



On The Move

Aug. 28, 2017

Official Publication of TWU Local 234

www.twulocal234.net

“Big Brother” Willing to Take another Look?

On August 16, 2017, President Willie Brown and other Union officers met with some of SEPTA’s top brass to discuss the Authority’s ill-advised plan to install and use live time surveillance/cameras on vehicles and in maintenance shops. SEPTA thinks they have the unrestricted right to install and to use their 24,000 /plus surveillance/cameras anyway they choose.

SEPTA’s unrestricted use of live surveillance would kick the door wide-open for all types of harassment and retaliation against our members.

- If a member signs a last chance agreement, SEPTA could immediately use the cameras to do live surveillance for a day, a week, or until the last chance probation is over---fishing for something to justify the member’s discharge.
- If a member files an EEOC complaint, SEPTA would be able to zero in on the individual all hours of the day, in hopes of finding something to fire them for.
- Union section officers, activists and outspoken members could become targets as well.
- In addition, studies have shown that live surveillance in the workplace increases stress, health and safety problems, sick leave and workers comp claims.

Here’s the bottom line. The ways in which live surveillance could be misused are limitless. No one would be safe from overzealous managers attempting to flex their SEPTA muscles.

The Union made it clear to SEPTA that their spy plan is equivalent to labor–management nuclear warfare. The unrestricted use of live surveillance is NOT a management right. Yes, we will file a grievance and/or an unfair labor practice, if necessary, but be assured it will not stop there. We will employ old school tactics from the past to fight this. We will not allow SEPTA to pick us off, one at a time.

No matter how good our wages are, no matter how good our health benefits, no matter how good our pension plan---we won’t be around to enjoy these benefits if we don’t pull together and fight real time surveillance in the workplace.

Once SEPTA realized we were prepared to fight hard over the issue, it was agreed that the surveillance plan would be put on hold and both sides would take some time to cool off. There will be more meetings on this very explosive dispute in the near future. We will update you after the next meeting. Please stay prepared to stand and fight over this issue, by any means necessary.

30th Annual Labor Day Parade and Family Celebration, September 4, 2017

It's time to make plans. The 30th Annual Labor Day Parade is scheduled for September 4, 2017. As in the past, TWU Labor Day marchers will assemble at the Sheet Metal Workers' Union Hall, at 1301 S. Columbus Blvd., starting at 8:30 a.m. There will be a pre-parade kick off rally at 9:15 a.m. and the march to Penn's Landing will start at 10:00 a.m. At the conclusion of the parade, the Family Celebration will begin, with food, refreshments, kids' activities and live music. The annual Labor Day Parade is an important event for the labor movement in the City and the Tri-State area. It's a display and solidarity between all sectors of the labor movement, solidarity that's particularly important at a time like this, when politicians, from the President on down, are determined to strip working people of their benefits, their civil liberties, and their right to organize and bargain collectively.

AmeriHealth Out as SEPTA's FMLA Administrator

SEPTA has forced AmeriHealth out as the Authority's third party FMLA administrator. SEPTA brought in a company called Work Partners as its new FMLA administrator. The company is out of Pittsburgh and has twenty years of experience administering FMLA type programs for employers in the southwestern Pennsylvania. They will take over from AmeriHealth on September 1, 2017. If you have to reach Work Partners you can call 844-860-9305. While we don't know much about Work Partners, it should not be too difficult for them to do a better job than AmeriHealth. At the very least, they must administer the FMLA program in accordance with the law, something AmeriHealth and SEPTA didn't always manage to do, especially when it came to charging employees a full day of sick leave for taking a few hours of FMLA leave. We shall see.

New CDL License Requirements are Causing Problems for Many Members

Pennsylvania has changed its citizen identification and proof of residency requirements for **renewing** your CDL license. To establish proof of citizenship you must present one of the following: (1) Your Birth Certificate with raised seal; (2) Certificate of U.S. Citizenship; (3) Certificate of Naturalization; or, (4) a Valid U.S. Passport. Whichever document you present, it must be the *original*.

To meet the residency requirement you must present one of the following: (1) Tax records; (2) lease agreements; (3) mortgage documents; (4) W-2 Form; (5) current weapons permit; or (6) current utility bills. Proof of residency documents must have your name and official Pennsylvania address on it.

With these new requirements, the biggest mistake you can make is to wait until the last minute to renew your CDL license. If your license is downgraded for failure to meet these requirements you could find yourself out of work, causing great financial hardship to you and your family.

We Must and We Will