



Local 1277

News

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No, No, NO on Proposition 22!

Imagine This Nightmare: Your Benefits are Stolen!

By John DiRito - Executive Board Member-at-Large

That's right, brothers and sisters: stolen!

Healthcare coverage—gone!

Overtime pay—vanished!

Retirement security—bye, bye!

Union representation—forget it!

Do you think it can't happen in California? Are you *sure*? Certainly not at the properties that ATU Local 1277 represents, because we are a strong, pro-active, watchful union that *always* has your back.

But what about the tens of thousands Uber and Lyft drivers throughout California? Who has their back?

Well, since last year, the California State Legislature did. With the passage of AB 5, and the governor signing it into law, all those drivers were classified as *employees* of Uber and Lyft, instead of *independent contractors*. What's the distinction? *Oh, only everything!*

As independent contractors, corporate bottom-line worshipping Uber and Lyft ruled their drivers' lives with an iron fist and acted that way towards them. No healthcare coverage. No overtime pay. No retirement benefits. No union representation or collective bargaining. No Social Security contributions. No disability coverage. No workers' comp.

How could that be, you ask? *Because, as independent contractors, those drivers were at the "mercy" of Uber and Lyft.* The ride-hailing giants, like all of Corporate America, wanted to squeeze their workers for every last drop of blood in order to fatten their bottom line. So they arbitrarily laid down the law: *If you want to drive for us, then you will work by our rules—and that means no benefits, no union.* If you don't like it, good luck in finding another job.

So the drivers drove, because some money for themselves and their families was better than none. They put up with foul treatment and humiliation because the alternative was *worse*.

AB 5 to the Rescue

AB 5 (Gonzalez) changed that. It evened the playing field. By re-classifying Uber and Lyft drivers as *employees*, this progressive, much-needed bill mandated that Uber and Lyft grant their drivers the basic benefits that unions like Local 1277 have fought for over the past century. Benefits that you rely on and could not imagine living and working without. Ride-hailing drivers in California now had access to the *fundamental* rights that unionized workers enjoy. *Further, no union trying to organize drivers would take away their freedom to work when they so choose.*

This was labor's biggest legislative triumph of the year, one which we saw as a milestone in our fight to bring basic benefits and unionization to hundreds of thousands of "gig" workers in California.

Of course, big business didn't see it that way. So they have passed the hat around among Corporate America allies and have raised tens of millions of dollars to wipe out AB 5's progress.

The Empire Strikes Back

Their vehicle, on the November 3 ballot, is **Proposition 22, which would overturn AB 5, strip Uber and Lyft drivers of their hard-won benefits, and—worst of all—encourage other greedy employers to classify their workers as independent contractors and steal their benefits!**

That's right: Passage of Proposition 22 would mean nothing less than an outrageous raid on the basic rights and security of all these drivers and their families! Passage would take these working men and women back into the dark ages of no benefits, no safety net, no security for their future. *They would, in effect, once again become "wage slaves", crushed by their corporate masters.*

In pursuit of their really terrible goal, Corporate America has raised (and, believe me, will *spend*) more than \$180 million (so far) to trash AB 5's protections. Labor's side—*our* side—has so far only raised \$5 million. Uber and Lyft alone have each kicked in \$20 million towards passing Proposition 22. **Here's something to think about: Both ride-hailing companies claim that giving their drivers basic benefits would crush them economically, yet they have the resources to pony up \$40 million (and counting) to strip away those benefits? Really?**

Proposition 22 Must be Defeated!

Brothers and sisters, this is labor's biggest fight of the year! *Of course*, the battle for the presidency is vitally important. It's nothing less than a life-changing election. **But, the national election is just that: a battle across 50 states. The fight to defeat the awful Proposition 22 is our special fight here in California.**

With that in mind, I most urgently ask you not only to vote NO on Proposition 22, but to **reach out to friends, family members and retired Local 1277 members throughout California and explain the stakes in this fight and why they must vote NO on this terrible proposal!**

Please, please get out and vote NO, NO, NO on Proposition. Please be sure that your families, friends and neighbors turn out to stop this terrible anti-working people, anti-union scam by Uber and Lyft. **Corporate America is spending oceans of money to crush the promise of AB 5 and cripple "gig" workers. Of course, organized labor is pouring money, time and massive effort into defeating Proposition 22, but we are surely going to be outspent by the bad guys. Our ace in the hole is our collective votes! You must vote against Proposition 22!**

President's report

The Choice of a Lifetime: It must be Biden for President!

By Art Aguilar - President, Local 1277

Editor's note: Because of the vital importance of both the Presidential election and the absolute necessity to defeat Proposition 22, we are sending you the October paper early, before many of you have cast your ballots.

The presidential election Tuesday, November 3 (and earlier, if you vote by mail, since ballots will be mailed out by October 3) really *does* represent the choice of a lifetime. It is nothing less than that. It is nothing less than a decision tens of millions of Americans will make that will determine the future of our country, our democracy, and our very way of life—as working men and women, and citizens of a very troubled and sharply divided America.

Our choice, the only right choice, the only choice that can help working families, is Joe Biden for President! The Democratic ticket of former Senator and Vice-President Biden and California Senator Kamala Harris, is the best—make that the only!—chance for this country to come out of the disastrous condition that the current administration in Washington, D.C. has put us into.

- For four long, depressing, *dangerous* years, the *Republican*-led government has trashed workers' and union rights. It has encouraged fear and division along racial, social and economic lines. It has trampled on civil liberties, freedom of expression and common sense. It has turned basic civil rights into protections for the *wealthy*, not for every *American*. *It has failed to control—or even understand—the worst public-health crisis in memory, relying on silliness instead of science.* It has turned domestic politics into a blood sport, with any hope of bi-partisan cooperation and progress lost to verbal bomb-throwing and personal attacks.

- It has governed with the most corrupt, incompetent and anti-working people “leaders”, whose only qualifications for authority has been lap-dog loyalty to the President and a willingness to destroy the very department or agency they were sworn to protect and administer fairly on behalf of *all* the American people. It has turned the federal Department of Labor into an anti-worker hellhole. It has denied the reality of climate change, and turned environmental protection into “whatever-is-good-for Corporate-America-is-o.k.”

- Overseas, this government has cozied up to dictators in Russia, China, Turkey, Egypt, and Hungary (just to name some), while criticizing and undermining our long-time allies. It has pulled the United States out of important and successful international agreements, while replacing them with nothing, and often making tensions rise needlessly. It has made our country a global laughing stock and an unreliable ally, while destroying our moral standing and leadership.

Bottom line, this disastrous scam of a government has made every effort to roll back our country to the “good old days” of the 1950s, when the corporate power structure ruled, when people (minorities and women) “knew their place”, when workers were exploited and the corporate “bottom line” was more important than anything else. It has done its very best to ignore or eliminate 70 years of upheavals in society, new personal, social, racial and gender views and goals, and a country (and world) that has become completely more complex and inter-dependent.

Second bottom line: For four years, an amoral, self-promoting, willfully out-of-touch crime family has ruled this country—and that has to change, or we—our families and future—are lost for good! It's as simple as that. Giving this corrupt, clueless crowd four more years could well mean that America in 2024 will be completely and disastrously unrecognizable!

It must Be Biden-Harris!

They are organized labor's—and our country's—best and *only* bet. Contrast Joe Biden's long and productive record of public service with the “record” of a failed developer, reality-t.v. front man and “leader” who doesn't understand politics and governing and cares less about it.

Over a career of service as a six-term U.S. senator, and then eight years as an active, responsible vice-president to President Obama, Joe Biden has *always*:

- Supported the union movement and the goals of working families
- **Fought tirelessly for adequate, affordable healthcare for everyone**
- Seen the reality of climate change and the need for environmental safeguards
- **Been out front for social, racial and gender rights and equality**
- Promoted public education, mass transit and equal treatment under the law
- **Valued science over ignorance (think the failed coronavirus effort)**
- Been a “people person”, not an elitist or captive of big business
- **Worked to strengthen relationships with foreign leaders and treaties**

*Perhaps the most important and enduring thing about Biden is that great and so rare (in current American politics) trait: **Decency**.* Joe Biden simply is hardwired to treat every man, woman and child he meets with friendship, openness and caring. His life has been filled with unbearable personal tragedy, but through it all he has stuck to his efforts in productive *public* service and a consistent outpouring of *personal* empathy, understanding and compassion.

Decency. Perhaps that's the single thing that separates Biden from the current president. But it gets even better when you think of what a Biden presidency would mean for our country:

- Crucial, *progressive* Supreme Court appointments
- **Advancing labor's agenda under a pro-working people government**
- The end of a "crony", corrupt government
- **A scientific fight against the coronavirus**
- Recognition of the danger/reality of climate change
- **Expanded healthcare for everyone**
- Sensible immigration policies
- **Restoration of foreign commitments and treaties**
- A focus on civil rights and equality under the law
- **Government truly of, and for, all the people, not the rich**
- Upholding our Constitution, not trampling on it
- **An America we can, once again, be proud of**

Think of that, brothers and sisters, a country we can again call our own. One in which an person's *rights, dignity, worth and future* is put ahead of corporate greed, ignorance and hatred, self-serving bluster and total lack of understanding about domestic governing and foreign affairs.

Think of an America looking forward, not backwards. Involved with the world, not hiding behind a wall. Committed to income, racial and gender equality, not government for the wealthy few. Honoring working people and families, not making their lives more difficult. Making government a partner for progress, not an extinguisher of freedom.

We *can* do this, brothers and sisters. We *can* change the wrongful direction of our country. We *can* do it and we *must* do it! Starting with your mail-in ballots and/or voting on Tuesday, November 3 for **Joe Biden for President!**

With that in mind, I must add this very important note: **This is a national election. And while California will most likely vote for Biden, the election may hinge on the votes in many other states. Please—please—reach out to all your friends and family members in other states and urge them to vote for Biden for President. Make those calls, write those cards, send out those e-mails and texts. Vote for Biden. Vote for a better America!**

The Biden-Harris ticket isn't our best bet. ***It's our only bet!*** This is the presidential election that will shape our careers, families and future. It is nothing less than that!

It's good for you and for our Union

Stay Informed, Keep Your Contact Information Updated!

By Jeff Shaffer - Financial-Recording Secretary

This is a communication/information matter that comes up from time to time. The most important example of the importance of maintaining contact between your Union office and you takes place around the time of our Union election for officers and Shop Stewards, or—especially in this case—when there is an all-important national, or even state or local election.

Your vote *matters*. It is important for you to participate both in our Union democracy and the larger national and state democratic process. And there's no higher stakes than the upcoming ***Presidential election and the critical fight against Proposition 22 in California*** (see the articles in this paper).

There is a simple fix to any problems concerning communication and information. As many of you know, your Union has a need to send out information from time to time. This can be for any number of reasons, including an event (like Old Timers' Day or Open Enrollment), timely notifications, or even a work-related or political/social action ATU Local 1277 is putting together. This applies to *all* of our members, active and retirees.

I've heard many members tell me that they willingly give their new address and other personal contact details to their company, so I have to ask: *Why doesn't your Union get the same information?* Believe it or not, the companies we represent do not often forward this information to our Union. That's a *shocker*, I know!

Whether it is a name change, address switch, new phone or e-mail contact, or *any* type of change to your contact information at all, *please let us know so we can best serve you*. You can always contact the Union office at 323/222-1277, ext. 105, and leave your updated info. Thank you!

A final note: As per the ATU International Constitution (Section 21.8), "Members are required to keep their Financial-Secretary notified of their current place of residence."



Membership Meetings During The Coronavirus Pandemic

By Mauro Varela - Treasurer, Local 1277

You probably know that ATU 1277 had gone five months without holding membership meetings. This is, of course, because of coronavirus pandemic. On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency in California due to the outbreak. Gatherings were limited to no more than 10 people, and at least six feet of physical distance had to be observed. While adhering to those limitations, it was not physically possible to conduct our regular unit meetings.

As of April 2020, ATU International President John Costa ordered all locals to discontinue membership meetings and elections (if applicable) until further notice. In late August, the International gave permission to use Zoom as a form of conducting membership meetings, and also provided guidance on conducting elections for the locals that needed them in the June and November election cycles. Therefore, all members received credit for every meeting not held.

Local 1277 President—and Chairman of the California Conference Board, which represents 13 ATU local in our state—Aguilar started using Zoom to communicate daily with all the Presidents, IVPs, lobbyists and attorneys who are working hard to assist our more than 13,000 brothers and sisters during this pandemic.

Your Executive Board realizes how important it is for our members to be informed, and has been working hard to make membership meetings possible again. With our forward-thinking, can-do attitude, your Board learned to work through the difficulties caused by this pandemic. During these last five months, we've learned how to proficiently navigate the Zoom platform so that we can once again connect with all of you and make sure that you are properly informed.

We successfully held our first week of *on-line* membership meetings in September. If you were not able to join us, don't fret. I will walk you through on how to register so you can attend the on-line meetings while we wait to resume in person meetings.

First, why Zoom? Well, as you all know, almost everything went online once the virus restrictions hit. As such, we were able to join different meetings with different people on different platforms. We had meetings on Microsoft Teams, and we attempted to have meetings via WebX, and StartMeeting. All had varying degrees of issues, from logging in to dropped meetings, to audio/video difficulties.

Zoom is Best

Although Zoom has its share of issues, it seemed to be the most stable way to go, and had the most bang for the buck, including hosting meetings/webinars on the most electronic devices. After our successful September meetings, we knew this is the right platform for us. So, how do you get on Zoom, and how do you join our meetings? Well, start by downloading Zoom. You can download the app to almost all electronic devices. It will work with iOS (iPhone/iPad/Mac), Android (most other cellphones/tablets), Windows and Chromebooks.

On mobile devices, go to the App/Play store and search Zoom. The correct app to download is *ZOOM Cloud Meetings*. This app is free and should not cost anything to download. If you are getting charged, it is not the correct app, and you should not download it. Once it is installed on your device, you will have to create an account by signing up with an e-mail. On a Windows/Mac desktop/laptop or Chromebook, open your web browser and type in ZOOM.com. On the top right corner of the page, there is a sign up/in button. Click on that button and create an account. **For the purposes of our membership meetings, please make sure it is an e-mail account that is on file with the Union so we can verify your membership.**

At your locations, every month there should be a posting on the Union board with information for the next meeting. There will be two ways to register for the meetings. 1) Via a QR Code, which you can scan with your device's camera. 2) If your device does not have a camera, or you are not familiar with QR codes, the link to the registration page is also listed on the posting. If you opt for the latter, please be sure to type the link *exactly* as it is displayed. Otherwise, you will get an error page, or it may send you to some other website.

Once you have scanned or typed in the link, fill out the questions on the registration page. Once you complete the registration, it will tell you to wait for a confirmation from the host. This will be in the form of an e-mail sent to the e-mail you have used to register. Please keep in mind that if you get denied, it is more likely because the information provided does not match the information on record with the Union. If you get denied, please reach out ***directly to me*** at the Union office to verify your information.

Once all information is verified, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a link to the meeting you have registered for. **Please do not share this link as it is unique to you.** If you do share the link, it will only allow *one* device to join the meeting.

If you have any question or concerns about joining the meeting, please e-mail me at mvarela@atu1277.com. I hope this information is helpful. I encourage everyone to register for the next membership meeting in October. See you all there—***virtually***—at our next meeting!

