



Teamsters Local 117

Teamster Talk

Fighting for Workers' Rights Since 1936

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SOLIDARITY AT SYSCO

Unanimous Strike Authorization Vote and Overwhelming Member Support Lead to 3-Year Contract



Teamsters at Sysco gather at the Union hall on October 2 after voting 150-0 to authorize a strike.

In the end, solidarity won the day. On Saturday, October 24, Teamster drivers and warehouse workers, employed at Sysco, voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new three-year contract.

It was a sweet victory, but it didn't come easy.

In contract negotiations, Sysco was proposing a two-tier system which would have divided the group and rolled back industry standards with respect to wages, health and welfare, and seniority.

But Teamsters at Sysco would not be pushed around. We filed Unfair Labor Practice charges with the **National Labor Relations Board**, accusing the company of intimidation and bad-faith bargaining. Then, on October 2, in an incredible display of solidarity, the group came together and voted unanimously, 150-0, to authorize a strike.

The strike vote had an immediate impact.

"It meant unity which equals power which equals strength which equals getting what you deserve," said Will Buff, a Shop Steward and member of the union bargaining team. "They shouldn't have tried to divide us. We weren't asking for the sun and stars. We were asking to keep up with the industry and to be treated fairly so that we can take care of our families."

SUPPORT FROM TEAMSTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The strike vote led to an outpouring of support, not just locally, but from members across the country. Photos of Teamsters in Denver, Philadelphia, and Ventura, CA, began cropping up on the Internet with members holding signs that read, "I'm a Teamster and I support my Brothers and Sisters at Sysco in Seattle!"

Local 117 members did their part to support their brothers and sisters as well. Members from Safeway, FSA, Lineage Logistics, Supervalu, South Sound 911, the Tacoma Pierce

County Health Department, and Pierce County sent their solidarity photos to the Local.

The fortitude of the group combined with the broader union rallying behind the workers made the difference. Just two days after bargaining resumed, the union committee achieved a fully recommended agreement with Sysco that contained improvements to wages and benefits with no concessions and no tiers.

Sysco was forced to bargain in good faith, while just a few weeks before they seemed intent on provoking a strike. Workers demanded – and won – the respect they deserve.

"When Teamsters stand together and are united, there is nothing we can't achieve," said John Scearcy, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117. "Teamsters at Sysco showed that they will stand together in solidarity and fight for dignity at work and they won. That is a lesson we all can learn from." ●

A Message from your Secretary-Treasurer



John Searcy

Brothers and Sisters:

Your Teamsters contract is a powerful tool - it provides negotiated wage rates and benefits, job security, and a process for addressing grievances. The contract is a codified framework that reflects your voice in the workplace.

But your contract is not the only avenue for asserting union power at work.

The right of workers to take collective action is protected under the **National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)**. This right exists for all workers - whether they have a contract or not.

When workers act together to improve their conditions of employment, it's called "protected concerted activity". Workers can take collective action to address issues like unsafe working conditions, excessive overtime, or a hostile work environment. It is unlawful for an employer to retaliate against their employees for engaging in this type of action. The key is that, to be protected under the NLRA, workers must act together - not as individuals.

In a Union workplace, a well-coordinated action can have a real impact, both in terms of building solidarity and affecting change.

Recently at **Seattle Iron & Metals**, a majority of Local 117 members signed a petition demanding safer working conditions and respect. The workers, together with their Business Representative, presented the petition to their boss. Ultimately, the employer agreed to hold a formal meeting to address the workers' concerns.

Just last month Local 117 members at **IKEA** took a similar action.

The company was having night shift employees work an excessive amount of overtime. After talking with his Business Representative, Tyler Thomas, the Shop Steward, led a group of workers up to the office to confront the labor relations manager about the issue. At the meeting, one of the workers said, "You care more about your batteries than about the people who work here."

The meeting had a major impact. In Tyler's words, "open and honest words were spoken." Although the group didn't get everything they wanted, management agreed to cut back workers' overtime by more than 50%.

These kinds of collective actions can affect change and build union power and solidarity in the workplace. They energize workers so that when contract negotiations roll around, the group is ready.

If you and your co-workers want to engage in "protected, concerted activity", be sure to talk to your Business Representative first. Any ideas can be run through our legal office to ensure that your rights under the law are protected.

In Solidarity,

John Searcy
Secretary-Treasurer

LABOR SUMMIT FOR UNION LEADERS!

Members to meet on November 14



On November 14, Shop Stewards and member leaders in our public sector shops will be gathering to build power and solidarity in the workplace.

AT THE LABOR SUMMIT WE WILL:

- Learn more about the ongoing threat of anti-worker laws and other recent attacks on labor;
- Talk about how we can build power in the workplace and protect our rights;
- Discuss ways to build solidarity and share best practices.

Space is limited! To reserve a spot, register online at www.teamsters117.org/kclaborsummit.



"The four pillars of survival are air, water, food and shelter. Unions need to work to protect and maintain the very pillars of our survival. "

- PETER MILLER, SHOP STEWARD

ORGANIZING IN THE GIG ECONOMY

Taxis, For-Hire, and Uber drivers fighting for collective bargaining rights



Uber drivers pack City Council hearing in October.

You know something is wrong in Seattle's for-hire industry when a driver for a \$51 billion company like Uber looks at his tax return and discovers that he made less than \$3 per hour last year.

But that is the reality workers like Takele Gobena are facing in the new gig economy as they try to cobble together a living without access to basic rights and protections of traditional employees.

Because they are classified as independent

contractors, for-hire drivers don't have the ability to unionize through a traditional NLRB election process, and they aren't covered by Seattle's wage theft, sick leave, or new \$15/hr minimum wage law.

Fortunately, some relief may be on the way.

Under a proposal put forth by Seattle City Councilmember Mike O'Brien, taxi, for-hire,

"I think this collective bargaining that you're proposing is a great step to equalizing things..."

- DON CREERY, UBER DRIVER

and drivers for transportation network companies like Uber and Lyft, would have the ability to join together to bargain collectively over their wages and working conditions.

This groundbreaking, innovative policy would give drivers a voice and a formalized process for addressing their concerns.

"I think this collective bargaining that you're

proposing is a great step to equalizing things, getting us on parity, and making these middle class jobs," said Don Creery, as he addressed councilmembers at a committee hearing to discuss the issue at city hall.

Creery is an Uber driver and a member of the Leadership Council of the newly-formed **App-Based Drivers Association**. The association works with Teamsters Local 117 to ensure that drivers in the industry are treated fairly.

The association successfully reversed Uber's attempt earlier this year to cut the drivers' rate of pay by 15%. The group has also been active in lobbying for drivers' rights in Olympia.

UBER AND LYFT DRIVERS NEED A VOICE

But access to collective bargaining rights could be a game changer - not just for for-hire drivers in Seattle, but for independent contractors across the country.

It would allow the growing number of workers who are exploited by unscrupulous employers to achieve safe and secure working conditions and to earn a living wage.

The City Council voted unanimously to pass the O'Brien proposal out of its finance committee on October 2. The bill will now move on for consideration by the entire council, most likely in November.

Not surprisingly, both Uber and Lyft have threatened to take legal action to block the legislation.

As members of Teamsters 117, we need to support drivers! Look for **A Voice For Drivers** updates and action alerts on your Union's website at www.teamsters117.org. ●

Teamsters Back-To-School Drive is a Success!

Your generous donations are helping local families.



Going back to school ready to learn!

This fall, members of Teamsters 117 donated several trunk loads of school supplies for kids headed back to school.

The **Back-To-School Drive** was sponsored by the **Teamsters Pacific Northwest Black Caucus**. Members were able to donate in their shops or at an event held back in August.

Donations were made to community groups in both King and Pierce counties.

A representative of the **Rotary Boys and Girls Club** expressed her gratitude for our donation in a voice mail: "You're awesome! We never expected this much in supplies. This is going to serve at least 1500 kids, so thank you so much!"

Thanks to everyone who donated. Your contributions helped to ensure that more kids in our communities returned to school well-equipped, and ready to learn! ●



Save the Date!

HOLIDAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING - DECEMBER 17, 2015

It's that time of year again when Local 117 members across the state, at our DOC facilities and domicile locations, and on Dec. 17 at 7 p.m. at the Union hall, will be gathering together for union solidarity and our annual raffle drawing.

Dozens of prizes are awarded each year, including power tools, wine, gift cards, televisions sets, and best of all... NUTS!. All of the gifts are purchased from companies with whom Local 117 has a bargaining relationship.

See you on December 17! ●



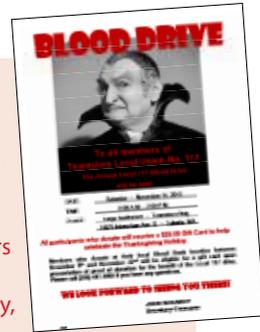
Taking home the winning prize!

Local 117 Blood Drive

Nov. 14 - Tukwila

Our annual Teamsters 117 Blood Drive will be held on Saturday, November 14 at the Union hall in Tukwila from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. **ALL DONORS** will receive a **\$25 Safeway gift card**.

If you don't live in the area – have no fear! Donations made between Nov. 8 and Nov. 22 will be rewarded with a \$25 Safeway gift card as well (just mail in proof of donation to the Union Hall). ●



The Teamsters DIFFERENCE

Check out what a Union can do for workers who are determined to have a voice. These before and after shots come from **Industrial Container Services**, where workers organized and joined with Teamsters Local 117 last year. Congratulations, brothers and sisters, and welcome to the Union!



ICS Locker Room Before Joining Local 117



ICS Locker Room After Joining Local 117

LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Nov. 14, 2015 - Teamsters 117 Blood Drive

Nov. 14, 2015 - King County Labor Summit

Dec. 5, 2015 - New Shop Steward Training

Dec. 17, 2015 - Holiday Membership Meeting

TEAMSTERS 117 ON THE WEB!



Visit your Union's new website at www.teamsters117.org. Join your Union's Facebook page, follow us on Twitter @teamsters117, and watch Local 117 videos on YouTube!

Sign up online to receive Teamster Talk at www.teamsters117.org.