in, they bought us all new vans, new dollies for — because you had to buy your own dolly before. They got them for all the trucks. So safety right now is not an issue.

We approved our contract just June 5th of 2006. We secured raises across the board, overtime including Saturdays, affordable health care. The Teamsters have changed everything.

We have a good working relationship with this ICC between the union and the company. They bargained in good faith. We now have very open lines of communication.

And I believe with all my heart that because we have so many fellow Teamsters behind us, that we now have the dignity in the workplace. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

**SCOTT WILLIAMS**  
**ABX Aircraft Mechanic**

Good afternoon. My name is Scott Williams. I'm an aircraft mechanic at ABX Air, the company formerly known as Airborne Express whose major function is to fly freight for DHL across North America. I've been there for 13 years now, I've been a union organizer there for 13 years now.

I stand here before you today on behalf of over 1200 mechanics and related who hopefully will soon be joining your ranks as Teamsters brothers and sisters.

(Applause)

Let me back up just a minute there. I blew that. Not hopefully, who I know will soon be joining you as brothers and sisters.

(Applause)

There are several reasons we need IBT representation at ABX; but since I don't have a whole lot of time to list all of them, I will just go over a few that affect all of us that we could definitely resolve with a Teamster contract.

First, we do not like the fact that ABX can and does change policies at any time that affect our daily lives and our futures without any input from us, sometimes without even informing us the change has been made. Along the same lines, ABX treats our benefits with the same disregard. About six years ago they made a major change to our retirement plan. They call it "Enhancement 2000," where they made it virtually impossible for any of us to retire before the

age of 67 without taking a major penalty on our pension each year.

Also, we now receive no retirement benefits as far as medical benefits go, and they also quit contributing to our profit sharing at the same time. All, of course, without our say.

Favoritism is a major concern that affects all of our mechanics. Seeing the same faces get profitable out-base recovery missions on our aircraft and going overseas to overlook jobs over there, it gets very old seeing the same people leave all the time on these jobs.

Since the company can change policies at a whim, we are all very concerned that there is no clear, defined layoff policy and no seniority guarantees as we currently have about three different seniorities that the company has within it.

A major buzzword that has come to be of concern to many of us is outsourcing, a favorite cost-cutting measure of just about every airline in the U.S. and the downfall of AMF at Northwest.

Last, but certainly not least, is our pay. While certainly not the worst in the industry, we are far behind what they call the industry standard that our CEO enjoys.

For all of you who hadn't heard of our campaign until now, I would just like to take a few more minutes to let you know where it stands. A little over a year ago I contacted the Airline Division, requested union cards so we could do a drive the old-fashioned way. Shortly thereafter, I received my first house call, one of the first with our company, with Greg Chockley, who explained to me — Greg Chockley who was the same man who just made the house call on the video — who explained to me the way the IBT ran their drives now and we got the ball rolling from there.

Since that time, we have had over 50 organizers from locals all over Ohio and the country helping us with our effort. I have to say that the IBT Organizing Department from Jeff Farmer

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

and everyone else in it is absolutely topnotch. There is not a more friendly, knowledgeable or professional staff anywhere. They have invested thousands of hours knocking on doors, educating and listening to my co-workers, compiling lists and helping us set up a committee so that we may join you as Teamsters and enjoy all the benefits of a Teamster contract.

Through their effort and all the support we have received from the Ohio Conference of Teamsters, including Roger Insprucker, New York Locals 295 and 851, UPS Local 2727, and our own pilots' Local 1224, I just want to thank all of you.

From where we organizers were at ABX six years ago sitting in a friend's garage stuffing envelopes with union cards, to a streamlined professional campaign that I know we will very soon win, all I can say is thank you on behalf of all of my brothers and sisters at ABX.

(Standing ovation)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you, Al, Sue and Scott. Congratulations on your impressive victories.

German-based DHL is the largest parcel post delivery company in the world. It has sales of over \$60 billion a year and growing and making tremendous profits across the country. DHL is a big, big company.

In the United States, its business model is based on the employment of so-called independent contractors to do their deliveries. That makes organizing very difficult, but it hasn't stopped us, and we're winning organizing campaigns at DHL.

Let's take a look at a video about DHL and see how they operate.

...A video presentation regarding DHL was shown to the delegation.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you. I call on the President of Teamsters Local 295, Lou Calemene, to read the resolution called

“Organizing DHL.” That's No. 26 on page 44 of your resolution book.

DELEGATE LOU CALEMINE, IBT Local 295, Valley Stream, NY: Hello, Jim, can I have a moment before I read?

Hello, brothers and sisters. Excuse me for my voice but I've been serenading our brothers up there.

I'm the principal officer and President of Local 295, a proud elected delegate supporting Hoffa and Keegel. Since 19 — no, since 2003, we've been involved with trying to organize the DHL workers in the New York area. It just didn't happen easily. It took all the 295 members, the 851 members, and it took the help and the guidance of President Hoffa, Mr. Keegel, IBT staff, Tom Cornelias from 851, president of Joint Council 16, Gary LaBarbera, Danny Kane, Sr., Danny Kane, Jr., and a special help from Local 804, Brother Howie Redmond, to get this done.

(Applause)

It was with their cooperation.

(Applause)

It's with that whole cooperation from the IBT down to here that this is able to be done. And to watch what it's done for these workers is a great joy for me and all the other 295 workers. We need to do a lot more.

Since we've organized those 350 workers at the gateway, other gateways followed. That first group at the JFK gateway are now in Wilmington, Ohio, as volunteers helping organize the DHL hub with about five to six thousand non-union workers. That's the whole key. That's success. They're proud Teamsters now, and they're out there sacrificing all the time to go out there and continue organizing their fellow workers in DHL.

(Applause)

Over the three years trying to organize and help these workers out, I've got to know them. They want to be unionized. More importantly,

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

they want to be Teamsters. We need to help them. We need to — I'm going to ask you to look at this resolution — if I have to read it — and pass this along to help these workers. And you might have to hear it.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 2.

DELEGATE DAVE JACOBSEN, IBT Local 174, Tuckwila, WA: Mr. Chairman, I'm a proud Hoffa-Keegel supporter. I'd move to have a motion to dispense the reading. I'd like to make comments on this resolution.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: All right. Do we have a second? Mike 2.

DELEGATE ROBERT E. BERNAT, IBT Local 377, Youngstown, OH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm the Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 377 and I would second that motion.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: All right. We've got a motion and second to dispense with the reading. We're also saving Lou's voice. Save his voice.

Okay. You wanted to speak on it. Go ahead, Brother.

DELEGATE BERNAT: Yes, Mr. Hoffa. I'm a shop steward for DHL and I've been a Teamster member for 16 years. DHL, we would like to have a contract, Master Freight Agreement, across the country from coast to coast to be union just like UPS.

(Applause)

I ask for this resolution to pass overwhelmingly, and I would like to say that we are proud Hoffa supporters, and we beat TDU out of Local 174 in Seattle, Washington. Yeah!

(Standing ovation)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay. Very good. Let's move on here.

Okay. We have got a motion and a second to dispense with the reading. All those in favor of dispensing with the reading, signify by saying aye.

Anybody wants to hear it?

None being heard, okay. We've dispensed with the reading, and now we're going to move the resolution.

Okay. 2.

DELEGATE BERNAT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to call the question.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Call the question. Very good. Okay, we're going to call the question. We have a motion and a second.

Mike 2 for the second.

DELEGATE CHRIS GRISWOLD, IBT Local 986, South El Monte, CA: Mr. Chairman, I'm Vice President of Local 986, a proud Hoffa delegate. I'd like to second the motion to adopt the resolution.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay. We have a motion and a second of the DHL resolution. All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

Anybody opposed?

It's a great resolution; it is passed. Thank you very much. Thank you, Lou, for your help and all the work you've done on DHL.

DELEGATE LOU CALEMINE, IBT Local 295, Valley Stream, NY: Thank you, Jim.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: You and Tom have been great, an inspiration to us all.

(Applause)

Mike 3.

DELEGATE SANDY POPE, IBT Local 805, Long Island City, NY: Mr. Chairman, I guess I should be flattered that people have asked me to speak so many times.

(Shouts from the delegation.)

Do you want to hear me or not? You asked me three times, four times.

(Shouts from the delegation.)

Okay. We shouldn't be wasting our time dealing with personal attacks, but I'm not big on being used as a punching bag. First, you get someone to lie and slander me saying I cut my union's pension when I was the only trustee to vote against cutting benefits in our local.

Then you make a big deal over what I said

about a nomination form and pretend you're upset. Walt, were you planning to vote for Millie?

Then you wait until you know I left the room to get up and trash me again. Your whips all knew because they watch where I go all the time. You may notice — I had four people in two minutes speak against me.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Let her talk, please.

DELEGATE POPE: It's getting pretty juvenile. Let's try debating the difficult issues facing our union instead of personal attacks.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Let the sister talk.

DELEGATE POPE: The Election Officer had the paperwork; it was late, so I won't apologize, no. The sister up there said something about taking something out of your purses. Well, I'm addressing it to all the delegates. I think we should be debating the issues and we should have an election and let's get on with it. Thank you.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you. Let's move on.

Our next guest speaker is somebody very, very special to the Teamsters. He comes to us from Germany. I'm the General President of the Teamsters Union, and he's the General President of a great union called Ver.di in Germany. He has done a great job to help us out. He's got a huge union like we do. I want you to know that when we started organizing DHL, he was an ally to us. When we needed help, and we wanted to talk about how do we organize DHL here in the United States, it was Rolf Buttner who helped us out and has been tireless in helping the Teamsters.

He is a very special friend. He's come as our guest from Germany. We really want to hear your message. Let's hear it for Rolf Buttner. Thank you so much for being here.

(Standing ovation)

**ROLF BUTTNER**

**Postal & Logistics Division Director**

**Ver.di**

Dear brothers, dear friends, dear delegates of the 27th Convention of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. It's a great honor today at the 27th Convention to bring my greetings. I am sending you the best wishes from the international guests at this convention. They are from Australia, from El Salvador, from France, Great Britain, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, and from the Global Union Federation, International Transport Worker Federation, Union Network International, International Union of Food Workers, and Public Service International. Thank you very much to be here in this convention.

(Applause)

I send also the best wishes of the National Executive Board and of the 2.5 million members of the German United Service Union, Ver.di.

I know I speak on behalf of all our members and friends of the Teamsters when I say thank you to General President Jim Hoffa and General Secretary Tom Keegel to be here to this very important convention. And I say thank you for your help and thank you for your solidarity. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

Conventions like this are very important. They are there to unite everybody to set the future of the union work on a secure foundation. They are there to determine jointly the right way to a good future for our members and their families.

Dear General President Hoffa and brothers and sisters and friends, I would like to direct your attention to some things that are in flux. By that, I mean the economic developments in the globalized world. Deregulation and globalization are the terms that face us daily at our work. The changes caused by them happen more and

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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more in the sectors we represent: The postal, the courier, express, and package sector, as well as the freight, logistics and transport sector.

The changes are driven by technological progress in the IT sector. They are driven by lower trade barriers and increasing international flow of goods and production change. The global division of labor continues and, therefore, demand is growing for the service of the big logistic companies, the couriers, the integrators and their international network.

These developments bring opportunities and risk for our sector. Globalization also means, therefore, opportunities and risks for our members. We trade unions have to make sure that the interests of our members are not run over. Our job is to make sure that workers are not pitted against each other by the global division of labor. It's our job to make sure that the winner of the international competition is not the one who offers the worse working conditions, dear friends.

(Applause)

This year, brothers and sisters, cannot become the dominating ideology. We are fighting for fairness and social justice. We don't want bad jobs, we want good jobs. They're what we fight globally, and we fight it together, brothers and sisters.

(Applause)

We say competition is okay, but it must be fair. We want competition for the best product, and we want the best quality. We don't compete for the worst paid and the most exploited workers, brothers and sisters.

(Applause)

That's why we have to confront global company managers with a global united trade union front. This is our work.

(Standing ovation)

Dear brothers and sisters, my union, Ver.di, organized the service sector in Germany. This is a broad field: Finance, retail, public sector,

postal service, logistics, transportation, health care, telecommunication and media, all these are included. Ver.di has about 2.5 million members and is the largest union in Germany. People with more than a thousand different jobs are organized in Ver.di that gives us power and strength. I, myself, I am responsible for the Postal Courier, Express Parcel, Transport and Logistic Division.

In this international industry, a good and trustworthy cooperation has developed between Ver.di and the Teamsters over the last years. And for this, I want to thank you, General President Jim Hoffa, and thank you, General Treasurer Tom Keegel. Thank you for the international solidarity.

(Applause)

Colleagues from the Teamsters came to visit Germany. One of the big logistic firms, DHL, is a German corporation and is organized by Ver.di in Germany. We are 90-percent members in this company.

It was great that a delegation of Teamsters have attended two annual meetings of Duetsche Post WorldNet, the parent company of DHL. It was great that we used this opportunity to exchange your experiences, especially as they concern union rights in both of our countries.

I, too, had an opportunity to visit colleagues at the DHL hub in Wilmington, Ohio. I was able to hear from colleagues about their work conditions and learn about the union work there. I was able to learn about the great work Teamsters Local 1224 does for the pilots. I was able to hear about how wonderfully they receive support from the International in Washington, D.C.

This cooperation, the cooperation between Ver.di and the Teamsters, is very good and it is very important. And I say to you, we want the German company DHL to pay fair wages in the United States. We support you on this, and we will fight and pursue this together hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder.

(Applause)

Based on our cooperation, new energy can develop. We should become pacesetters for trade union work that goes over national borders, jointly under the umbrella of the Global Union Federations UNI and ITF, and our cooperation bears fruit. Together with UNI and ITF we have created an integrated network. It brings unions together that represent employers of the Big Four, which are UPS, DHL, FedEx and TNT. This network shall help us to develop joint strategies on a global scale.

The practical outcome is a joint action day this fall. On November 9, 2006, there will be actions for workers right at the four and the greatest locations around the world. We want all job sites for the Big Four — DHL, UPS, FedEx and TNT — to respect union rights. We want collective bargaining agreement with these companies all over the world; that is our mission.

(Applause)

Dear colleagues, I know that your General President, Jim Hoffa, and I agree when we stand together we can do a lot for our members, here and across the globe. We move forward together and concretely. We want from Ver.di in Germany — we want Teamster members to get collective bargaining agreements from coast to coast at DHL in the United States, and we want the DHL management to fairly deal with the employees and their union. We promise to support you in this struggle. This is where we fight in Germany with you together, dear friends.

(Applause)

Related to this, under the umbrella of ITF and UNI we have discussed a joint plan to organize the large global air hubs. The most simple way is that the union at the company headquarters takes the lead. For UPS and FedEx, that is the Teamsters as the relevant union in the United States. For TNT, our colleagues in the Netherlands and Australia. For DHL, Ver.di in Germany.

Regarding DHL, we have initiated a project that we will try everything to organize the three key DHL air hubs in America, Asia and Europe; Wilmington, Ohio, here in the U.S.; Hong Kong in Asia; and Leipzig in Germany. And together we want to organize Wilmington. And you have my sympathy to organize the pilots and mechanics and the workers in the centers, and we make it together and I bring you my help for this very important work.

(Standing ovation)

And also we learn from the Teamsters, we make an organization campaign in Leipzig, the hub from DHL in Germany. And in the morning time I have a telephone call with our friends in Germany, and I tell you today 95 percent of the workers in Leipzig in Germany by DHL are members of our union today. We are very proud of this. Thank you.

(Applause)

And after this Congress we go to Hong Kong and we want to organize the DHL people — the DHL workers in Hong Kong.

And this fall or next spring we plan a DHL airport conference in Germany, and we want to invite colleagues from the Teamsters. And dear brothers and sisters, I remember the words of a delegate at the last year's UNI Congress in Chicago — he said to all of us, "No matter what company we work, solidarity is the foundation of our basic value and our only chance." And I want to add, colleagues, solidarity gives us strength, and this strength, this energy, we need to strive for a just world, for a life in peace, freedom and social justice.

(Applause)

Dear brothers and sisters, you the participants of this 27th Congress, you have the job to set the course for the future for your union.

And Jim and Tom, when the Teamsters work with Ver.di together, nothing is impossible. And you see, dear friends, this was my first speech in my life in English. Nothing is impossible when unions work together.

(Standing ovation)

And I have a dream tonight, but my dream is in German.

(Laughter)

From this Congress, from this convention, we make history in international solidarity, we build a global union. Together we move forward, hand in hand.

I'm proud that Teamsters and Ver.di work together. For this challenge, for all the important talks ahead of you, I wish you strength and success. You can be proud to be a member of such a great union.

I wish you a successful convention and thank you for your attention. And I say solidarity is our strength. Keep the union strength. We work together. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you, Rolf.

Isn't he great? I tell you, he's been a big help to us, really opening up a lot of doors that we didn't have when we were organizing.

I'd like to take the opportunity next to welcome other international guests who have traveled from far away as Australia and South Africa to be with us.

Let's welcome them with a big round of applause.

(Applause)

Thank you for joining us in our fight.

### **SCHOOL BUS CAMPAIGN**

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Now, to tell us about a promising international campaign to drive up standards for the school bus operators, we have Rick Middleton, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 572 in Carson, California. Let's hear it, Rick.

#### **DELEGATE RICK MIDDLETON IBT Local 572, Carson, CA**

Good afternoon. Thank you, General President

Hoffa. The Teamsters are committed to running an industry-wide campaign to organize workers in the private school bus industry. We are working with SEIU and the T&G, our brother transport union in the United Kingdom, to drive up the wages, the working conditions for the tens of thousands of school bus drivers and bus aides.

We have targeted First Student as the first company we will organize in this industry. We are beginning a full, strategic campaign to bear on this industry. We will organize on the ground and we will use our political relationships in a global outreach.

General President Hoffa has met with the First Student CEO President Carey Paster, last winter, and he refused to give an inch when it came to the freedom of bus drivers and the intent to form a union. Now we intend to show them the full power of our union.

We have already had success. I am happy to report that in the past couple of months we won elections at First Student in Iowa City and in Baltimore.

(Applause)

But this is just the beginning. We intend to keep beating First Student until it treats school bus drivers and aides and their union right. And after that, we will go on to the next big private bus companies, Durham and Laidlaw.

(Applause)

And until we have organized this core Teamster industry, the private school bus industry is watching our efforts carefully. We are going to hit them hard so that the school bus drivers and aides win the respect and dignity that they deserve. Thank you.

Now, please welcome Rodney Winbush and Denise Taylor from First Student in Baltimore.

(Applause)

#### **BROTHER RODNEY WINBUSH First Student, Baltimore, MD**

Again, my name is Rodney Winbush, and this



### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

is my co-worker Denise Taylor. We're attendants at First Student in Baltimore.

I want to tell you a story that happened to my co-worker Denise. On May 4th of this year, Destiny, Denise's eight year-old granddaughter, actually went down to the basement to find her grandmother lying there in a diabetic coma hardly breathing, and little Destiny called 911. Denise is a diabetic and she'd been forced to choose between her insulin or supporting herself financially.

First Student is a global company that generates billions of dollars in profits, yet it does not even cover the most basic parts of health care.

On May 31st of this year, Denise Taylor was fired for her union activities. Can you believe that? The fake reason that they give her for termination was because of her absence from work while she was recovering in the hospital.

Now, me, I have epilepsy. In April I had my first seizure that I've had in two years. My medications alone cost me upwards of a thousand dollars a month out of pocket. And First Student doesn't even have a prescription plan that covers this. That's awful.

First Student hired me as an attendant, knowing of my medical condition, but then fired me because of my union activities. But they said, they claimed it was due to my health condition.

On June 1st, I'm proud to announce that we won our election after we voted "yes" for the Teamsters.

(Applause)

And the numbers were outstanding, 145 to 96. First Student fought tooth and nail against us. They attached union letters to our paychecks. They threatened to close down and fire us. They put up a wall of shame and tried to bribe workers. They held captive-audience meetings and individual one-on-one meetings, but it didn't work. We were unbeatable. The more they said no, the more we said yes.

We held together as a Teamsters family. So I

want to thank you, Teamsters, for backing us through the hard times, 100 percent — no, not 100 percent — 500 percent. Thank you for backing us up.

(Applause)

We have learned so much working on this campaign from all who had a part, and the experience was very exhilarating. Thank you from all the Teamsters from Iowa, Pennsylvania, California, Georgia, Illinois, South Carolina, Florida and Arizona, all who came to help us. And most of all, thank you Local 570 in Baltimore, the Secretary-Treasurer, Sean Cedenio; Business Agents Mo Jackson, Rich Brown and Bob Brown, thank you all for all your support.

Next, Denise and I, we're going to be a part of a campaign to do whatever it takes to make First Student respect its workers. We will do whatever it takes to get the job done. So continue to join us.

In the immortal words of our honored Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel —

(Rodney Winbush and Denise Taylor jointly responded: "First Student kiss our asses.")

(Standing ovation)

BROTHER MIDDLETON: Thank you. And now please welcome Allison Heady and Michelle Quick from First Student in Iowa City.

(Applause)

#### **SISTER ALLISON HEADY First Student, Iowa City, IA**

Good afternoon. I have been a bus driver at the Iowa City First Student location for four years now, and I have an excellent record there as a safe driver, my kids love me, and I've always had decent working relationships with all of the other staff. I was, however, also one of the organizing committee members from the very start because of the many things that I've witnessed over those four years working for the company.

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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Some of the things that I have witnessed happened to my co-workers include buses going unrepaired because management wanted to manufacture a reason to eliminate that driver, such as leaving a speedometer unfixed so that driver might unwittingly speed too much and get a ticket. That's a terminable offense.

I've also seen a corrupt and arcane pay schedule screw my co-workers out of money they were owed. One co-worker was denied rightful overtime; another, a native Columbian, was told that she was earning half what she should have been because — and I quote my manager — her English wasn't that good.

Of our few benefits, I've also seen them go unmentioned, including our 401(k) plan and the flu shot reimbursements.

I've seen corporate discipline structures repeatedly fail my employees. One of our managers was terminated, only after the company finally settled ten outstanding EEOC complaints against him, most of which involved sexual harassment.

Another manager was transferred, not terminated, after our school board got involved with our private subcontracting school bus company and told them they had to get rid of him. These are the reasons we organized, and there are many others that I can't go into because of the time constraints.

Essentially we were tired of getting the crap kicked out of us with steel-toed boots and having no way to turn around and give it back to them.

These are the conditions that led to us striking prior to having representation, prior to even filing for the NLRB election, and they are damn sure the reasons that we won that election. Thank you.

(Applause)

**SISTER MICHELLE QUICK**  
**First Student, Iowa City, IA**

Hi, we still have a battle before us to negoti-

ate, but now we have all our brothers and sisters behind us, so we're sure that something good is going to happen. So the old adage says, "All it takes is one good person to do nothing for corruption to spread." Well, we're changing that adage to, "It takes all of us to triumph in order to give corruption a black eye." So —

(Applause)

Now, there are a few of us that would like to take the "freedom campaign" on the road and free every First Student location from tyranny and make them Teamsters. Personally, I'd like to send First Student back to Britain, where British workers have told First Student and their other companies that they don't want to be treated like the American workers. So I know we're going to do that with your support. Thank you.

(Applause)

**BROTHER MIDDLETON:** As you have heard about Denise Taylor who was wrongly terminated while she was in the hospital, as Rodney said, she was there recovering and was terminated.

In addition, our Brother Freddie Sanchez from the BLET on his way to this convention was killed in a car accident. Brother Sanchez was a local chairman of the ATSF Committee on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. For that, I ask General President Hoffa — I think you have something to bring to the delegation.

**GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA:** I certainly do, Rick. You know, I had the great opportunity to go to Baltimore to be part of that First Student organizing campaign where Denise Taylor was there, and I heard about the plight of how she had this attack and now she's fired. I also heard the tragic story about Fred Sanchez dying on the way here.

What I'd like to do is, I'd like to pass the hat here amongst all the people here, all the brothers and delegates. What I'm talking about is we're going to pass — I really don't want any locals coming up or anything like that. But what

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

I'd like to do, is everybody dig into your pocket. We're going to have baskets passed by the sergeants-at-arms. You know, throw in some money there, and we're going to raise enough money out of 1,800 delegates here to really make a difference. We're going to give that money to take care of Denise Taylor. She's got a lot of medical bills, she has her child Destiny. And certainly the Fred Sanchez family must be in complete disarray right now. The money is going to mean a lot to you and we're going to do that for you.

So let's sure we do. Dig deep, let's give them money, throw in a 20, throw in whatever you've got. Let's do it, let's make it happen, let's pass those buckets. We're going to make sure we show them the Teamster heart. And this is really Teamsters helping Teamsters. Thank you very much, Rick. And, Denise, help is on the way.

Mike 4.

DELEGATE BILLIE HAWKINS, IBT Local 614, Pontiac, MI: Yes. I wanted to speak on the school bus campaign. I have been a school bus driver for approximately 33 years. I have been a steward at First Student for the past seven years. I think that this campaign is what we have been looking for for a very long time. I get sent to different locations for two months, three months at a time to help fill in when they don't have drivers. These people are looking for a union. I have called back to my local and said they need a union, they want a union.

Since I've been back from Columbus in October, I've received four phone calls: "What do we do and how can we do it?" It's time to get them altogether and get them into the Teamsters. You've a hell of a lot of people out there that need you, need us.

And please, back us 100 percent.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you, thank you very much. Thank you for those comments.

Before our next speaker, I want to get the collection done, so let's just wait a moment.

Mike 2.

VICE PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman, if I may for a moment. You mentioned earlier this week that retiree Don West was going to be here this week. I saw him a few minutes ago. Don is a retired vice president, as you well know, former Southern Freight Coordinator, and believe it or not, a guy that came up through the ranks. You know, all of us aren't born at the top of the picking order.

But I would really consider it a privilege and an honor if you would recognize Brother West.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Where is Brother Don West?

VICE PRESIDENT JOHNSON: He's in the back with the guests, sir.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay, in recognition of Brother Don West, former Vice President, we certainly welcome you to these proceedings. It's an honor to have you here. As you know, earlier we recognized a number of people. I hope we don't miss anybody because we enjoy having you here, and it's certainly important for us to keep up the friendship that we've had over the years. Thank you, thank you, Don.

Let's hear it for him.

(Standing ovation)

Okay, let's have our seats. We've got another great speaker. One of the labor movement's most dynamic leaders today is SEIU General President Andy Stern. He's a person that I've worked with at Change to Win and gotten to know. He and the SEIU have become a close Teamster ally over the last year. He's an affiliate of the Change to Win Federation and a partner out there driving the standards up in the school bus campaign.

He's a tremendous person. His union is growing fast, and we're working together on so many plans. He's part of what makes Change to Win the most dynamic federation.

Let's hear it for a friend of the Teamsters, Andy Stern, President of SEIU. Come on, Andy. (Standing ovation)

**ANDY STERN**  
**President, SEIU**

Good afternoon. You out there?

Good afternoon. First of all, Jim, let me tell you how much I appreciate those very kind words for me and our union. But after ten years of being President of SEIU, I think I understand like you do, that what makes our union so great is that there are so many members and so many leaders and so many courageous workers like Denise Taylor and the workers from FedEx, who have had the courage to try to join our great unions against all odds.

I want to tell you the story of Clara Vargas, someone Jim was fortunate enough to meet. Clara is a maintenance worker for a large national employer at the University of Miami, the largest employer in the private sector in all of South Florida.

All of us see those gleaming condos and those trendy restaurants in Miami, yet Miami is the third poorest city in America. Clara's worked at the University of Miami for seven years and she makes \$6.50 an hour.

When I first saw Clara, she was trying to organize her co-workers. I said to her, "Clara, when was the last time you got a raise?" She smiled, she said, "President Stern, I got a raise last year." I said, "How much, Clara?" She said, "Seven cents an hour."

I said, "What about the year before?" She said, "I got a four-cent-an-hour raise," at a university with a billion-dollar endowment, with a president named Donna Shalala, a former Clinton cabinet member, who says she believes in universal health care. Her own gardener at the presidential residence has no teeth because he can't afford his own health care with a union — or have a union at such a powerful institution.

So Clara and her workers began to organize, and they faced the same kind of duress that we heard Denise talk about. And those workers made a very bold choice. Rather than face that intimidation, they went out on strike. After three weeks on strike, Donna Shalala formed a committee to look into the workers' problems.

After three weeks of meetings, their answer was, "You know, these workers don't make enough money here at the University of Miami." So she gave the workers a \$2-an-hour raise, and she gave them employee health care. But she told them they could not have a union.

I've got to tell you, we were scared. That was a lot of money for people making \$6.50 an hour. Those workers voted unanimously to not go back to work.

(Applause)

Even more courageously and heroically, 15 of those workers began a hunger strike. After 11 days, the first three workers were sent to the hospital, one with a stroke, two with liver problems. After 15 days of not eating any food, those courageous workers were all told that they had entered, by their doctors, the danger zone, that their life was at stake; and yet these workers were willing to die for the union.

And then the tide turned when two great leaders, strong fighters for working people, came to Miami. Both of them you heard from today, John Edwards and your great president, Jim Hoffa. Changed their schedule, changed their life.

(Standing ovation)

They walked in the hot sun of Miami, as John Edwards said. They spoke to the leaders in the community. They re-inspired the workers. And not listening to their lawyers, they defied an injunction and marched up to the front door of Donna Shalala's 9,000-square-foot residence and demanded justice for those workers. That's the kind of leadership you have in Jim Hoffa.

(Applause)

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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But it wasn't just Jim Hoffa. Rome Aloise, your great Vice President, followed in the footsteps of Fred Gegare, who told the owners of the office buildings, who employed this national contractor, when there was Teamster money involved, there were not going to be scab contractors and either they threw those contractors out of those buildings or the Teamsters pulled those monies. And that, my friends, my brothers and sisters, settled the strike that won justice for 500 workers.

The Teamsters, to Jim Hoffa, to Rome, to all of you, you are simply the best.

(Standing ovation)

You know, when I was growing up in New Jersey and then as a union rank-and-file member in Pennsylvania, when you said Teamsters, it meant two things: Good jobs and the power to change people's lives. When we saw in Miami the word Teamsters, it still means the same. You are the pride, you are the backbone, you are the courage, you are the leaders of the American labor movement. Never forget who you are, where you came from. You are the Teamsters, power for American workers.

(Standing ovation)

And now our country, our movement needs your help. Our two countries, now joined by the rest of the world, are living through the most profound, the most transformative, the most significant economic revolution in the history of the world.

There's only been three economic revolutions during the life of this planet. The first is when people stopped hunting and gathering and formed villages and communities. It took 3,000 years and we called it the Agricultural Revolution.

The second economic revolution in American history was when people left those farms and went to factories. They left the rural and went to the urban. That was the Industrial Revolution. It took 300 years.

This Economic Revolution, the one we and our children and our grandchildren are now living through, as we change from an industrial and agricultural to a service and a transportation, finance and knowledge economy, and from a national to an international economy, is only going to take 30 years.

No single generation of people on this planet have ever experienced so much change in such a short time. We know what this new global economy has meant for workers. John Edwards and Jim Hoffa have told you well. Now we can see the new outlines, our future that we need to confront. And as we heard from Rolf, it's a very different kind of future.

First of all, our employers are global. They're no longer national employers, American employers. They salute no flag but their own corporate logo. They worship no God but the almighty dollar.

And the second thing we know is that the world has become flat. All of a sudden with the Internet, with worldwide logistics, with new technologies, employers have worldwide hiring halls. They roam the earth seeking the cheapest labor. The truth is, "Workers of the world, unite," can't be just a slogan, as Rolf and Jim have said. It has to be our new way of life.

We created global trade, global finance, global companies but we created no institution in this world to regulate the behavior of global corporations, and we now see what they're up to. Of the hundred largest economies in the world, 52 are corporations and only 48 are actually countries. We live in a world where companies, not countries, are making the rules of this new global economy.

We just heard about it in the school bus area. Look at this chart. I never thought I'd see the day when my kid gets driven to school in a little yellow school bus owned by a multinational corporation. National Express, First Group, Laidlaw, gobbling up the public sector and cre-

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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ating a multinational global corporation. Those workers and employers don't give a damn about anything but their balance sheet. We heard from Denise, we read it on the screen. These workers care only about their bottom line.

All of us who thought, well, maybe these European companies, companies coming to our country, would bring a tamer form of capitalism, should read this handbook. The top is the handbook of First Student that they give out in the U.K. talking about developing strong partnerships with our trade unions both local and national levels, leading to working across a range of issues. And then we see on the bottom their attitude in the United States. First Student will vigorously oppose any attempt by a union organizer to organize their employees. And they mean business. These are the signs they hung outside the yards as all of our organizing drives began.

But I'm so proud today to say that our unions, the Teamsters, SEIU and the T&G over in the U.K. have now all come together, just like Rolf said for DHL, because "Workers of the world, unite" is not just a slogan, but now it's a way of action and organizing. It's about our future.

The good news is the Teamsters get it. While too many unions have put their heads in the sand and thought they could get by alone, the Teamsters at DHL, the Teamster at Quebecor, the Teamsters at First Student, the Teamsters in food processing are leading the way. You should be proud of the progress, you should be proud of the leadership. You should be proud of the vision of your leaders to take this union global where we really could change workers lives. Thank you to the Teamsters.

(Applause)

Now I want to just play you a short video to add on to what Denise and the other workers talk about that brings home — "Workers of the world, unite" is now just a way of life in our unions. Play the video, please.

...A video regarding "Workers of the World, Unite," was shown to the delegation.

(Applause)

BROTHER STERN: We began this campaign in 2004, but I must admit despite the pride in my own union, this campaign only took off in 2005 with the arrival of the Teamsters. It was the Teamsters that won the election in Baltimore.

(Applause)

It was the Teamsters at the Change to Win Convention that announced that we were going to England, and we were going to collect 250,000 shares of stock to qualify to put a resolution at the shareholders meeting over in Europe. The Teamsters became a shareholder themselves. Along with the T&G and the workers in England, today we're going to send bus drivers from the Teamsters to represent us over in the U.K. But they're not going to have 250,000 shares of stock, we have collected 1.7 million shares of stock, and we're going to tell this company we want unions now in America and around the world.

(Standing ovation)

Don't mess with the Teamsters!

Don't mess with the Teamsters!

Don't mess with the Teamsters!

(Standing ovation)

Let me end by saying this: Our two unions are the two largest unions in all of North America. We've changed our unions, we've created a federation. We've changed this labor movement. And I honestly believe when the history books are written about this era of the labor movement, that it will say this: That one of the darkest hours for workers in America, when things looked bleak for our children and our grandchildren, two unions, two great unions, the Teamsters and SEIU, had the courage to change, had the courage to make work pay, had the courage to campaign for justice, not just in the U.S. but around the world. Because of their

courage, they brought the American Dream back alive. They brought respect to the union movement back alive, and they made America the country we all can be proud of.

Thank you very much.

(Standing ovation)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you, Andy.

### TRIBUTE TO GILBERTO SOTO

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: What we are seeing today is our future. Our global alliances are an important part of our work today. Our international allies make it possible for us to organize and better win contracts at the local level. Unfortunately, our international work has forced us to confront the ugly realities of what it's like for a trade unionist in countries where you put your life on the line to be a union leader. As you know, undoubtedly, now, the Teamsters Port Division representative, Gilberto Soto, gave his life for our workers to have the right to take collective action as they went about their business to join our Teamsters Union.

On November 5, 2004, during a trip to meet with trade union leaders in Central America, Gilberto Soto stopped off to visit his mother in El Salvador and was gunned down, murdered. Gilberto was killed for his union work, and we are keeping his memory alive. We look forward, together with our friends all over the world, to complete the work that Gilberto started.

Gilberto's murder has strengthened our resolve to bring union representation to port workers. Let's have a moment of silence and remember Gilberto.

...A moment of silence was observed by the delegation in memory of Gilberto Soto.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you.

Mike 2.

### PORT ORGANIZING

VICE PRESIDENT SANTANGELO: Mr. Chairman, I'm a Hoffa-Keegel supporter. In Los Angeles and Long Beach, the largest ports in America, we are surely and slowly organizing port drivers. At this particular time with the leadership of our Port Director, Chuck Mack, who is doing a wonderful job, we have been out there, Miguel Lopez and Bob Blanchet. We have now joined with the Change to Win people in Long Beach and LA ports whereby we have now the majority of the city council who are pro-union, and also the newly elected mayor of the City of Long Beach.

So I want everyone here to know that it is coming right around the corner, the magnificent job the Port Division is doing and Change to Win in the largest port in the country. We're going to be there. I think we're going to be there before January 2007 where we will have some 15,000 truck drivers in the Teamsters Union. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you, Jimmy. Thank you very much.

As most of you know, we've launched an aggressive campaign called Justice Port Workers. We're going to bring justice to these more than 100,000 owner-operator drivers who are hauling containers at our ports. These drivers are the most exploited truck drivers in the country, and they work in a super-growth industry. Turn your attention to the video screen to learn more about the truck drivers who are at the ports who we're trying to organize.

...A video on justice for port workers was shown to the delegation.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you. I'd like to introduce Alexis Parredes, a port worker from Newark, New Jersey, to tell his story about working at the ports.

(Applause)

**ALEXIS PARREDES**  
**Port Worker, Newark, NJ**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Alexis Parredes. I arrived to United States 15 years ago looking for the American Dream. I've been working in the industry, trucking industry, for around eight years. I joined the Teamsters fight five years already. I got the pleasure to know Gilberto Soto — rest in peace. The reason why I'm here tonight is to concrete — or to let you know that the video you saw make you witness the treatment of around 7,000 drivers in the area of New Jersey and New York are going through.

It's 100,000 drivers through the whole United States that can become part of the fight, can become Teamsters. I mean, we can still grow, we can go forward. That's our intentions. We have problems in the ports such as steamship lines abusing the situation, taking advantage of the situation, together with the port authority abusing of the drivers. We're becoming targets just because we stand with our beliefs of defending our rights. We're human beings.

Just look at me as one more member of your community. I wanted to fight, I wanted to grow, just like you guys do. It's strange to see in the United States still abuses — thousands of people being abused in all the industries. But now I would like to ask you something for those people who believe in God and Jesus — I mean, He was a revolutionary. He came to the world. He saw everything was messed up. He give an example. He say He's the roadway we have to follow.

Thank you for giving me the chance to express myself, and keep on going strong.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

...Brother Lerro addressed the delegation in Spanish.

**SANDRO LERRO**  
**Port Driver, Miami, FL**

My name is Sandro Lerro. I've been a port driver for about eleven years, six of those years in Port New Jersey, five in Miami.

I'm Cuban. Like most of the Cuban community in Miami, I'm a Republican; don't hate me. I voted for Mr. Bush. That's my president. I'm sorry. I know.

(Laughter)

Seventeen hundred of the drivers in Miami, they're also Republicans; they voted for Mr. Bush. I'm going to take this opportunity to give Mr. Bush a message from all 1700 drivers in Miami that voted for him.

"Fuck you very much," (indicating) and thanks for nothing."

(Standing ovation)

Thank you. Thank you.

I just have to let it out of my system. Whew!

"Fuck you, Bush."

Let me tell you something: How can Mr. Bush sit in the White House and tell us our ports are secure? Come on, port security, my ass, man. I go into the Port of Miami every day, in and out, in and out of the Port of Miami and Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale. Listen, any of you could go in my truck and I'll bring you inside the Port of Miami. They tell you you need a Port ID. Yeah, I have a port ID. I show it from my truck. I show it to the Port Security. They don't check my cab. They don't know what I have in my cab.

You know. So I tell you, Mr. Bush, write this down — or then again, have somebody write it down for you because you're a little stupid, you know?

(Laughter)

(786)402-7809. That's my phone number. When you go to Miami, Mr. Bush, give me a call, right? I'm going to put you in my truck, I'm going to bring you right through the gates of the Port of Miami, and you can bring one of



### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

those weapons of mass destruction that you found in Iraq, and you can plant it in Miami Port and blow up the whole place.

(Standing ovation)

Thank you. That's our port security right there.

Like I said, we are 1700 port drivers in Miami. Listen, we're ready. We want a union. We already picked our union; we want the Teamsters. You know?

(Applause)

Listen to me, we have the unity, you have the union. Come and get us.

(Standing ovation)

#### **PATRICIA LEE** **Port Worker**

Alrighty, how you friends doing out there? I want to tell you a little bit about my life story. I started back in the Port of Oakland driving for my brother in 1989. I learned how to drive down in the piers. We was in business about a year and a half. He wasn't making no money; he gave me the truck. Wasn't that great, the money ain't that good for us. So I ran that truck for myself, felt good about it. I worked for myself about four years. That truck broke me down so bad, I was so broke, I had to park the truck, sell the truck.

I got another job in 1993 for Keep on Trucking hauling containers out the pier. I get on that freeway and I'm hauling ass; I'm hustling. I had no medical for my kids, single mom with three kids. And if I can turn them loads quick as I could in nine hours, I still would have had me \$14 an hour. So I'm hauling ass out there, doing what I got to do. They couldn't go to the doctor or anything.

So finally, after four years still at that same pay rate, I left that company. Went over to J.B. Hunt. Boy, I thought I was doing it. J.B. Hunt is a big company, lot of drivers. I drove for J.B. Hunt and everything was going fine, so I thought — until I hurt my shoulder. I was the

Driver of the Year, local Driver of the Year 2001. That same year I tore up my rotator cuff; them bastards fired me. They had nothing else to say. They was through with me. They used word "terminated," but what's the difference? They fired my tail.

So then, my brother was telling me — I fooled around with a lot of other jobs. My brother said, "Call Bob Blanchet. The port is trying to do something. The Teamsters are trying to come in the port. Call Bob and see what's going on."

I called Bob and he told me about this new Port Campaign. So he said I'd be called. So I was waiting for it. I went over there, and — with a company, brand new company, the first dray company in 22 years hauling containers out the Port of Oakland called Meritech. So I went over there and we tried it. We've been working for two months now.

But what I have to say, 17 hard years I've been in the business, and I finally became a Teamster. It took me 30 days, but I'm here now. Thirty days, after 17 years, I am a Teamster and I'm proud of it. I'm proud. Seventeen years I've been hustling. I'm here now, though. I'm here.

(Standing ovation)

So I really came. I was invited. I wanted to meet Chuck Mack, I want to thank Bob Blanchet, I want to thank the President, President Hoffa. Hey, thanks a lot guys. God bless you, and have a good one. Thank you.

(Standing ovation)

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: You go, girl!

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you. Isn't that great?

Organizing our ports, our port drivers, has been one of our priorities, we're working hard on it. Now we've got Port Division Director Chuck Mack, also our Western Region Vice President, who's heading up this program. He's harnessing the power of our members from different departments to make sure this is a Teamster success.

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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Let's tell the story, Chuck.

(Applause)

VICE PRESIDENT MACK: Thank you very, very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank Alexis, I want to thank Pat, and I want to thank Sandro for coming to Las Vegas and sharing their stories and sharing their enthusiasm. That kind of enthusiasm and the stories and the problems and the fact that port drivers are the most exploited truck drivers in this country is the reason that we're committed to bringing social and economic justice and a contract for port drivers across the country.

(Applause)

I want to thank so many of our local leaders, local unions in the port areas, our joint council leaders, our rank-and-file members who have come out to the many rallies and demonstrations that have been called oftentimes on very short notice. But every time that call's gone out, you've been there. You've supported it, you've given your time and, in some cases, your resources. And I want to say on behalf of the Port Division and our representatives, thank you very, very much.

(Applause)

I also want to acknowledge and thank and recognize our Secretary-Treasurer Tom Keegel and our General President Jim Hoffa. They have continued to support and put resources into this program. The reason they've done it is not because of any dues return, because outside of Meritech, we have precious few people that we've organized. We have got plans, and we've made some significant progress; but they've supported it with the resources of this organization because they believe in it, they believe that we need to have fair treatment, equality, opportunity and economic justice for port drivers. So they've committed the resources to this organization to do the right thing. That is absolutely outstanding on their part.

Thank you very much, Tom. Thank you, Jim.

(Applause)

The biggest problem in organizing port drivers has been the independent contractor status. It creates problems under the Sherman Antitrust Act. Two drivers come together and start bargaining, ironically enough, they're in violation of antitrust law and could be held liable and the organization, the Teamsters, if we're organizing them and cause any action that would disrupt the operations in the port, we, too, could be liable. So we have been wrestling with that problem for a significant period of time. We think now with the support we've received from Change to Win — because we've been brought into the Change to Win program — they now have brought resources to port driver organizing. They've identified it as one of their programs.

We have resources and we have talent, and we have changed the model. Yes, we'll continue to organize at the grassroots level, talking to drivers on a regular basis. But we also intend to use the political power that we have as an organization to make change in the model and within the system.

What we're proposing to do is to use a concept that was adopted by HERE/UNITE at airports across the country for the concessions that are in those airports. We're talking about using that same concept in the ports and port areas. It would be a concessionaire-type arrangement with trucking companies that would come into the port. But there would be some standards and qualifications for companies that operate in those port areas.

One, people would not be independent contractors, they would have to be employees; and two, there would have to be labor peace. Now, labor peace means neutrality. It means card check. It means recognition of the union that represents the workers. It means safe equipment. It puts standards for equipment and it puts standards for pollution to make sure that trucks

that operate in the port areas are doing so in an as environmentally friendly way as we can do it.

Those would be the standards. And we have been calling on ports, we have been calling on stakeholders in this industry talking about the problem.

Finally, there's a recognition generally that this whole truck-driver system is a broken system and that it needs to be fixed. And there's a recognition, too, that the Teamsters have a solution. We've got an answer to some of these problems. We've got a solution to the driver shortage. We've got a solution that will raise the rates so drivers and companies can afford to buy newer and environmentally friendly trucks. We've got a solution to deal with the problem of port security, a solution to protect the public from overweight containers and poor chassis. And we have a solution. It's the Teamster solution with the Teamsters Union and Teamster drivers and a Teamsters contract.

And now, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to introduce a resolution on "Port Organizing" that has been introduced, and it's in the booklet that you have on resolutions.

In the interest of time, I would suggest that the resolution not be read. It's in the booklet, the delegates can refer to it. And I would make a motion that it be adopted.

...Vice President Mack presented the following:

### **PORT ORGANIZING**

**WHEREAS**, trade volumes are expected to double at North American ports during the next seven years, leading to tens of thousands of new jobs for intermodal container truck drivers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Teamsters are engaged in a broad-based, innovative campaign to organize the 100,000 port drivers who play a critical role in global trade; and

**WHEREAS**, Teamster drivers once hauled containers in and out of ports and rail terminals,

but deregulation caused the industry to be dominated first by nonunion motor carriers and more recently by owner-drivers who are misclassified as "independent contractors;" and

**WHEREAS**, port drivers are among the most exploited truck drivers in the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada. They earn an average of \$7 to \$8 an hour, often work more than 12 hours a day, receive no benefits, and are forced to perform other work for free; and

**WHEREAS**, port drivers operate in an underground economy that undermines standards the Union has achieved and defended for decades. These standards made truck driving a respected profession and a pathway to the middle class; and

**WHEREAS**, an organized port driver workforce would produce the added social benefits of improving port productivity, reducing driver turnover, protecting national security, and significantly limiting the pollution of older trucks; and

**WHEREAS**, successfully organizing port drivers could lead to organizing victories throughout the entire logistics supply chain, including warehouses and distribution centers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Teamsters Port Campaign will provide knowledge and insight that will help organize other workers who are similarly misclassified as "independent contractors;"

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, its Joint Councils, and Locals, commit to assisting the organizing of drivers in our maritime ports and rail terminals. Such assistance would include participating in rallies, demonstrations, driver outreach, legislative initiatives, and training programs for drivers; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this twenty-seventh convention of the Teamsters recognizes that the traditional NLRB route is not going to work for unionizing port drivers, and

that instead we need to embrace alternative approaches to guarantee these drivers their right to choose union representation; and

**FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED**, that because shippers and ocean carriers are multinational corporations operating in ports around the globe, the Teamsters will continue to promote solidarity with labor unions and federations in other countries.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 2.

DELEGATE ROGER INSPRUCKER, IBT Local 114, Cincinnati, OH: Mr. Chairman, I'm a proud Hoffa-Keegel-Cheryl Johnson delegate. I move — second to adopt the resolutions.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay. We have a motion and a second with regard to the "Port Organizing" resolution. Any discussion?

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

Anybody opposed?

The resolution is adopted. Thank you, Chuck.  
(Applause)

Our power in North America is very much tied to our ability to work across the borders with our great friends to the north, Teamsters Canada. They produced the following video that I would like you all to watch.

...A video presentation regarding Teamsters Canada was shown to the delegation.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: What a great video.

You know, Teamsters Canada is the fastest growing region in our entire union. They are growing faster than any other area and it's because of a very special person and our great leadership up there.

The next speaker you're going to hear is Teamster Canada President Bob Bouvier, who is leading the fight to make sure that Canada grows and that we have great relationships between our two great countries. We work together constantly and have a great relation-

ship. He's a guiding force with regard to making sure that we have economic justice on both sides of the border.

Let's hear from our good friend, Teamsters Canada President Bob Bouvier.

(Standing ovation)

**BOB BOUVIER**

**President, Teamsters Canada**

Thank you. Thank you, General President Hoffa. It's always an honor and a pleasure to be able to address this great convention.

I want to bring you news today. This year, 2006, is the 100th anniversary of the Teamsters being in Canada. So for those that thought that we've just been around for a few years, the Teamsters have been in Canada since 1906, and it all started in Lethbridge, Alberta, a hundred years ago.

(Applause)

Since those 100 years, we have created great unity amongst our two countries. We have made sure that equality and work — the workers would be treated equally on both sides of the border. And a hundred years later, Teamster Canada represents 125,000 workers in Canada. That is a 25-percent growth over the last five years.

(Applause)

I want to say that these are not the accomplishments of Bob Bouvier whatsoever. In Canada, we always work as a team and nobody can do any kind of success like this without having great people, great local union leaders, great joint councils, great Vice Presidents working with me and a great group of people that are dedicated to this great International Union; and that's the only reason why we've got success. Nobody is strong enough to get anywhere without a great group of people and the great help that we get from all our local unions.

Let me talk to you about a couple of victories we've had. As you can see, since 9/11 airport

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

---

security has become quite important across North America. Well, the Teamsters in Canada have already organized about 3,000 airport screeners at different airports in Canada, including our major airports, Toronto, Calgary and some other airports across the country. We are now one of the major unions in airport screening in Canada.

We also won great battles in Manitoba where we've got 1,500 casino workers that left their Canadian-based union to join a strong Canadian and International Union like the Teamsters.

We also organized Stock Workers, which is a great company you guys are dealing with in the U.S. Totally anti-union but we finally got them to their knees not too long ago in Toronto and signed a contract for 500 members in Toronto.

We also chartered a new construction local in my own province of Quebec about seven months ago. It's almost up to a thousand members by this time.

We also had the great mergers with our brothers and sisters of the Graphic Communications, Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way, and the Locomotive Engineers that brought us also some growth. We can say that in the last five years we grew about 15,000 members from natural growth of just organizing, and also had the chance and the privilege of welcoming 10,000 new members from those mergers.

(Applause)

The reason that we've been able to accomplish these things goes back to 2001. In 2001, when all this Sovereignty Agreement came together, with the vision of the General President, unanimously this convention acknowledged the difference that we have between the two countries as far as laws are concerned, the way we do things on each side of the border, and acknowledging that we have to have our operation in Canada while remaining a strong bond with the International Union, and all living under the same Constitution. There's

no different Constitution in Canada. And we managed to accomplish that.

I want to applaud you today for giving us this great opportunity to be able to run our show in Canada and to be able to be part of this great International Union and maintain our strong bond.

(Standing ovation)

Thank you. There were some doubts out there in 2001, some people, might have been a scheme for the Teamsters in Canada to break away. For those that thought that, I can tell them exactly what Tom would tell you, they can all kiss my ass.

(Laughter)

It's a great quote, Tom.

That was not the reason. The reason was simple: We needed to have our own structure to do our own lobbying, which we do successfully now with full lobbying on our Hill. We have to have our own education and all the things that we needed to operate. And also to convince the Canadian workers of the importance of being part of an international union.

Global economy is not a U.S. thing, it's not a Canadian thing, it's a worldwide thing. If corporations have thought prior to us that they've got to go worldwide, I think in Canada and the U.S. would have thought that a long time ago since we've got a hundred-year bond between the two countries.

It's important that we have good contracts in Canada. Some of these companies you deal with — UPS, they're in Canada — whether it be Pepsi, Coke, Budweiser, or if you're fighting with Quebecor — well, Quebecor's home office is in Montreal; it's a worldwide company now. You're dealing with them in the U.S. and we're dealing with them in Canada. They're just as bad on our side of the border as they are on your side of the border.

A lot of people thought that's what our goal was, to just disaffiliate from this International

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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Union. That was totally wrong, because somebody had a vision in all this. Our General President had a vision. Our General Secretary-Treasurer had a vision. Our Executive Board had a vision, knowing that some other unions that did not recognize the Canadian flag lost their members in Canada. Didn't stop them from organizing but lost their members and weakened the strength of the labor movement and forgetting the basic thing, that we exist to represent workers on both sides of the border and while we're maintaining standards of employment on either side of the border, we're securing our job either in the U.S. or Canada, and we're very grateful for that.

Again, I want to thank the General President, the General Secretary-Treasurer in 2001 to have the foresight and the vision. It's been a proud honor for me and our Canadian members to work in this great Executive Board. We're looking forward to go even further in our negotiations — not our negotiations but our work together to make sure that the next convention we won't be 125,000 but we'll exceed 150- or 160- because, by golly, we've got to do exactly like you're doing and we've got to grow and grow again.

There's no secret to this game, because I've been a member of this organization for 30 years and a principal and an officer of my local. The only way we can survive in the labor movement is keep on organizing. We've got to go out there and fight it.

I've heard so many reasons why we can't do it, but, by golly, I've heard for the last week like I've never heard before in a convention of this International Union, that we talk about the basic thing which is organize the unorganized.

Again, I would like to bring you at this time a couple of my representatives. First of all, Mr. Don McGill from Joint Council 36 in British Columbia that represents the workers in BC, a member of my Executive Board and one of the

great advocates that managed to get our Sovereignty Agreement.

Mr. McGill.

(Applause)

DELEGATE DON MCGILL, IBT Local 213, Vancouver, BC, CAN: Thank you, President Bouvier.

You just heard the General President introduce our President, Bob Bouvier, the President of Teamsters Canada. One of the reasons we're the fastest growing region in this International, you can see on the podium, is his enthusiasm and his drive. He makes sure that we all are part of that.

Five short years ago at our International Convention held here in Las Vegas, our General President Hoffa — President Hoffa showed the leadership and foresight in negotiating the Canadian Sovereignty Agreement. The Canadian agreement recognizes the distinct national characteristics of Canada. I understand at this convention there's over a thousand new delegates that have never attended a Teamsters Convention before.

For those delegates who weren't at the 2001 Convention, I'd like to review a few key points and the effects the Canadian agreement has had.

You, the delegates, as President Bouvier stated at the 2001 Convention, designated Teamsters Canada as our national representative for all Canadian Teamsters.

You recognized our country's distinct French and English cultures and heritages, each with his own constitutionally-protected historic and linguistic traditions. For this we thank you, the delegates and General President Hoffa, who showed the wisdom and the foresight by enshrining a unique structure for Teamsters Canada in our International Constitution, the Sovereignty Agreement.

Since the Canadian Amendment was adopted in 2001, we continue to see other internationals in Canada lose membership and others talk of

separation from their international unions, that is, all except for Teamsters in Canada. Under the leadership of President Bob Bouvier, we have seen Canadian membership grow in all sectors. This is no small feat, considering the diversity of our country's distinct French and English culture. We have seen under the leadership of President Bouvier successful engagement in Teamsters legislative and political action on a national level in our country, which have benefited not just Teamster members but all Canadians.

Teamster members in the United States and Canada will continue to benefit from the centralized policymaking existing in both our countries. We will continue to deal with corporate and political events that transcend our national borders.

In solidarity, on behalf of the Canadian Teamster members, we thank you for supporting the Canadian Resolution. And again, as I stated at our last convention, Teamster members in Canada will never, ever separate from this, our great International Union. And thank you.

(Applause)

VICE PRESIDENT BOUVIER: Now, let me introduce to you Brother Larry McDonald, President of Joint Council 52 and President of Local 938 in Toronto, Ontario.

**BROTHER LARRY McDONALD**  
**President, Local 938, Toronto, ON, Canada**  
**President, Joint Council 52**

Thank you, President Bouvier. And I guess when you're the last speaker on such an important subject, one could just say ditto. But I do have something to say. Bob Bouvier, first I'd like to say thank you. And I'd like to thank General President Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer Keegel and the entire General Executive Board for making this decision and bringing it forth and bringing it to light in 2001.

I have been a long-time person who believes

that we in the Teamsters could do something like this where we didn't have to get into a big fight or threaten separation. When people asked me and I had people ask me this: "Why should we do this?" And I simply said, "Because we can, we are Teamsters, and we know how to do this."

It's also saying something that General President Hoffa said to me in Toronto one day, he said, "You know, Toronto has always been an important area, Ontario has always been important. It's a neighbor." And I thought about that. There's a saying that says, "Good boundaries make good neighbors." And I believe that.

The IBT has taken this adage much further by acknowledging the boundary and the unique relationship that exists between the United States and Canada in the form of this sovereignty. Because of this forward thinking and progressive policies of our leadership, Canadian Teamsters no longer feel divided by a boundary, but united by a cause, and it's the Teamsters cause.

For me, sovereignty signifies what we've been talking about here all week. We've heard so many people say why they wanted to join the Teamsters Union. They wanted to join the Teamsters Union because they wanted respect. Well, having lived in both countries, I can tell you I have the utmost respect for the United States and what you stand for. And when you recognize a country's sovereignty and you recognize that country, you showed the greatest respect to all the Teamsters in Canada, and I thank you for that. Thank you.

(Applause)

VICE PRESIDENT BOUVIER: Now I want to deal with a little bit of the other side of sovereignty, just to say a couple things. Sovereignty is important to Canadians, it's important to get that respect, it's important to be an equal partner in this union, which we feel we are. But then it helps us organize. You've heard of the numbers,

### THIRD DAY—AFTERNOON SESSION

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and I could just tell you it wasn't a month ago when Vice President Fraser and I sat with a group, a Canadian group — they're large, they're very large, about 13,000 members, and they spoke to us about coming to the Teamsters and why they should come to the Teamsters, and they were concerned. And with great pride we both talked to them about our sovereignty and about the respect we have and about how important it is belonging to a large, international union.

And I'm going to jump from there and tell you a couple just little stories. When I went into 938, there had been a lot of trouble in 938, it was very weak, very disorganized and the employers thought they could really take advantage of us, and they tried.

Pepsi was the first corporate giant that stood up and thought they were going to kick the crap out of 938. Well, I tell you, they didn't want to bargain with us in good faith, and I told them — I warned them not to do this, but then they wanted to strike, so we hit the street.

The first phone call I made was to Jack Cipriani and Dave Laughton, and it didn't take them very long to organize and get their Brewery Conference people talking. I tell you, the help that they gave us, the strength that they gave us and what they put together, we kicked Pepsi's ass and we ended that strike in ten days.

(Applause)

You know, just one other little story, too. We had a company called Integris Metal headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Yes, it belonged to Local 120, our Secretary-Treasurer's local. We had our members on strike for 17 weeks and they wouldn't give up. They tried to take health care away from them. They tried to take all these benefits away that they had for years and years.

I made a phone call to President Bouvier, who relayed that to the International. And Tom Keegel sent Brad Slawson, Sr., gave me a call

and said, "I think we can help you." And we made arrangements — he came up, he came down on a Friday night, he gave up his weekend, and I'll tell you, two o'clock Sunday morning we had the best damn agreement you've ever seen with Integris Metal.

(Applause)

We're also joined in talking about the school bus. I seen First Student. We're in 938 organizing and Local 879 and Local 91 in Ontario, and we're organizing the school bus industry, and we won an election against — we call it Stock in Canada, but it's Durham. We won an election, 460 members. They said we wouldn't get an agreement. We got an agreement, one of the best in the school bus industry. And we're still out organizing.

And we reach across the border, hands across the border with your Strategic Campaign people and your Organizing Department, and we work jointly on those things.

That's the other side, the important side of having your sovereignty and your respect, having that bond and being able to reach out and being part of such a great International Union.

When we meet with other international or national unions who are affiliated to international unions, they're surprised and they can't figure out how we achieved what we achieved. And again, I tell them we achieved it because we're Teamsters, that's why we achieved it.

(Applause)

Brothers and sisters, I believe the path is chartered and we're on course, and enjoy the journey into the future.

If I had one thing that I could give to my American brothers and sisters to pay you back for what you've done for us — and I know Bob Bouvier and Brother McGill would join me in this, we would give you our Canadian universal health care because you deserve it and you need it. Thank you very much.

(Applause)



VICE PRESIDENT BOUVIER: Delegates, we have a resolution on page 41 on “International Unity,” and I would recommend that we accept this resolution without going through the reading, and I would need a second.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Mike 2.

DELEGATE RICK ASHDOWN, IBT Local 979, Winnipeg, MB, CAN: I’m the Secretary-Treasurer and principal officer of Local 979, a proud Canadian Teamster. Our local has supported the Jim Hoffa-Tom Keegel Slate from the beginning, Jim, you know that.

I am proud to second this motion, and thank the delegates for the 2001 support, and join me in supporting this resolution again, please. Thank you.

(Applause)

...The following resolution is presented for vote.

### RESOLUTION ON INTERNATIONAL UNITY

**WHEREAS**, the delegates to the 2001 International Convention officially acknowledged the partnership that exists between the IBT and Teamsters Canada by adopting the “Sovereignty Amendment” to the International Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the partnership whereby the IBT and Teamsters Canada collaborate across the border between our two countries is unprecedented in the Labour Movement; and

**WHEREAS**, our partnership has created a strong bond of unity and mutual support among Teamster Local Unions and their membership in the U.S. and Canada; and

**WHEREAS**, our bond of unity and mutual support has enabled the Teamsters Union to win important victories on both sides of the border, including organizing the unorganized and forging historic mergers with other International Unions such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of

Way Employes and the Graphic Communications International Union; and

**WHEREAS**, our bond of unity and mutual support has strengthened the Teamsters Union in our continued battle against multinational corporations, unfair trade agreements, and anti-worker legislation that threatens the well-being of our members and their families on both sides of the border; and

**WHEREAS**, our bond of unity and mutual support has helped to give the Teamsters Union a leadership role in revitalizing the Labour Movement in our two countries;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the delegates to this twenty-seventh International Convention reaffirm, and rededicate ourselves to further strengthening, the bond of unity and mutual support between the IBT and Teamsters Canada that is at the heart of our identity as a great International Union.

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Okay. I’m going to call the question. This is the resolution on “International Unity.” You ready? All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

Anybody opposed?

The resolution is passed.

Thank you, Bob Bouvier.

Mike 2.

VICE PRESIDENT SANTANGELO: Mr. Chairman, point of privilege. Down the street there are 25 of the most magnificent trucks on the U.S. highway. They are our Teamster trucks. Tomorrow morning, with the help of the principal officer of Local 14, Gary Mauger, we got permission and a police escort to move our trucks down the street. The media will be there. And I am asking that all the delegates, alternates and guests, if they would get on the sidewalk on Las Vegas Boulevard at eight o’clock in the morning, we will be able to show America what we’re all about.

(Applause)

I would ask, since this is the first time this International Union has ever done this — I would ask that the principals of the local unions and the joint councils to have their drivers there tomorrow morning at 7:00 a.m. to parade at 8:00 a.m.

Now, the down part of this is addressed to the General Secretary-Treasurer. The sheriff said — Tom, the sheriff said —

(Laughter)

— that we have to pay for four motorcycle officers. So I say, “Brother, can you lend me a dime?”

(Laughter)

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER KEEGEL: I thought Joint Council 42 had a hell of a lot of money.

VICE PRESIDENT SANTANGELO: You see, I knew you were going to say that, Mr. General Secretary-Treasurer. That’s why I asked for the dime.

GENERAL SECRETARY-TREASURER KEEGEL: You got the dime, Brother.

(Applause)

GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA: Thank you. We are an International Union and all of our work in the international arena is rooted in what we have been able to achieve for Teamsters in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico. Without a firm base in our own countries, our global campaigns would meet with little success. Teamsters are a power in Puerto Rico. We have significant organizing victories there, and we’re growing very, very strong in Puerto Rico. Joining us now to talk about what’s happening in the beautiful island of Puerto Rico is the Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 901 of Puerto Rico, German Vazquez. Come on up here, German.

(Applause)

...The following speakers addressed the delegation in Spanish and the following is the English translation:

## GERMÁN VÁZQUEZ

### Local 901, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Good afternoon Teamster brothers and sisters:

I want you to know how proud I feel on seeing my flag flying next to yours and listening to our respective national anthems.

And that reminds me that thousands of miles from here, there is a small but beautiful island called Puerto Rico, where Local 901 is located along with its 5,000 worker members who, just like all of you, are proud to be Teamsters.

I myself have been a Teamster for 33 years, and the principal officer for Local 901 since 2001. In the time since I took over the reins at the local, the local has grown in every way possible.

Our Local has achieved an economic strength that is without precedent, and its members are more active than ever.

Local 901 has been recognized, awarded and honored for its organizing. In fact, over the past four years, Local 901 has organized more workers than in the previous 30 years. Chief among our considerable organizing achievements are the following:

Virtually all of the country’s truckers.

The new mass transit system (*Tren Urbano*).

All solid waste collection companies.

All parcel delivery and express delivery (courier) companies, with the exception of FedEx.

Puerto Rico’s new Convention Center.

Sears, and other companies.

Regarding truck drivers, we must recognize the assistance provided by Teamsters General President Jimmy Hoffa, who placed at our disposal all the necessary resources to halt implementation of an insurance plan that would have bankrupted truckers.

This significant intervention by Mr. Hoffa led to the creation of what we in Puerto Rico call the Council of Dock Unions, which is made up

### THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION

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of the longshoreman's and other unions, including the Teamsters. Needless to say, the Council is presided over by our Union.

The Puerto Rican Teamsters Union has always been a strong union, but never as strong as it is now. We are respected more than ever, due in great measure to the unconditional support provided to us by the International Union.

We all remember the headlines last summer that spread across the entire world: "The Teamsters Union, with its permanent assembly, completely paralyzed the entire country." "Truckers ceased to work, operations on the country's docks came to a stop, gasoline supplies were depleted and the economy came to a complete halt."

We Teamsters literally paralyzed the country.

With our actions, we were able to ensure that agreements were reached with a number of different government agencies in order to bring labor justice to thousands of truckers. Various island agencies all found themselves forced to sit down and negotiate with the Teamsters.

Fair freight rates were negotiated, along with the cancellation of tickets issued to truckers for defects in truck chassis that did not belong to them, but rather to steamship companies, as well as projects to improve infrastructure on the docks and other initiatives.

The enormous power that Local 901 has achieved in Puerto Rico extends well beyond labor issues to encompass matters of considerable social significance. During the government crisis that erupted in Puerto Rico and forced the government to shut down for the first two weeks of May 2006, the entire country wondered, when will the Teamsters step in to resolve this problem? When will the Teamsters get involved so that this matter can be put to rest? Although we Teamsters do not represent public employees, our contribution to resolving this problem that affected an entire people was crucial.

First, we worked on the proposals submitted

to the Government and to the legislature by the organized labor sector with a view toward putting an end to the crisis.

We then provided moral, logistical and labor support to our sister unions, particularly those belonging to "Change to Win."

On Friday of the first week of the crisis, Puerto Rican civil society took to the streets in a march called "Puerto Rico Shouts!" but not without first requesting assistance from the Teamsters Union. Our Local managed all logistical concerns and obtained all the required permits. It was the biggest march in the history of the island, and it was the Teamsters who made it possible.

On Friday of the second week of the crisis, the labor sector marched. Teamsters filled the Capitol, and filled the capital city of San Juan with more than 1,500 trucks. And that very weekend, the crisis was resolved, with the Governor and the Legislative Branch reaching an agreement.

All of these achievements, all of this growth and all of this power have not happened by accident. Rather, they are all the result of a number of factors.

First of all, as I mentioned earlier, there is the support provided to us by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and its General President, Jimmy Hoffa. Mr. Hoffa's visit to Puerto Rico in 2004 was of considerable assistance in reinvigorating the active participation by Union members.

Secondly, there is the hard work that has been carried out by myself and my work team.

Third, but no less important, is the fact that the Puerto Rico Teamsters Union has firmly established itself as a union for workers, which that does not now, nor ever will, answer to any political party or movement, much less to any interest, no matter how large or how small, that is not in the interest of social and labor justice for workers.

Thank you very much and may the All Powerful bless you all.

**LUZ DELIA PEREZ**  
**Director of Organizing**  
**Local 901, San Juan, Puerto Rico**

Hello, Teamsters brothers and sisters. I am Luz Pérez, Director for Organizing for Local Union 901 in Puerto Rico. For me it is an honor to work with the most strong and powerful union in the world.

To work in organizing and achieve growth in our local union has been and is a daily challenge. But *Sí se puede* (it can be done), by having the support of the local board, in particular of Secretary-Treasurer Germán Vázquez and José Ayala, our President (What a great duo!). Also, by always having the unconditional support of the IBT, in particular the IBT Organizing Department and the IBT Research Department, giving us contacts, some bilingual, that have always been supporting us, such as Jeff Farmer, Chuck Mack, Mike Hogan and Claudia Galloway. In addition, I want to thank the solidarity of the Hispanic Caucus.

In addition, we have been able to create an incredible team of voluntary organizers that include retirees, active members and their families. Many times we have been at 2:00 a.m. at the entrance of a landfill, at a port, or in front of a factory and then they have to go to their regular jobs at UPS or CROWLEY. Thanks to all of them we have been able and will continue to be able to organize more Teamsters members. Some of these voluntary organizers are here, Pizarro, Rosario, Marrero and many more that use their free time to orient and organize new members and they deserve and I ask you to give them a round of applause (APPLAUSE).

Thanks to all of you Teamsters for working hard to achieve a better world. God Bless The Teamsters!!!

**JOEL SIERRA**  
**Dockworker**  
**Local 901, San Juan, Puerto Rico**

Warm greetings to all the Teamster brothers

and sisters here today and especially to my fellow Puerto Ricans from Local 901. My name is Joel Sierra, and I'm a dockworker at Crowley Liner Services in San Juan and a Teamster through and through.

It's a privilege to be here today.

Before I became a Teamster, I had a long series of jobs where I suffered abuses and injustices from the anti-worker bosses who exploited us.

I want to share with you my first experience and one that's had the most lasting effect on me.

I've worked to help my family ever since I was very young because I come from a low-income family. At age 18 I had completed my studies as a Refrigeration and Home Appliance Technician and began working with Sears. Then my father was diagnosed with cancer. Since I was the only boy in the family, I had to take the reins in order to help my father. I needed to get a permanent position at Sears to help my family.

After I had worked for 40 hours a week for three months, my supervisor told me to go to the Human Resources office. Naively, I began to celebrate because I thought that after the three excellent evaluations I had received I would be made a permanent employee. A very courteous young man asked me my name and when I answered, he handed me a new work schedule. Unbelievably, after having worked 40 hours a week for three months, my work schedule had been reduced to 15 hours per week and my route had been exchanged for work inside the shop.

That was one of the saddest days in my young life, but my father's illness meant that I had to accept it. This and many other experiences have raised my awareness of the labor situation and led me to search for information on the rights of the working class in Puerto Rico. To my surprise, I found a sad reality: the working class was suffering constant abuse on the part of anti-worker employers.

One day I visited my uncle and I told him what had happened. My uncle, a dockworker for 30 years, told me about the Teamsters.

Believe me. After that visit I wouldn't leave my uncle's house. I begged him to please help me get a job with his company.

Thanks to Secretary Treasurer Germán Vázquez and President José L. Ayala of Local 901 of Puerto Rico, I got the chance. For three years now I've been represented by the most prestigious union on our island, the Teamsters. I've enjoyed the benefits of being a Teamster. I've seen how a real unionized shop is organized and I've seen true unity. This unity has motivated me to commit to fighting to improve the working conditions of our labor class.

I urge you all to continue, with God's help, the arduous work of organizing shops to strengthen our unity and our capacity to represent, proudly and with dignity, the working class of the world. I'll end with this short saying: "Nothing is achieved without first fighting a battle."

May God continue blessing you. Thank you very much and remember: Workers united will never be defeated.

### **ALEXIS RODRIGUEZ**

#### **Local 901, San Juan, Puerto Rico**

Good afternoon brothers and sisters. I am Alexis Rodriguez, and I work on the docks of Puerto Rico. I am a proud member of Local 901 in San Juan.

I joined the labor force at a very young age, as I am the child of a single mother and at that time I felt I had to work to help my mother. At work, I suffered abuse, lack of respect and all types of indignations because my bosses wanted to make money at all costs, even at the cost of the health, safety and lives of the workers.

I watched my mother lose her slender figure, I saw her lose her eyesight little by little and her overall health. I also saw her black hair turn

white and her body become stooped under the relentless yoke of the sewing machine in the garment industry (she worked for Playtex), with abusive work quotas, deplorable working conditions and a salary that did not match the conditions. And that's not all: there was no pension when she retired, there was no retirement plan, there wasn't even a "thank you." Today my mother lives on social security with all its failure and on what I can help her with.

My father's story was similar. He was a construction worker and the job cost him his back, he earned meager wages, worked under subhuman conditions, without even a medical plan. My father died and never received social security, because in those times it was easy for the bosses to avoid paying social security premiums and construction workers had to choose between having a job without social security and not working at all.

This is still the situation for the vast majority of workers in Puerto Rico today. Only a small fraction of the island's workers are organized. The government just closes its eyes to it, no matter which party is in office.

Now I have all the benefits and privileges of being a Teamster. I now feel deep in my heart that I must do something to bring justice to the workers of Puerto Rico, to do justice to my parents and to myself. I feel I must be, and all of us here must be, instruments of social justice and labor justice for all those who do not have the good fortune and blessing of being a Teamster. Being organized is good, but being a Teamster, that's the big leagues.

This is one of the many reasons why I feel committed to the workers movement in general. Another important reason is for my children, because as a witness to the real world in which unorganized workers live, my worst nightmare would be to see any of my children as the victims of an abusive and exploitative employer. Everyone wants the best for their children,

### THIRD DAY—MORNING SESSION

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wants to them to be able to study and be professionals, but we never know what their actual future will be. This is why it's all of our responsibility to forge a worthy future for our children and the coming generations. So I believe that the future of our children and of the next generations depends on our generation, because what our generation does and achieves in the workers movement today will determine the workers movement of tomorrow. I know that I'm doing what I should and I invite each one of us to do our part.

Today I can tell you that with each new shop we organize I am filled with pride and feel I am saving lives. Nothing gives me greater satisfaction than the feeling I get when I see new members, because I know they've begun to enjoy a different world, a world of justice in every sense.

Two years ago, our president, Jimmy Hoffa, gave us an incentive to organize because we were the Local that organized the most new members. This incentive gave us more and better tools to work with. Today we thank him and tell him that these actions encourage us to believe that these resources are being utilized as efficiently as possible and we also thank those who have looked to Puerto Rico and recognized our efforts for workers.

Thank you for allowing me to express myself. God bless the workers. God bless the Teamsters. God bless Puerto Rico and God bless America.

**GENERAL PRESIDENT HOFFA:** Gracias.

Well, as you know, we have to vote. Let's see, I have an announcement before the recess. There will be a brief meeting for Sysco locals at 6:00 p.m. at Las Vegas I in the South Tower at Bally's. That's Las Vegas I in the South Tower at Bally's.

Now, you know we have to vote between 5:00 and 7:00. Now it's time for us to recess. Those 17 guys that didn't vote, you better vote this time. Okay. Everybody go vote. Nobody misses.

**SECRETARY-TREASURER KEEGEL:** I don't know if anybody heard that. Unfortunately, it was on the monitor wrong. I've been informed the Sysco meeting is tomorrow.

(The Convention was recessed at 5:01 p.m., to reconvene on Thursday, June 29, 2006, at 9:00 a.m.)