

# TWU Express

TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO

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## LA Bikeshare Workers Secure Industry-Leading Contract



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# Taking Back Our Strike Power

*By International President John Samuelson*



**T**WU Local 100, in conjunction with the International, has launched a campaign to amend New York's public sector strike-prohibiting Taylor Law. This damaging pro-employer, anti-worker law prohibits work stoppage for any reason by public employees, including TWU members in two of our local unions employed by New York's MTA.

Those in favor of this law—namely most Democrats and Republicans, and shockingly many public-sector trade unions—have simply kept it on the books for the last 56 years. Collectively, with some standout exceptions, they are quite content with denying workers the right to strike and thereby granting bosses enormous power.

It is stunning that there are public-sector unions who do not want the right to strike. Having the legal right to strike would mean having the lawful power to disrupt the status quo. This power would disrupt the current structure and methodology of how most unions conduct business and settle contracts. It would also mean workers could push union leaders to exercise this power, including demanding more because they hold a power that is taken from the bosses. In New York State, this also means taking on the Democrats. It is crystal clear that most Democrats, and most public-sector unions for that matter, are very comfortable with the current system that gives the politicians and the bosses they appoint almost all the power.

The TWU has always fought back against this construct. Faced with an extremely onerous anti-strike law, in 1966 Mike Quill famously led Local 100 into strike action against New York City. Twice more since the Quill era Local 100 has engaged in full-blown strike action to achieve contract settlements. Additionally, threats of Taylor Law injunctions against the TWU over allegations of work stoppages are a common occurrence year in and year out.

Counterintuitively, and perhaps most importantly, the right to strike is itself a deterrent to strike action. When bosses are forced to confront the consequences of their actions, they immediately have more skin in the game and become more willing to bargain in good faith. Absent the threat of strike action, the bosses have no incentive to end contract disputes amicably. So long as the playing field remains unlevel, the bosses will at some point overplay their hand, underestimate the willingness of the TWU to fight for our livelihoods and trigger a fightback.

By amending the New York State Taylor Law and winning back the right to strike, public sector bosses will be compelled to bargain in good faith and contracts will be settled as intended: fairly and on time, without a strike.

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*"When bosses are forced to confront the consequences of their actions, they immediately have more skin in the game and become more willing to bargain in good faith."*

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samuelson".



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# Protecting Our Children from Workplace Hazards

*By International Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerome Lafragola*



Recently, the United States entered a startling new era in domestic labor policy. For the first time in over a century, our country experienced an increase in child labor violations amid a simultaneous rollback of child labor laws. A Hyundai supplier in Alabama was sued for employing children as young as 12. In Nebraska, an investigation was launched after an underage worker sustained chemical burns in a meat packing plant. And a McDonald's franchise in Pittsburgh was busted after forcing children as young as 14 to work more than eight hours in a single day. Since 2018, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has reported a 70% increase in child labor violations, citing 835 companies in the last fiscal year alone.

In response to these egregious allegations, states across the country, including Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Ohio are toying with or have already loosened the very laws that are designed to keep our children safe and protect them from hazardous and dangerous work. In some cases, state legislatures want to make it legal for children as young as 14 to work in heavy construction, on assembly lines, during overnight shifts or in meatpacking plants.

Our teenagers should be focused on family, school and friends—not whether their hand might get severed in a workplace accident. Watching as state after state seeks to expose children to the physical, mental, and emotional harms of industrial worksites all while degrading a pillar of U.S. labor law that our predecessors fought, and in some cases died for, is a moral outrage.

It should be no surprise that those most in favor of child labor law rollbacks are outsized corporate interests that stand to benefit from these abusive policies. An investigation by the Washington Post found that the Foundation for Government Accountability—an organization with direct ties to big business—is the primary force behind this new wave of child work laws.

The introduction of policies that enable children to legally work in dangerous conditions, during overnight shifts, or when they should be in school, is just another way for corporations to take advantage of America's children, and the TWU will continue to fight against it.

Pushing back on these draconian measures will take a collective effort, not just from the trade union movement, but from the

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elected leaders, safety and child advocates, and voters who find the resurrection of inappropriate child labor morally unacceptable. It will also require the Department of Labor to continue investigating and prosecuting any organization or individual who endangers America's children.

As we enter this new chapter in American history, the TWU will continue to stand up against anyone who thinks these abusive policies are okay and aggressively defend the rights of our children to receive an education, experience childhood, and be protected from the hazards of industrial work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome Lafragola". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

## LA Bikeshare Workers Ratify Industry-Leading Agreement

Fighting for increased wages, improved working conditions and job security, bikeshare workers at LA Metro overwhelmingly ratified their first contract, becoming the newest members of the Transport Workers Union of America on March 10.

Workers employed by Bicycle Transit Systems (BTS) voted 97% in favor of an industry-leading agreement that includes pay increases ranging from 20% to 27% over the next five years, including paid sick days and other workplace improvements. The workers, who manage, maintain and redistribute bikes throughout the LA metro region are now members of TWU Local 320.

“The story of this LA Bikeshare contract victory begins with workers having the audacity to fight back to advance their livelihoods. These workers began organizing in the middle of a pandemic, persevered through two years of tough contract negotiations, and ultimately came out on top — with an agreement that raises the standard for this industry across the board,” said TWU International President John Samuelson. “I’m incredibly proud of what this workgroup has fought to accomplish, and I am honored to welcome them to the TWU family.”

“This contract represents the solidarity of the workers here and reflects the value, importance and dignity of our labor. It will help ensure better protections, accountability and livable wages, all of which translate into a thriving future for the workers and the metro bikeshare system,” said Anne Marie Drolet, a bike mechanic and member of the negotiating team.

TWU member organizers Chris Avila from Local 555 and Jason Frantz from Local 320 worked closely with the LA bikeshare group



throughout the entire campaign up until the contract, and were instrumental in helping workers with their victory.

The LA metro bikeshare victory comes as popularity for unions continues to soar among Americans, and at a time when workers in emerging markets are organizing and fighting the bosses to secure life-changing contracts.

“I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: an organizing campaign means nothing until workers ratify their all-important first contract,” Samuelson said. “Since 2017, the TWU has been committed to growing our membership and settling for nothing less than life-changing collective bargaining agreements for the workers we represent.”

## Victory in the South: Houston Paratransit Workers Win TWU Representation

The Transport Workers Union won a representation at MV Transportation in Houston, Texas in March. The TWU’s goal is to provide more than 375 paratransit workers with dignity on the job and improved working conditions.

The paratransit workers sought TWU representation to combat low pay, staffing shortages and other issues related to post-pandemic working conditions. Organizing in the South has been a strategic focus of the TWU.

“For far too long, working people in Southern states have been fed lies and have been intimidated into believing that their organizing efforts will be unsuccessful. This victory proves that organizing in the American South is



possible and that when workers collectively fight back, workers win,” said TWU International President John Samuelson.

“Unions level the playing field by making things fair between workers and bosses — and that’s exactly what we need. I’m thrilled to have TWU on the property and look forward to negotiating our first contract,” said Tomika Griggs, a Houston Paratransit driver.

This campaign was successful in part because of the grassroots efforts by TWU Officers Raul DeLeon of Local 260 and James Mobley of Local 252. The nearly flawless organizing drive was based on the principles they learned through organizer trainings made available by the TWU Organizing Department.

## MEMBERS IN ACTION



# TWU Local 100 Seeks the Right to Strike

Since 1967, bus and subway workers in New York employed by the MTA have not been legally allowed to exercise their rights as workers to engage in strike action. That could change with the introduction of new legislation in the New York State Legislature and strong support from pro-worker elected leaders.

Drafted at the request of the Transport Workers Union of American and TWU Local 100, a bill introduced earlier this year would amend the Taylor Law, effectively giving bus and subway workers employed by the MTA the right to engage in strike action if a lengthy process of negotiations and mediation fail to produce a contract governing wages, health benefits and working conditions. Transit workers and TWU Local 100 would not be subject to the draconian penalties currently authorized by the Taylor Law if the legislation is adopted.

The bill's introduction by New York State Senator Jessica Ramos comes as Local 100 is in contract negotiations with the MTA, and as their current contract nears expiration.



The bill is based on the federal Railway Labor Act, which allows railroad workers at the LIRR, Metro-North and other carriers to legally strike if certain criteria are met. If adopted, the legislation would level the playing field for transit workers after the Supreme



## MEMBERS IN ACTION

Court's Janus decision weakened the power of organized labor by allowing freeloaders to avoid paying dues. It also would bring New York in line with international law declarations, by the United Nations and other entities, that workers have the right to withhold their labor.

"The right to strike for NYC Transit workers is a matter of equity," TWU International President John Samuelson said. "Prohibition against striking for inner city transit workers, while our suburban counterparts can legally withhold work, is grossly unfair, grossly inequitable."

Local 100 President Richard Davis thanked Sen. Ramos for being a "champion for the working class."

"This is a democracy," Davis said. "Working men and women should have the right to withhold their labor so they can secure good wages and provide for their families as best as they can. It's that simple. The working class has not received its fair share in society, and we will not rest until we receive it."

The amendment also would apply to transit workers at the Upstate Transportation Authority, including the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, the Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority, the Capital District Transportation Authority and the Central New York Regional Transportation Authority.

### Local 100 Members Make Their Voices Heard

More than 2,000 transit workers from every department and division of Local 100 descended on New York's State House in March to lobby their individual legislators, both in support of New York Governor Kathy Hochul's MTA budget and in support of the proposed legislation that would amend the Taylor Law.

Workers heard from Comptroller DiNapoli, Assembly members Rodneyse Bichotte, Monique Waterman, Al Taylor, Latoya Joyner and Speaker Carl Heastie. On the Senate side, Local 100 members heard from Jamaal Bailey, John Liu, Kevin Parker, Zelnor Myrie, Leroy Comrie and Jessica Ramos. Ramos and Joyner particularly impressed the crowd with their full-throated support for amending the New York State Taylor Law to give transit workers statewide



the right to strike, including TWU Local 100 alongside other unions (including those representing the LIRR and Metro North), who currently enjoy that right.

Ramos told the crowd in part: "In 2005 I was in college when I got to see so many Local 100 members walk off the job, courageously violating the law to do the right thing – to leverage their power for a better contract. That's what union members do. That's what a good union does. It organizes its worker power to ensure that the bosses at the bargaining table hear every damn word. So when John, Tony and Rich came to me, I said, 'Hell yeah – I'm going to introduce that bill.'"

"This is about equality. This is about having the possibility of calling for a strike when you know the bosses at the MTA aren't treating you right, when you know that you're not getting the wages, benefits, and protections you need on the job."

She urged members to tell their legislators how hard they had to work during the pandemic and how important the Taylor Law bill is.

Following the auditorium program, in over 100 legislative visits, union members pressed our legislative agenda, also asking many legislators to support hazard pay for transit workers.



### Secretary-Treasurer training was held at the MITAG training center in Linthicum, Maryland March 26-31

In attendance were Sienna Dunn, Secretary-Treasurer and Thomas McQueen, Executive Vice President of Local 200; Joshua Mascara, Secretary-Treasurer and Tyson Brown, Vice President of Local 208; Joseph Ford III, Secretary-Treasurer, Joseph Rose, President and Alexander Ramirez, Representative of Local 264; Jeannette (Pickle) Tierney, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 289; Raul Abreu, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 507; Erick Burch, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 512; Vivian Lewis, Recording Secretary of Local 571; Cliff Irvin, Executive Vice President and Tracy A. Clark, Recording Secretary of



Local 527; Saadat Ghani, President, Abraham Morante, Secretary-Treasurer, Anthony Clark, Executive Board and Lakesha (Lake) Henry, Executive Board member of Local 575; Sharolyn Stanley, President of Local 578; James Denti, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 1400; Brett Lilley, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 2008; Reese Price, Secretary-Treasurer and Paul J. Romero, Vice President, International Representative and President of Local 2014; Christina Scott, President of Local 220 and Shavon Gibson, International Staff. Special guests included Jerome Lafragola, International Secretary-Treasurer and Curtis Tate, International Administrative Vice President and Mitch Lieberman, Instructor.

### Trade Unionists from Across the Globe Celebrate TWU's Irish Heritage

TWU leaders and members gathered in New York City March 15 – 17 to celebrate the TWU's Irish heritage and honor the contributions Irish Americans continue to make in fighting for workers and their communities. During the three-day celebration, the TWU welcomed trade unionists from around the world, including Mick Cash, Former Secretary-General of the National Union of Rail, Transport and Maritime Workers (RMT) and Paddy Crumlin, National Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia. Festivities kicked off with Quill-Connolly Day at Local 100 and concluded with a global contingent of trade unionists marching together in the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade.





# TWU Looks Ahead to Worker Wins

After the hard-fought pandemic and its aftermath, elected leaders are starting to return to longstanding public policy issues. Labor protections, infrastructure investment and implementation and integrating new technologies are all on the agenda in Washington, DC and in state capitols across the country. The TWU is prepared for these fights, and we are planning to make significant gains for our members over the next two years.

## FAA Reauthorization

In Washington, the Federal Aviation Administration's authorization (FAA) is set to expire at the end of September 2023. Similar to the surface transportation reauthorization (which became law in 2021 and is now known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), the FAA authorization establishes the rules everyone in the airline industry must follow. For this round, there are major safety and labor concerns the TWU is asking Congress to address, including:

- Holding aircraft repair stations outside of the country to the same standards our members follow. The Global Aircraft Maintenance Safety Improvement Act, which would force the FAA to hold all of the repair facilities it certifies to the same safety standards, passed the House last Congress but was too late to be taken up by the Senate. The TWU is leading this bill, which would be the largest increase in standards for these facilities since the FAA first allowed airlines to repair their fleets outside of the country in the 1980s.
- Ending the threat of assault on airline and airport workers. Violent attacks on flight attendants, customer service agents and others have skyrocketed in recent years. Ending the mask mandate has not brought these assaults down to pre-pandemic levels. Requiring airlines to follow their own assault prevention rules, mandating self-defense training and establishing a "no-fly list" for convicted assailants are all essential steps towards protecting workers as they do their jobs.
- Fighting back on airline attempts to pre-empt state labor laws. After TWU victories in California, Colorado, Illinois and elsewhere that raised labor standards for airline workers, airlines have asked Congress to invalidate state laws and make the federal government their sole regulator. No other industry has this model, and such a change would instantly undermine labor rights across the country. The TWU is leading the fight to keep this bad idea out of any federal legislation.

## New Technologies

New technology remains at the forefront of the TWU's concerns. Many states are considering laws governing autonomous vehicles on their roads, and Congress is likely to consider legislation that would establish minimum federal standards for these vehicles in the near future. At the same time, advanced air mobility companies have applied to the FAA to certify air taxis that would

fly up to six passengers at low altitude across urban areas. The TWU is focused on making sure that new technologies are not displacing workers, but rather upskilling workers in order to create new jobs with high labor standards for TWU members.

## Railroad Safety

Railroad safety reform is also expected to come up following the derailment and environmental disaster in East Palestine, Ohio. TWU members at freight railroads have been forced to work longer and longer hours attempting to keep their trains safe in an industry that intentionally destroyed 20% of its jobs over the past six years. We are fighting to hold railroad management accountable for their poor business decisions and keep our members safe.

## Defending and Expanding the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

The historic victories we won last Congress in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will need to be defended and expanded upon. Transit agencies now have more money than ever for capital projects but are facing massive deficits for operations. Commuter railroads have new plans to expand track in California, New York, New Jersey and elsewhere, and worker protections around electric buses are more important than ever. We will preserve every dollar and every worker protection we won over the past few years and move forward stronger than ever.

## Victory for Air Workers in California

In 2021, the California Supreme Court ruled that flight attendants based in the state were entitled to the same meal and rest breaks as other workers. In response, the airlines immediately launched a lobbying blitz to try to exempt themselves from these protections. TWU organized the other airline unions and defeated every attempt to exclude our members from state law. Finally, the airlines agreed to a deal that requires them to negotiate with organized labor to implement meal and rest break requirements for flight attendants. Non-union carriers are not eligible for any flexibility under the new law. This is a major victory for TWU members, and we are encouraging other states to follow a similar path as they increase workers' rest time.

# STATE CONFERENCES



## Strengthening Political Collaboration and Communication in Texas

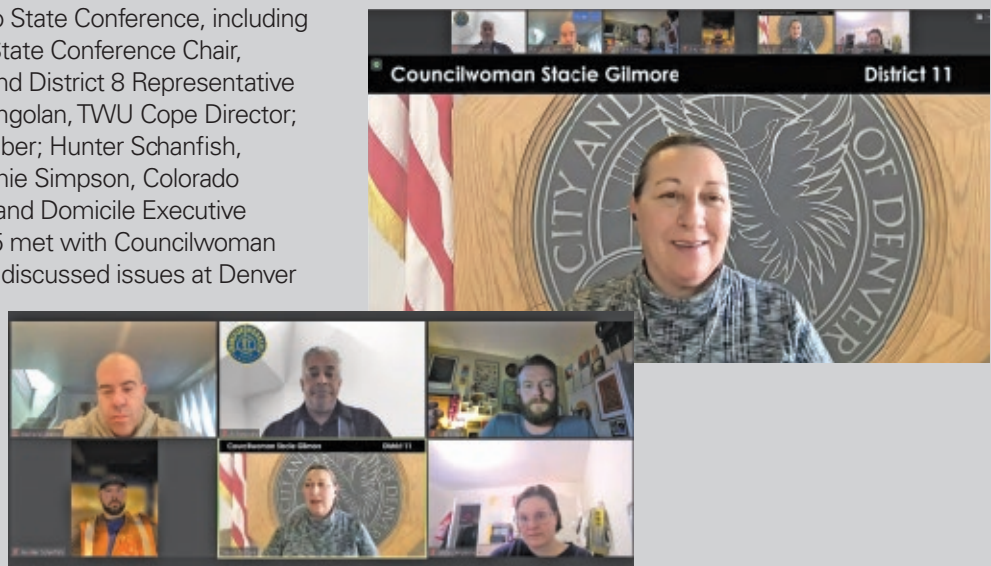
On April 5, 2023, Texas Congressman Marc Veasey hosted a Labor Task Force meeting with DFW-area union leaders to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing working families in the region. Among the attendees were TWU Local 513 Legislative Representative John Gardner, TWU Local 591 President Gary Schaible, Texas Tarrant County CLC President Brian Golden a TWU Local 591 member and TWU Local 567 President Rollie Reeves, who shared their insights and concerns with Rep. Marc Veasey. The meeting was part of the Texas State Conference and local member issues initiative, which aims to strengthen the collaboration and communication between labor unions and elected officials in Texas.



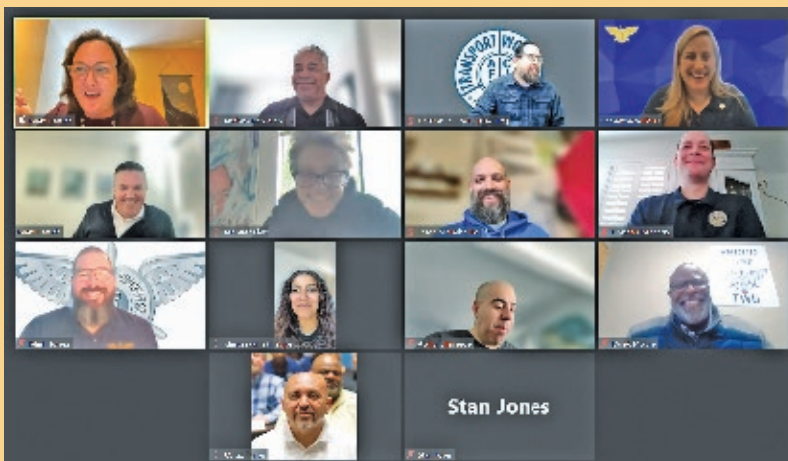
## Colorado State Conference

Members of the Colorado State Conference, including Albilio Villaverde, Colorado State Conference Chair, Executive Board Member and District 8 Representative from Local 555; Andrew Rangolan, TWU Cope Director; Justin Neal, Local 555 member; Hunter Schanfish, Local 555 member; and Jamie Simpson, Colorado State Conference Co-Chair and Domicile Executive Board Member of Local 555 met with Councilwoman Stacie Gilmore, where they discussed issues at Denver International Airport.

The Councilwoman listened intently as TWU members shared their perspectives and challenges and explored potential solutions.



# STATE CONFERENCES



## California State Conference

Congresswoman and U.S. Senate candidate Katie Porter met with the California State Conference to discuss her vision for the state and the nation. She highlighted her record of fighting for working families and holding corporations accountable, and she also listened to the concerns and priorities of the California State Conference members. Porter thanked TWU members for their leadership and advocacy.



For the latest news & updates, visit [www.twu.org](http://www.twu.org)



## NY/NJ State Conference Meets

The NY/NJ State Conference meeting took place on April 11 at Local 1400 in Edgewater, NJ. Participants included Matt Wright, New Jersey Conference Co-Chairman; Patrick Reynolds, President, TWU Local 1400; Christina Scott, President, TWU Local 220; Debra Hagan, President, TWU Local 252; Denise Fleming, Vice President, TWU Local 252; Tracy Lowe, Legislative Representative, TWU Local 101; Mark Quirk, Legislative Representative, TWU Local 1400; Patrick Howard, President, TWU Local 2001; Jose DeJesus, Recording Secretary, TWU Local 106; Steve Hamm, Local 229, New Jersey Conference Chairman; Patrick Flannery, New York Conference Chairman, TWU Local 2001; Celeste Streeter, Legislative Representative, TWU Local 101; James Mobley, New York Conference Co-Chairman; and Andrew Rangolan, State Conferences Director.

# TWU Working Women

Laws passed last decade and expanded late last year grant nearly every American worker the right to pump breast milk at work. These laws also require that employers provide workers with reasonable break times and a place other than a restroom for the purpose of expressing breast milk—with one exception; flight crews are the only private sector workers excluded from these essential workplace protections.

But if TWU's Working Women's Committee has anything to do with it, these outdated and exclusionary laws may soon be a thing of the past.

Advocating for changes in federal law was the focus of the spring meeting of the TWU Working Women's Committee meeting, held March 28 – 30 in Washington, DC. More than 70 working women attended the meeting where they learned how to lobby before meeting with members of Congress.

TWU's working women called on lawmakers to ensure all nursing mothers—including flight crews—are protected under federal law. The women asked that these protections be included as part of the upcoming FAA Reauthorization.

For Mary Simon, a 28-year member of TWU Local 260, the experience was exhilarating.

"I've never done anything like this before—I've never lobbied before," Simon said. "So, to be able to sit across from my own elected leaders, talk to them about a problem that women are facing, and know that they listened felt good. I believe TWU women were able

to make a difference, especially for younger workers who are joining the workforce."

For Allegiant Air Flight Attendant and Recording Secretary for TWU Local 579 Klarissa Principe, watching her union sisters from across transportation industries stand up for flight crews was an inspiring act of solidarity.

"It really hits home that no matter how many locals we have, no matter where in the country we are, no matter how different our jobs are, as TWU members and as working women, we're all going to fight for each other," Principe said.

In addition to meeting with more than 60 lawmakers, TWU's working women also learned about the importance of COPE, toured the National Museum of African American History and Culture and learned about a brief history of working women.



# Lobby in Washington



# TWU Veterans Committee Lays Wreath

Members of the TWU Veterans Committee gathered in Washington, D.C. on February 28 where they honored fallen service members by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

Following the ceremony, the TWU Veterans Committee was given a private tour of the cemetery where they learned about its history, culture and future. During the tour, committee members paid their respects at well-known sites, including the eternal flame that marks the graves of President John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline Onassis, as well as lesser-known sites, including the graves of fallen service members from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Being able to represent our union sisters and brothers while paying respects to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice was a once-in-a-lifetime honor,” said Jose Galarza, International liaison to the TWU Veterans Committee.

“Arlington National Cemetery, and the wreath laying ceremony, represent a profound legacy that, as veterans, we are a part of,” said TWU Veterans Committee Recording Secretary and Local 100 member D’Artagnan Magaña. “It is an honor to have moments like this that allow us to come together and reflect on everyone’s service.”



# at Tomb of Unknown Soldier





## Local 579 Flight Attendants Picket JetBlue Airways Headquarters

On March 20, nearly 100 JetBlue flight attendants with TWU Local 579 picketed outside of JetBlue’s corporate headquarters in New York to demand answers from the airline about what its proposed takeover of Spirit Airlines will mean for their jobs and livelihoods. At the picket, JetBlue flight attendants called on the company to provide them legally binding protections in the event JetBlue’s acquisition of Spirit Airlines is approved.

“As flight attendants, we are the cornerstone of JetBlue, critical to its success, yet JetBlue management continues to disregard our members,” Tysha Best, President of TWU Local 579, said at the picket.

JetBlue’s failure to outline clear protections for workers amid its proposed Spirit acquisition is just one way the airline is failing its flight attendants. On top of this, JetBlue continues to blatantly ignore legally binding language in its contract agreement with flight attendants, undermining Local 579 members’ major collective bargaining win and driving concern among workers that a Spirit acquisition would only magnify mismanagement within the airline.

JetBlue’s disrespect towards its flight attendants and refusal to hear their concerns comes as the carrier sustains some of the highest flight attendant attrition rates in the industry. As a result of low pay and mistreatment of its workers, JetBlue’s high turnover will no doubt continue until the airline adjusts its anti-union and anti-worker approach and addresses its widespread mismanagement head on.

Undeterred by JetBlue’s failures, flight attendants made their voices heard at the picket, refusing to let management get away with shady, abusive practices. Especially with JetBlue’s Spirit acquisition



looming, flight attendants are determined to hold JetBlue accountable and secure critical job protections.

At the picket, flight attendants held signs that read “It’s Our Turn!” and led chants saying, “Honor the contract,” “We want solutions, no more excuses” and “We are here! Where is Robin?” in reference to Robin Hayes, the CEO of JetBlue.

Local 579 members’ March picket was a show of force. Flight attendants made known to JetBlue that its flight attendants are not going to let themselves be taken advantage of and that the union is as strong and determined as ever.



# TWU Shows Support for Reintroduced “Protection from Abusive Passengers Act”

TWU flight attendants joined Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), Congressman Eric Swalwell (D-CA) and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) on March 29 as they announced the reintroduction of the Protection from Abusive Passengers Act at a press conference in Washington, D.C. The legislation would prohibit violent passengers from utilizing the national airspace after being convicted or fined for assaulting aviation workers. The bill, first introduced in April 2022, would also permanently ban abusive passengers from participating in the TSA PreCheck or Customs’ Global Entry programs.

At the press conference, Jennifer Vitalo, a flight attendant and member of TWU Local 556, shared her personal experience of assault on board and highlighted the need for legislation that holds violent passengers accountable. While assaults against airline crews increased exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic, unruly passengers were an issue that TWU members and other airline workers dealt with long before the pandemic, and violent incidents continue to occur across the country.

“We were taking off and a passenger got up, started screaming obscenities and came to the aft galley door and began to open it. I contacted the flight deck immediately and at that time, the passenger started to assault me. I was hit in the head, knocked to the ground and I sustained very serious injuries as a result of that,” Vitalo said. “We’re there to do a job and we want to keep our passengers safe as well as each other, and we deserve to go to work and come home in the same shape that we



were in when we got there. This legislation will help us to be able to do just that.”

As part of its Assault Won’t Fly campaign, the TWU has been holding actions at airports across the country to drive public awareness to airline assaults, including at Dallas Love Field Airport in Texas, John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York, Chicago Midway Airport in Illinois and Orlando Sanford International Airport in Florida. The campaign has helped secure critical elected support for the Protection from Abusive Passengers Act, which now has 21 cosponsors.



# TWU Cabin Crew Coalition Accelerates the Fight for all TWU Flight Attendants

TWU flight attendant leaders from Southwest Airlines, Allegiant, Flight Services International and JetBlue met at the TWU International Headquarters in Washington, DC for the second Coalition of TWU Flight Attendants meeting in April. The Presidents, Health and Safety Chairpersons and Legislative Affairs Chairpersons from Locals 556, 577, 579, and our newest Local, 578, met for two days to discuss and collaborate on the priorities of our flight attendants.

In addition to updates on negotiations and other local issues, the Coalition members received briefings from TWU staff members and advisors on communications, legislative issues, Future Leaders Organizing Committee (FLOC) and the Assault Won't Fly Campaign.

The Coalition agreed on future events to visit legislators in support of the recently launched Protection from Abusive Passengers Act as well as additional member actions to mobilize the public in support of passage of the bill. The Coalition also discussed strategies working together to pass the Toxic Cabin Air Bill and develop a Flight Attendant Bill of Rights. In addition, the Coalition agreed to change its name to the TWU Cabin Crew Coalition.

"The TWU Cabin Crew Coalition accelerated the fight for work-life improvements for all TWU flight attendants," said Local 556 President Lyn Montgomery. "TWU flight attendant leaders collectively strategized over aviation safety, legislative actions, negotiations, assaults on flight attendants, and membership concerns."



"The TWU Cabin Crew Coalition continues our mission to combine our efforts in the areas of legislation, advocacy, and to share resources to improve the livelihoods of our union members," said Local 579 President Tyesha Best. "We are excited to amplify our voices as flight attendants as we fight for better quality of life, better work rules, and safer working environments."

"The TWU Cabin Crew Coalition is a diverse group of professional

## TWU Survey Shows Airline Workers Still Face Abuse and Violence from Passengers

The federal mask mandate on airplanes, which reportedly caused nearly 75% of unruly passenger incidents onboard, was lifted on April 18, 2022. One year later, a new eye-opening survey from the TWU finds that airline workers are still experiencing unruly passenger behavior at alarming rates.

According to the internal survey, 57% of surveyed flight attendants have reportedly experienced assault or harassment from unruly passengers in the past year, even as pandemic-related restrictions ease for air travel.

Additionally, the survey found that half of surveyed flight attendants have witnessed a colleague be assaulted or harassed by a passenger in the past year. Safety requests, flight delays or cancellations and alcohol consumption were the primary triggers for unruly

and violent behavior, according to surveyed members.

"This survey confirms what the TWU has been saying from the start: this issue won't go away until both regulators and airline executives implement stronger and more effective safety measures to protect our airline workers," said TWU International President John Samuelsen.

While reported incidents of unruly passengers fell following the lifting of the mask mandate, there were still nearly 2,500 incidents reported in 2022, roughly 6-7 incidents per day. Through the TWU's latest survey, flight attendants indicate that violent passenger behavior remains a massive issue facing workers in air travel, highlighting the critical need for legislators to pass the Protection From Abusive Passengers Act.

flight attendants working together to make improvements to the work lives of our members and protect our basic human rights,” said Local 577 President Christa Gifford. “We have only just begun but we can accomplish big things together.”

As the newest Coalition member, Local 578 President Sharolyn Stanley received pledges of support from the group as she builds her brand new local. “The TWU Cabin Crew Coalition represents the best of our work group — the professional flight attendants of TWU,” said Stanley. “Regardless of our differences, we are in this together. By promoting dignity and respect within the Coalition and representing that standard within our locals, we strive to seek improvements in the quality of life for all flight attendants.”

The next TWU Cabin Crew Coalition meeting will be held in conjunction with the TWU Legislative and COPE Conference on July 12-13 in Washington, DC.

### TWU Aircraft Maintenance Presidents Lobby Congress

TWU Aircraft Maintenance Presidents went to Capitol Hill in March to press for congressional support for the Global Aircraft Maintenance Standards Act. The TWU and our Local Unions are determined to keep America’s airline industry the safest in the world and keep good jobs on American soil.



### TWU Delegation Meets With Buttigieg at DFW

Gary Peterson, Executive Director - Office of the International President and International Vice President, Greg Cosey, President of Local 513, Gary Schaible, President of Local 591 and TWU Administrative Professional, Karen Koziatek met with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg while he was at DFW Airport for a station visit. Secretary Buttigieg reiterated his commitment to safety and was interested in hearing about current issues affecting the airline industry. International Vice President Gary Peterson expressed the TWU’s appreciation for Secretary Buttigieg’s assistance with our opposition to the JetBlue/Spirit merger.

### Envoy Maintenance & Related Workers Ratify New Contract

TWU Envoy Air members at Locals 570, 572, 574, 576 ratified a new, four-year contract on May 5. The agreement provides several important benefits, including improved wages, better working conditions, and restoration of items that were conceded during the 2011-2012 bankruptcy.

“On behalf of the TWU International, I want to congratulate our Envoy M&R sisters and brothers on the ratification of an outstanding contract. This new agreement is a direct reflection of your perseverance and resilience, showing what can be accomplished when our members stand with each other,” said TWU International President John Samuelsen.

# Q & A with Amtrak Apprentice Steven Wells

One year ago, the Transport Workers Union of America proudly partnered with Amtrak, America's national passenger railroad, to create an apprenticeship pilot program for frontline workers. The first-of-its-kind program at Amtrak is designed to create formal pathways for Amtrak employees to learn on the job and grow skills so they can forge professional careers and has now expanded to other crafts and classes.

Steven Wells is a coach cleaner in the Beech Grove, Indiana shop who is participating in the apprenticeship program and learning to become a journeyman carman.

**Q. Tell us about yourself. (How long have you worked for Amtrak? What job did you hold before entering the apprenticeship program?)**

**A.** I have worked at Amtrak for one year so far. Prior to joining Amtrak, I worked in the aviation industry working on commercial and VIP aircraft as a composite mechanic. I built cabinets and interiors.

**Q. How did you hear about Amtrak's new apprenticeship program and why did you decide to apply?**

**A.** I had been applying for a while and one day I got a call back about the apprenticeship. I decided to make a change in my life and go for it! I'm always interested in broadening my mechanical skills and knowledge.

**Q. Tell us about your experience in the program. What are you learning? What do you enjoy about it?**

**A.** One of the things I like about this program is the opportunity to travel to each shop. You get to learn about and actually see the work performed in each shop and learn their processes.

**Q. How has the apprenticeship program benefited you so far?**

**A.** The program is extremely hands-on. I've benefited from the Carman Apprenticeship Program by being able to step right in and get hands-on experience working with an experienced Carman Journeyman and learning the ins and outs of working on Amtrak train cars.

**Q. What are your future career goals and how will this apprenticeship help you achieve them?**

**A.** My future goals are to gain knowledge on most of the positions here at the Beech Grove, Indiana Amtrak back shops and to find a place within the company that best suits my abilities and knowledge. I also want to find a shop I'm comfortable working in. Once I've completed those goals, I'd like to continue pushing for more knowledge so I can possibly have a different position in the future.

**Q. What are you most looking forward to upon completion of Amtrak's apprenticeship program?**

I am most looking forward to gaining my Carman Journeyman



**I've benefited from the Carman Apprenticeship Program by being able to step right in and get hands-on experience working with an experienced Carman Journeyman.**

card. I'd also like to achieve my welder's certificate so I can carry the necessary credentials to be out on my own.

**Q. What advice would you offer to colleagues at Amtrak who are interested in advancing their careers at Amtrak?**

**A.** The advice I would give to my fellow workers is always keep your options open! If you are interested in learning more, the apprenticeship program is a good program to start. If you are at a crossroads and want something different, or want to learn something new, then our apprenticeship here at Amtrak is a good place to gain a new skill and start a new path!

*Amtrak's apprenticeship program is open to new hires and existing employees with diverse backgrounds, who will begin training in the classroom, then move to hands-on work in a specific trade. The Carman class for Bear is scheduled to start July 24, 2023. There will be 15 positions in the class. The bulletin for the class was posted on 3/2/23. Currently 7 coach cleaners have signed up.*

### Amtrak Knows Where to Go to Get the Job Done

Rail car manufacturer Alstom is unable to meet their timeline requirements and will not have the new generation Acela II train sets completed and delivered to the Delaware shops as previously scheduled. As a result, the Delaware shops will be overhauling the current Acela fleet in accordance with FRA regulations.

This is nothing new for the Local 2015 workforce at the Bear and Wilmington Shops. The same type of overhaul was done between 2011 and 2016 through the cooperation and expertise of all shop crafts working in tandem. The original project was carefully planned,

safely executed, and completed on time and on budget.

The current plan is to overhaul seven trainsets starting in October 2023. As was done previously, the coaches will be overhauled in Bear, and power car work will be completed in Wilmington. This upcoming project will allow the Delaware Shops to contribute to the maintenance of the active Acela fleet and keep it in a state of good repair for the traveling public. As in the past, this project will involve a great deal of work, and the teamwork of all the shop crafts is what will make it successful.

## Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles: Diane Harper, Local 2015

From ticket agents who worked in the New York City Subway system in the 1930s to aircraft maintenance technicians, journeyman carmen, power cable maintainers, and more, the TWU has a long history of representing women who work in non-traditional workplace roles. In this issue of *The Express*, we are featuring Diane Harper, an Amtrak Car Repair person at the Wilmington, DE shop, and a member of Local 2015. Diane has been a proud TWU member for 25 years and currently serves on Local 2015's Board of Directors as well as the TWU Human and Civil Rights Committee for the Rail Division.

### Q. What does the Transport Workers Union mean to you?

An opportunity for fair wages, fair treatment as a female, healthcare, and adequate pension upon retirement.

### Q. Tell us about the job you perform and your roles/responsibilities.

At Amtrak I am assigned to work on the tread brake units, rebuild, and testing.

### Q. What made you decide to go into this craft?

I started with Amtrak as a Coach Cleaner cleaning the inside of the trains. I then moved up to be a Carman Helper. In that role I used a truck to clean the bathrooms on the train. Later I was promoted to Carman, where I repair rail cars. As a woman I'm not afraid of challenges. I enjoy working on the trains with my union co-workers.

### Q. What challenges have you faced as a working woman?

Most of my challenges have been ergonomic and related to my height compared to the height of the equipment or the weight of the tools I use. As a minority woman I work with a great group of people. My main challenge is I am a short woman and getting on and off the equipment is not the easiest, but I do it. Usually if we



are moving a heavy component a fellow TWU carman will help or we will get the machines to move it.

### Q. What advice would you give to other working women?

Be confident, and do not be intimidated by the size of heavy equipment or a male-dominated workforce. Once you master sequential order, everything will fall in line. Be willing to take advice from co-workers and do your best to always learn. Try to accept as many classes as you can.

# Q & A with T.U.U.S. Division Director Willie Brown

**Q. You previously served as President of Local 234 from 2008 to 2010 and again from 2013 to 2021. Tell us about your career in the transit industry and your leadership experience within the TWU.**

**A.** I started with SEPTA in 1987. I got involved in the union right away. I first came on staff as a business agent in 1998. I also served as Executive Vice President from 2004 to 2008.

**Q. Local 234 has a storied history of strike actions that have led to better contracts for members, including a 6-day strike in 2009 that led to you being called the most hated man in Philadelphia and another under your leadership in 2016. What have you learned from these experiences and how will they help you in your role as T.U.U.S. Division Director?**

**A.** One thing I learned with the strikes is you have to know your audience. The people outside your union hate you, but they can't vote for you. You have to appease the people who you were elected to represent and who pay your salary.

As the elected leader of any organization, you have to understand that it's not about you, it's about getting the job done, and you also have to understand all of the political and other forces that are at play. On paper you might want to get something done, but in reality you have to take into consideration so many different moving pieces, and you begin to understand tactically or politically why you might not be able to accomplish a goal that, on paper, looks good. Having experience as a local union president means I understand that process, and that understanding allows me to better communicate with T.U.U.S. local union presidents one on one.

**Q. The TWU was founded as a union of subway workers in New York City, but over our almost 90-year history has expanded to include workers in a variety of industries, including those at universities, in utilities, in the school bus industry, and in other service sectors. What do you want members outside of the transit industry to know about you and the TWU?**

**A.** I want everyone to know that the TWU is one of the most diverse unions in the United States today, both in terms of membership demographics, membership jobs and industries, and leadership. We welcome everyone. We'll fight hard for you, and we will be straight with you. We won't promise the moon and the stars, but we'll go to bat for you. I also think it's important for members outside of the transit industry to understand that within the TWU there is a culture that values local autonomy. Among other things, that means the International will stand by contracts locals negotiate, and will not override them.



*Willie Brown, former president of TWU Local 234, became the T.U.U.S. Division Director in 2021.*

**Q. The TWU also has a large number of transit, school bus, and other transportation locals in Right-to-Work states, where workers may feel threatened, intimidated, or otherwise nervous about becoming more involved in the union. What do you want TWU members in Right-to-Work states to know?**

**A.** Members in Right-to-Work for less states need to know that we're going to do whatever we have to do to organize them and support them. We're going to do everything we can to get around Right-to-Work and attack it politically. We're in it for the long haul.

**Q. What are your goals and vision for the future of the T.U.U.S. Division?**

**A.** I want to get a standard training program in place to teach our members in offices the right way to do business. Right now we're all over the map. We have one constitution and we have to make sure there is uniformity in terms of how we live up to that constitution. Often I see trade unionists get caught up in wages and benefits, but leave out other important aspects like working conditions and the

grievance process. Having a strong grievance process strengthens job security and our union.

We also have to find a way to continue to grow the union and organize the unorganized, especially in the private sector.

**Q. Public transportation in the United States is experiencing a period of significant transformation. Ever-present funding challenges combined with COVID-19 ridership shortfalls and related work-from-home policies threaten these systems generally, while changing technologies and the introduction of unproven, unsafe automation directly threaten good union jobs. Tell us about the state of public transportation in America today and how the TWU is preparing to meet new challenges.**

**A.** When it comes to technology, we have to learn how to adapt to it. We have to be able to work with technology while ensuring that it does not replace us.

When it comes to public transportation in general, a lot of companies have gotten away from what they were set up to do. Instead of treating public transportation as a service, they treat it

like a business. They try to get away with catering to people who ride out of convenience, and leave behind the people who ride out of necessity. The TWU has always fought against this kind of dangerous thinking, and we're going to continue to advocate for the kinds of public transit policies that support our members and uplift our communities.

**Q. Is there anything else you want TWU T.U.U.S. Division members to know about you?**

**A.** I take the union very seriously, and I also take strike action seriously. A strike is your last resort. It sounds sexy, but it's not. We need to do a better job explaining that to people. If people have the ability to strike, it's not like what they see on TV. At the end of the day, a strike is a sacrifice: you have to commit to going to union meetings so you can be informed about what's going on; you have to start saving your money and be prepared to be out of work; and you have to get your family ready for changes to finances and schedules. It's also important to remember that workers should never strike just to strike. You have to have a strategy.

# T.U.U.S. Division Tours Texas Locals

In March, the T.U.U.S. Division was on a roll—in Texas. International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, T.U.U.S. Director Willie Brown, International Representatives Jose Cruz, Cassandra Gilbert, Jeff Mitchell and Christina Scott and Administrative Professional Shavon Gibson, accompanied by TWU Motor Coach Operator and Organizer Izzy Landau, first gathered in Dallas to show

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# T.U.U.S. Division Tours Texas Locals

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solidarity and support with Southwest Airlines workers who rallied for a new contract. From there, the T.U.U.S. division met with and toured T.U.U.S. Locals throughout the state, including Local 276 in Corpus Christi, Local 260 in Houston and Local 262 in Aldine.

While in Houston, T.U.U.S. Division representatives toured various facilities, observed a class of new hires, shadowed mechanics in apprenticeship training, toured training rooms and saw training equipment and spoke with members. Along the way they also toured a Metro Rail shop and had lunch with the Local 260 Executive Board.





# TUUS UPDATES





# Future Leaders Continue Learning about Contract Negotiations

The Future Leaders Organizing Committee (FLOC) met in Tulsa, Oklahoma from March 6 - 9 to resume learning about contract negotiations. The meeting was held by Local 514 and in attendance were young leaders from Locals 100, 252, 291, 507, 510, 512, 513, 514, 550, 555, 556, 568, 571, 575, 577, 579, 59.

Trainings and presentations were led by Christina Gornail and Holly Oliva-Van Horsten, attorneys from the law firm of Phillips, Richard, and Rind. They discussed the differences between private sector and public sector companies, the differences between contract language and negotiations, and the importance of educating the membership about the

negotiations process, among numerous other aspects of the contract negotiations.

After learning about the negotiations process, FLOC members were broken up into teams for mock negotiations. Young leaders also heard from TWU Local 514's President Dale Danker and Vice President Marla Johnson. Also addressing the meeting were Andre Sutton, Air Division Director, Juan Elvira, TWU Local 512 President, and Greg Cosey, TWU Local 513 President.

The Next FLOC meeting will be held in conjunction with the Legislative and COPE Conference, in Washington, DC from Sunday July 9- Wednesday, July 12.



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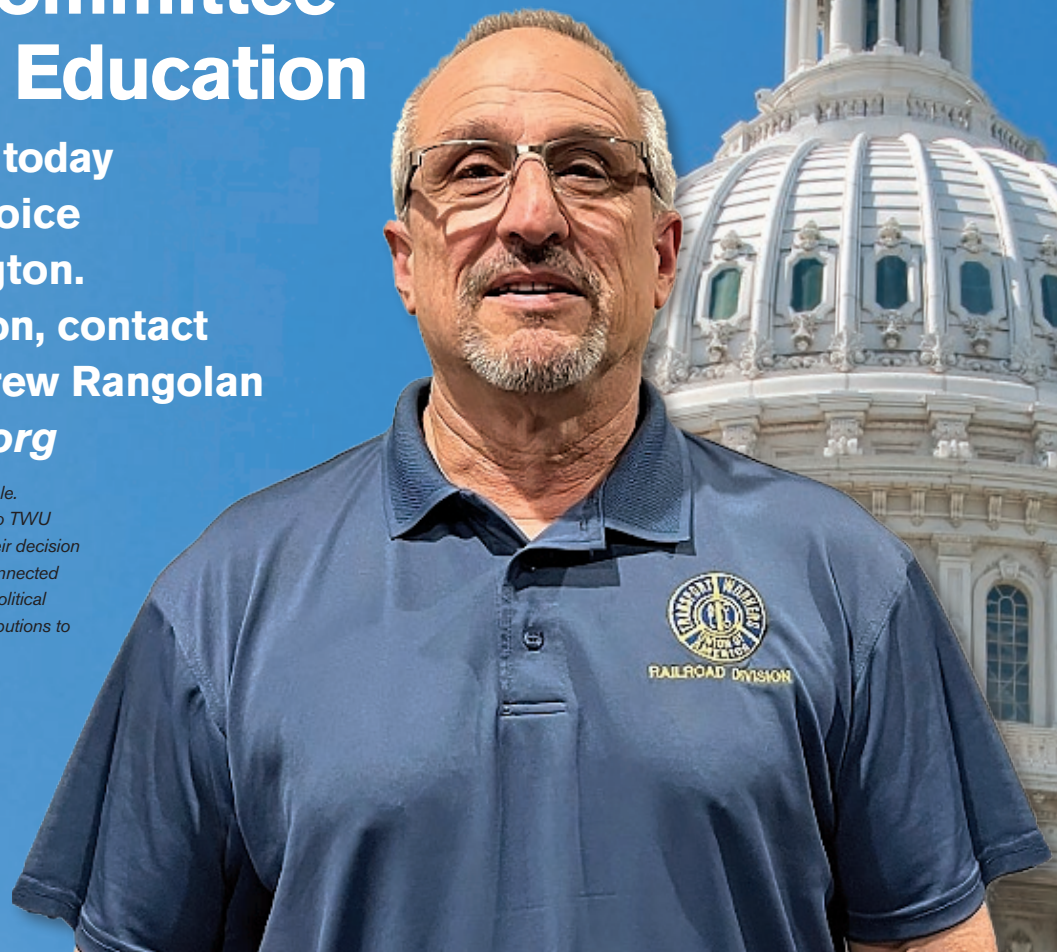


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*– Robert Cifarelli Local 2055*