



Local 1277

News

March, 2018

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President's report

National AFL-CIO Lashes Out at Trump; NLRB Shakeup May Harm Labor's Interests

By Art Aguilar - President, Local 1277

As you know, brothers and sisters, the national AFL-CIO, the authoritative voice of organized labor across our country, has been in the forefront of the resistance to the corrupt and anti-working family gang in Washington, D.C. The federation poured millions of dollars and manpower into trying to beat **Republican** Trump in 2016, and has spoken loudly and often against him and his terrible policies ever since that awful day he actually became President in 2017.

Now, in a timely and very necessary move, the AFL-CIO, through its outspoken and dedicated president, Richard Trumka, has upped the ante in the on-going resistance to that fraud in the White House.

Brother Trumka, the former hard-driving president of the United Mine Workers, blasted Trump, declaring that he has used his administration to **"actively hurt working people"** while favoring—and giving away the store—to fat-cat corporate interests. **"He has joined with corporations and their political allies to undermine the right of workers to bargain collectively,"** Trumka charged. **"He has taken money out of our pockets and made our workplaces less safe. He has divided our country, abandoned our values and given cover to racism and other forms of bigotry."**

Strong words, indeed, and *well deserved*. Trump has made a mockery of our democracy and system of government. He has made America a target of ridicule and fear around the world. He has appointed hard-right wing judges at all levels, including to the Supreme Court, which will soon decide (probably *wrongly*) on a case that will greatly affect union activity in the future. He has gutted worker-protection and environmental guidelines without a moment's hesitation. He has assembled a shady and anti-progress group of cabinet secretaries, and put his own and family interests ahead of our country. And now—*it's about time!*—his crooked business deals and debts to foreign power brokers may be catching up to him.

But he can still do a lot of damage! His hard-core base still buys his lies and impossible promises. He still has the national stage and the ability to disastrously stir things up.



Maybe, at Last, Some Sunlight

However, and this is significant, there are encouraging signs that people who originally supported him are catching on to his shell game.

President Trumka noted that when Trump took office last January, an internal federation poll showed that **45%** of union members supported him, with **55%** disapproving. But now, less than 14 months later, **37%** of members support him and **63%** disapprove. That's a nearly **20%** drop in support!

Even better, union members and households seem to be coming back to their traditional political home: the *Democratic Party*. Trumka said, **"What we are seeing in these numbers is that most of the people who went to third parties are rejecting what the Republicans are doing nationally and coming back towards the Democrats."** This means that voters in states that went for Trump in 2016 are coming to their senses and may be unlikely to support him in 2020 (if he even lasts in office that long).

Brother Trumka noted that organized labor will aggressively participate in the upcoming Congressional elections later this year. The AFL-CIO will pour money, manpower and resources into key congressional and senate races in many "battle-ground states", trying hard to elect new Democrats and retain current officeholders who face tough re-election campaigns.

Referring to Trump's disastrous, anti-union, anti-working family tax and economic policies, President Trumka said, **"Instead of delivering change, Trump in doubling down on everything that got us to this point."**

Finally, and correctly, Brother Trumka called on the Democratic Party and its leadership to **"outline an agenda that would appeal to union workers or risk losing their votes again in the mid-term elections."**

I am glad to report that our national AFL-CIO leadership has it right on all counts!

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Trouble Brewing at the NLRB

As you probably know, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was established—by a **Democratic** administration—to protect and advance the rights of working men and women, as well as safeguard worksites, and ensure that management doesn't trample on union activities that help their members. For decades, the NLRB has been our watchdog and advocate.

Of course—you just knew it—*this* President can't stand anything that might help working people and lessen corporate profits and power. So, according to a recent *New York Times* report, in a blatant, regressive and completely unnecessary move, the Trump gang is seeking to *reverse* recent federal pro-worker regulations and rulings by proposing to *demote* the competent and experienced NLRB's senior civil service professionals who resolve most labor cases.

Under this harsh proposal, these civil servants would *have to answer to a small group of officials installed above them at the NLRB*. This proposal could pave the way for a significant shift in the day-to-day workings of the agency. For openers, it could detour the NLRB onto a path leading to more favorable decisions for corporate America—at the expense of the working men and women who make their companies go! This shift could harm legitimate and needed union organizing activities at workplaces across the country.

The **Republican** majority on the NLRB Board has been working hard to overturn Obama-Era pro-union and worker policies and decisions. *It is seeking to overturn basic protections for working people, including labor-contract violations, jobsite safety requirements, and restrictions against the outsourcing of union jobs.*

The Trump gang installed a mouthpiece as the NLRB's general counsel, and he is acting as a one-man wrecking ball when it comes to workers' rights and safety! By proposing to demote and essentially sideline senior civil servants, including the NLRB's 26 regional directors, and putting in a new layer of officials—guaranteed to be pro-Trump and corporate America, and anti-union workers and families—this new guy may be able to make the NLRB a toothless agency instead of labor's guardian. No doubt this is a cherished goal of the Trump gang.

These drastic and negative changes are still pending, but just the fact that they are being publicly considered tells you all you have to know about the Trump gang in Washington and its contempt and downright hatred of unions, and working men, women and families! And don't be surprised if they force through these terrible changes in NLRB operations and policies.

If you ever thought that Trump and his gang cared about you or your families, or your goals and future, *think again!* If you think this gang and its policies amount to anything less than a war on working people, *think again!*

There's a reason, brothers and sisters, that your Union keeps insisting that you understand the issues and candidates, and take part in the political process! The continuing disaster in Washington is all the reason you need!



What Your Union Means to You

Your Union, ATU Local 1277, is unlike any other organization or club that you might belong to. Like any other good-spirited group, it welcomes you into its “family” and has only your best interests at heart. In that way, any organization you might join is similar to Local 1277.

*But—and this is very important—our Union, **your** Union, **protects** you, **helps advance** your career; **ensures** your worksite safety; **safeguards** your future and that of your families, and **faithfully represents** your needs and goals, both on the job and in the halls of administrative and political power.*

Think about this, brothers and sisters:

- You deservedly make very good wages in an economy where tens of millions of hard-working Americans do not. ***Your Union negotiated these wages for you.***
- You enjoy the security of an excellent healthcare plan, and please believe me, there are very few things—if any—more important to you and your loved ones that adequate, affordable health coverage. ***Your Union negotiated those health plans for you.***
- You rely on a solid, guaranteed pension that will absolutely be there for you and your family when it comes time for you to draw on it. ***Your Union negotiated that benefit for you.***
- You have enviable advantages like overtime pay, family leave, holidays, jobsite safety, career advancement, and strong representation if you ever have an issue with management. ***Your Union negotiated all this for you.***

Over the next few months, I will continue to present the benefits that you gain simply by being a Local 1277 brother or sister. Always take pride in your union membership, and let your friends and neighbors know that “*in union, there is strength*”. Enjoy—and appreciate—what it means to be a member of our great Union!

ATU International President Hanley Speaks Out Against Exploitation of Ride-Share Drivers

Note: This appeared as a letter to the editor in the February 14, 2018, New York Times, in response to an article entitled, "Despair Grows for Taxi Drivers".

Tragedy of Taxi Drivers

The tragic suicide of a New York livery driver, Doug Schifter, has highlighted the financial stress faced by taxi and livery drivers, and should cause all of us to question the merits of the "gig economy."

Drivers like Mr. Schifter used to be able to earn a wage that could support their families. Today, competition from largely unregulated companies like Uber and Lyft has made this a thing of the past.

It isn't just livery drivers like Mr. Schifter—who had to drive *100-hour weeks* to make ends meet—or the owners of medallions plummeting in value who are suffering. Uber and Lyft pay their drivers poverty wages, and drivers lack health insurance and other necessary benefits.

In an effort to have newer and better cars on the road, these companies have even pushed drivers into taking out subprime auto loans, with devastating consequences.

In our effort to sign up more than 16,000 Uber and Lyft to join the Amalgamated Transit Union, we've met hundreds of drivers with horror stories about how their lives have been ruined driving for these companies.

The "gig economy" *isn't* cutting-edge; it's exploitative and it's ruining lives. Remember that when you open the app.

Lawrence Hanley
International President, Amalgamated Transit Union



Save the Date

No time for a siesta

Viva la fiesta!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The 46th Annual Old Timers Get Together

SATURDAY • JUNE 9, 2018
AT THE PICKWICK GARDENS



★★★ Retirees Must have 2018 Union dues paid to receive an invitation to the retiree party. ★★★

Know your rights as a union member!

Your Weingarten Rights are a Hard-Fought Benefit for Working Men and Women

By Adolfo Soto - Financial-Recording Secretary

Here's an important "heads up" for all the new brothers and sisters of ATU Local 1277, something that applies at *every one* of the properties we represent. For that matter, consider this also a reminder to all the *veterans* at our properties: ***Your Weingarten Rights are a critical and hard-fought protection for you!***

There well may come a time at work when you may be told by a supervisor or a manager that they would like to speak to you, either in their office or, for example, in the drivers lounge. For a maintenance employee, such a proposed meeting could be out at a shop or in the field. A supervisor or manager may want to speak to you about anything; it could be something minor, or it could just as easily be about something more important.

If this situation arises, you should not *ever* feel scared, nervous or intimidated. There is always communication between supervisors and managers, and employees, during a work shift. You may be asked how things are going, or if you need help, or simply if you have any questions concerning anything to do with your work.

*But there is one very important thing to remember if the conversation ever starts to go in a direction (or towards a topic) which may cause you to feel that the talk is heading to a point where you may be facing any kind of disciplinary action. **This is exactly the moment when you invoke your Weingarten Rights.***

Under your vital Weingarten Rights, you, as a union member, have the **absolute right** to say, ***"If this discussion can in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated for cause, and have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully ask for assistance from my Shop Steward."***

Never, *ever* forget this! If you feel that a supervisor's or manager's questions could lead in any way to any kind of discipline, or worse, *you should stop answering questions immediately and ask for your Shop Steward. **This is your absolute, undeniable right as a union member!***

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Don't let a manager or supervisor fool you or "lull you to sleep" with softball questions. Management may well tell you that it is just asking some simple questions on a particular matter. Maybe. Maybe not. **But why take a chance?** *If you have the slightest doubt about anything that has been asked of you, just stop the conversation **right there** and say that you would like to have your Shop Steward with you.*

Never mind if a manger or supervisor tells you that you don't need your Shop Steward because "we just want to get some information." *Don't listen to them.*

Further—and this is very important: If you have asked for your Shop Steward to be present at this point, and you are denied this request, you simply say. "Without proper and rightful representation present, I choose not to continue this discussion."

These Weingarten Rights are a *fundamental* right of yours as a union member, one of many benefits of membership. It is a long and hard-fought valuable right that you have. ***Know your Weingarten Rights***, and always be ready to use them if and when you have to. If you have any questions or doubts, do two things: 1) Talk to your Shop Steward, and 2) simply clip out this article and carry with you at all times on the job.

Here are the upcoming Local 1277 membership meetings for March and April. Please make every attempt to attend the meeting for your unit. It's your Union, and we need your participation at our meetings!

Tuesday, Mar 6: Tuesday, April 3:	Los Angeles area members: L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Evening Session 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Mar 7: Wednesday, April 4:	Riverside area members: 1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 2:00 p.m. Evening Session 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, Mar 8: Thursday, April 5:	Palm Springs/SunLine members: Cathedral City Branch Library, 33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, Mar 8: Thursday, April 5:	Long Beach: Machinist Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.