



# Local 1277

# News

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## Think about this, brothers and sisters!

### **Cannabidiol (CBD) Can Cost you Your Career!**

By Mauro Varela - Treasurer, Local 1277

Brothers and sisters, you can call it Cannabidiol or you can call it CBD. *Either way, it is a potential job wrecker and career destroyer!* Please believe me, and think carefully about ever using it.

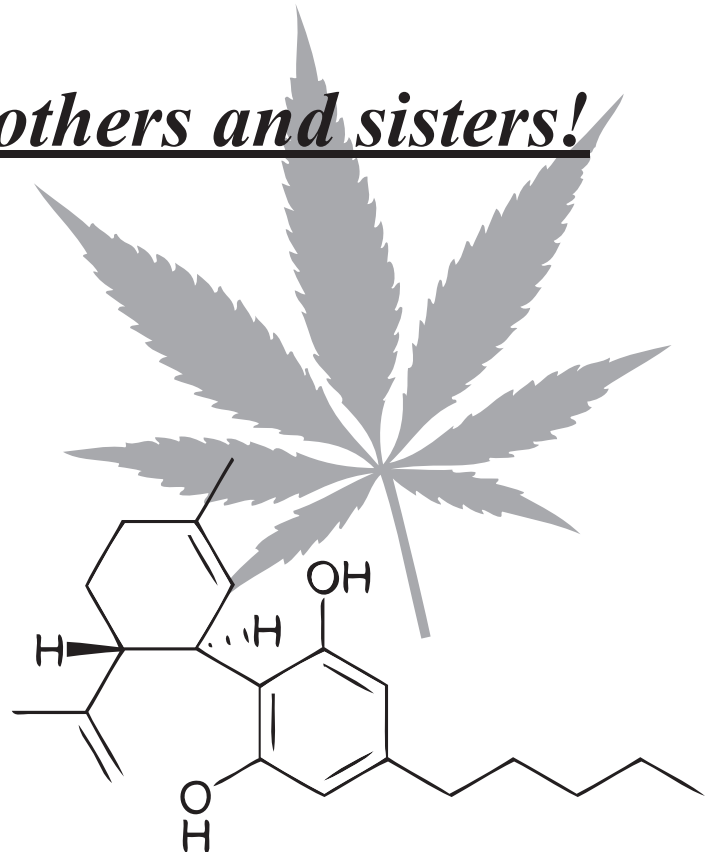
Cannabidiol or CBD, as it is known by most people; is a cannabis-based “THC free” oil product used to aid in chronic arthritis pain, inflammation and certain other medical conditions. But, guess what? *Using CBD may well result in you failing a job-required drug test, even if it has no THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol).* In fact, there have cases where employees have lost their jobs and careers because they used CBD oils.

Let me explain this very clearly:

What is THC? Well, the short answer is *that it is the chemical found in marijuana that causes the psychotropic “high” effect on the body when inhaled or ingested.* Fine, you might think, how can CBD—which is branded and sold as having zero THC—cause me to possibly test positive and risk my job? That’s a fair question.

Here’s how: The truth of the matter is that the *CBD industry is not FDA regulated.* This means that manufacturers can—and do—use different methods and processes for producing the oils. And, with no oversight, you can never know for sure what’s in it—and *never know the exact percentage of whatever ingredients are used.* Because CBD is cannabis-based, those oils that are sourced from hemp can contain up to **0.3% THC**, which is the *federal* legal limit for commercialized industrial hemp.

*While 0.3% doesn’t sound like much, and may not be enough for a “high”, it is enough to show up as **trace** amounts on a random drug test—and render it either as a positive or failed test. Furthermore, excessive use may well make the concentration worse and increase the reading from trace amounts to an actual nanogram count.*



While CBD may be good for medicinal purposes, and while the chances of testing positive for THC after using CBD oil are low, *it is by no means an impossible outcome.* People using CBD must be fully aware of the fact that there are different kinds of CBD oil out there—and, because of a lack of FDA oversight and guidelines, not all of them are created equally or designed with your jobsite regulations in mind.

I cannot stress strongly enough that even though marijuana and marijuana-based products may be legal in various states, *you must always remember that we are public transit employees, and as such fall under DOT/FTA oversight and regulation.* For better or worse, the federal government still classifies marijuana as a schedule 1 drug. So before you start to use, or continue to use, any CBD oil, think about everything you will be putting at risk: Your job, and your career. And your own security, well-being and future—and that of your family! *No matter how much you may rely on using CBD oil, brothers and sisters, please think about the risk!*

## *Why are we in politics?*

# A Good Question Leading Into Next Year's Presidential Election

By John DiRito - Executive Board Member-at-Large

Good morning, afternoon, and evening, brothers and sisters. I hope this newsletter finds you well and active at your jobs and careers.

As the above words ask, "*Why are we in politics?*" This is, in fact, a common question I get asked by you as I visit our properties. Too often, I've noticed, I get complaints or concerns about our political opinions and activities as a Union. Sometimes, I find brothers or sisters who don't always—or even sometimes—agree with our (ATU Local 1277's) views.

***I believe the heart of the issue is the more polarized views that individuals, groups, and even huge voting blocs across the country take as absolute fact.*** Voters simply align with either the Democratic or Republican Party, which is fine for the electoral process because that's what this nation is all about—the freedom to choose!

Some of these voters, however, feel that their union takes away those choices when we—your Executive Board—back one candidate over another. I want to take this opportunity to lay out a reason for our choices, and hopefully we can bridge the divide that seems to be taking place within our ranks.

## Why Have Unions in the First Place?

This question cuts right to the heart of the matter. ***Why are there Unions?*** We need to ask ourselves this, so that we can better analyze and define our direction and function in society. When America was first founded, people lived off the land: hunting, farming, bartering for all goods that would sustain and secure their families. When the Industrial Revolution began in England in the mid-1700s and hit our shores by the end of that century, the poor and unskilled working class was used in a cruel, uncaring system, including the awful use of young children!

Today, those terrible conditions are a (*very*) bad memory, a curse that seems unthinkable in our world! And why is that? The answer is: *Working people rightly demanded fair wages and safe conditions for their labor and productivity.* Now, do you for a second think they got these important, literally life-saving improvements because the industrial barons felt compelled to do that right thing? ***No!*** Not on your life. We had to elect officials and politicians to take the message to Washington and various state capitols: Pass laws that protected workers' rights, safety and health! *It was the working class fighting for the working class, and that fight continues today!*

It is easy to get distracted by today's technology and conveniences, and overlook all the laws that are passed on behalf of big business owners, bankers and the Wall Street crowd. We often have become complacent because we have just enough to make ends meet with our wages, and we can provide for our families even if we have to struggle to save something for their future.

*Meanwhile, far too many laws are stacked against working people and families.* The dream theme of "Work hard and you can make it" is becoming, if not obsolete, than certainly beyond the reach of tens of millions of American working families. Families are finding themselves deeper in debt than ever before, students are graduating with massive loans owed and no promise of a secure future. And the dream of owning your own home in California is quickly becoming a long-shot hope, a nice reminder of generations past.

## Living in Reality

I'm sorry this picture I've painted is so bleak, but it is the current world we live in! This is the current state of affairs our working families face. How do we change it? How do we make the necessary changes so that the working class prospers? ***We do it one political fight at a time, my brothers and sisters.***

The 40 hour work week was not passed into federal legislature in one day. The California law that guarantees overtime pay for anything worked over eight hours in a day was not passed in a single Assembly session. Important benefits like pensions, decent health care, jobsite safety, and Weingarten Rights (please see Brother Shaffer's article) didn't just drop out of the sky or were granted by "nice" bosses. ***No, we had to fight—and fight hard—for them and all the other rights you now have.***

Today, we have to continue to pick up the mantle and fight for our future. Raising the minimum wage to \$20 an hour, offering quality, affordable education, providing healthcare for all *and* exempting pre-existing conditions, and looking at alternative fuels and transportation solutions, just to name a few. These are all the beginning steps to creating a brighter future!

If you don't agree with me on even these simple truths, that's fine. It is still America. We can agree to disagree. We are still carving out a foothold for ourselves and defining what that will be, but I challenge you to consider this: Look at your children, your nieces or nephews, the future torch bearers for your family name and tell them directly, ***"If you don't have a college degree, you don't deserve \$20 an hour. You don't deserve to make a shadow of a living wage. You also don't deserve to have health care because you didn't try hard enough. Oh, and I knew the world would change for the worse, but I didn't care enough about you to do anything to change it."***

We need to fight for our future, brothers and sisters! That means we have to participate in the electoral system. We have to know the issues and know where the candidate—at all political levels—stand on them. We have to support our political friends and fight our enemies (The political slogan of the national AFL-CIO)! We need to unite together behind a common agenda and set of goals.

When we fight, when we get involved, when we involve others, we win! Next year, 2020, will be a turning point for politics and decency and progress in this country. ***We, as union members and simply as concerned citizens, have to be political players, not uninterested bystanders.***

So, you tell me, why are we in politics? Stay tuned in the months to come!

## *Know your rights as a union member!*

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

*By Jeff Shaffer - 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 manager 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.

# Yippee yay, cowboys and cowgirls!



## Local 1277's Annual "Old Timers Day" Set for Saturday, June 8

It's that joyous, good-memories time of the year again: ATU Local 1277's **47th** annual "Old Timers" reunion and party. This year's festivities—with its **"Wild West" theme**—is set for Noon - 4:00 p.m., Saturday, June 8, at the Royal Crest Room at the Pickwick Gardens, located at 1001 Riverside Drive, in Burbank (with the usual free parking).

As always, your Executive Board and active membership are very pleased to invite eligible retired brothers and sisters, along with one guest, to the party. This year's theme—the Wild West—is a tip of the ten-gallon hat to a popular part of American history and folk lore and, more importantly, it is an enjoyable and enduring tradition of our Union.

Our hosted luncheon honors our retired members—new ones and long-retired brothers and sisters—whose shared memories and experiences make this gathering nostalgic and so much fun. The afternoon is a once-a-year chance to catch up with old friends, share stories, laugh, eat, drink, enjoy music and dance.

In keeping with this year's theme, everyone is encouraged to show up in their best boots, ten-gallon hats, bandannas, lariats, boots and button ups. Horses are optional.

And, of course, what would our Old Timers party be without terrific prizes to be raffled off! Every attendee is eligible for the prizes, including our exciting annual *grand prize*. As always, you must be in attendance to qualify to win—and you must be paid up currently with your union dues.

Please be sure to submit your reservations and meal choices no later than **Friday, May 24**. There will be a charge of \$60.00 for any additional guest.

There will be a cocktail reception at Noon, followed by lunch at 1:00. This year's meal options are: BBQ Short Ribs, BBQ Chicken (both with garlic mashed potatoes and seasoned vegetables), BBQ Mahi Mahi (with basmati rice and seasoned vegetables), and the vegetarian option, Vegetable Kabob (with cous cous).

Following lunch, and after a few brief presentations and remarks—including honoring the Local 1277 Shop Steward of the Year with the President's Award—our festive afternoon will continue with music and dancing, and close with the drawing for our special Grand Prize.

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

<b>Tuesday, May 7:</b> <b>Tuesday, June 4:</b>	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.
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<b>Wednesday, May 8:</b> <b>Wednesday, June 5:</b>	Riverside area members: 1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.
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<b>Thursday, May 9:</b> <b>Thursday, June 6:</b>	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.
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<b>Thursday, May 9:</b> <b>Thursday, June 6:</b>	Long Beach: Machinist Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.
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