



## A Brighter Future

**TWU Defeats Anti-Union Shills and Successfully Organizes Brightline Rail Workers in Florida**



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Cabin Crew Coalition to Draft FA "Bill of Rights"



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Unemployment/Sick/Injury Benefits for Railroaders Fully Restored



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Bulletproof "cockpits" to protect Bus Operators Pass Ballistics Tests

# Workers Need a Labor Champion as Labor Secretary



THERE IS A NEW REALITY IN PLAY WITH PRESIDENT Donald Trump in the White House. And, like it or not, his ascendancy has largely been fueled by the fact that many workers in America at election time had more faith in Trump than in the Democratic Party.

For a decade or more, many of us in the trade union movement have shouted earnest warnings from the rooftops that the Democrats were losing ground with everyday Americans. Now, the Democratic Party's institutional failure to focus first on the economic security of working families has had epic consequences.

The negative impact on federal workers came quickly. Their collective defense is a necessary and legitimate fight that must be waged. But that war should not become a "throw the baby out with the bath water" situation.

Earlier this year, President Trump nominated Lori Chavez-DeRemer, a former Republican congresswoman, as labor secretary. As of press time in March, Chavez-DeRemer was expected to be confirmed. Before a Senate vote was scheduled, however, I urged Democrats to set aside party affiliation as a top concern and give Chavez-DeRemer their support. Chavez-DeRemer would have been a good choice for working people under a Democratic president, and she is about the best selection workers can hope for from the current administration.

Chavez-DeRemer cosponsored the PRO Act — legislation designed to empower workers to negotiate contracts and raise middle-class wages. She voted repeatedly to protect workers from assaults on the job. She cosponsored legislation seeking to bring back to U.S. soil aircraft maintenance jobs that major airlines are relocating overseas.

Chavez-DeRemer supports union apprenticeship programs, protecting first responders exposed to carcinogens while running into burning buildings and increasing public sector workers' rights to organize. The list goes on. She has been a pro-worker, consistently and unapologetically.

The proud daughter of a Teamster who worked in a grocery store, Chavez-DeRemer is one of a handful of Republicans publicly supporting reforms to make it easier for workers to join unions and win collective bargaining agreements. Perhaps most importantly, she has opposed nonsense right-to-work proposals that undermine workers' rights and are the ultimate dream for the right wing of the Republican Party.

There are no guarantees in life, and politics in Washington is increasingly unpredictable, but Chavez-DeRemer's track record strongly suggests she would put families' livelihoods ahead of enriching corporations and their lackeys. Workers need a union champion in this critically important position.







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# Relationships Get Results for The TWU Beyond Contracts and Organizing

*By International Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerome Lafragola*



**R**elationships matter. Most people think of unions as responsible for negotiating contracts and organizing new members who want a seat at the table with their employers – but The TWU goes beyond that advocacy at all levels of government and even internally to deliver victories. I wanted to highlight three recent wins for The TWU that show the importance of building and maintaining relationships.

At the end of last year, TWU Local 525 and the International successfully fought firefighter staffing cuts at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. The cuts were detrimental to our members, public safety, and billions of dollars of government property.

But getting Congress to act required more than just having the facts on our side. Local 525 built a years-long relationship with then Florida Rep. Bill Posey, who made the firefighter staffing cuts a top priority.

The TWU government affairs team worked with Posey and other members of Congress in Florida from both parties to get legislative language ordering the Space Force to hire more firefighters. Because of their efforts, The TWU could see a 20% increase of firefighters working at Cape Canaveral.

The TWU leadership has also built relationships with elected officials that show a demonstrated track record of supporting TWU members regardless of political affiliation.

In the most recent election cycle, we supported Rep. Marc Molinaro in New York after he stood up for transport workers while serving in Congress. Some unions refused to support him. But actions matter, and Molinaro supported existing federal transit worker protections while serving in Congress. The TWU will always back politicians, regardless of party affiliation, who stand up for TWU members.

A few months later, Molinaro lost re-election but is now poised to play a key role in the Trump administration's transportation agenda as head of the Federal Transit Administration – and The TWU is happy to support him. Because of the relationships we built with Molinaro, we now have a key government official in charge of transit who is a major supporter of The TWU and understands the specific issues facing our members.

But building relationships goes beyond elected officials. A recent organizing victory in Florida was a shining example of the internal relationships within The TWU that are essential to a union that executes successful fightback campaigns.

In the final days before PrimeFlight Fuelers at Orlando International Airport were scheduled to vote to join The TWU, our organizing department reached out to other TWU locals with access to the airport to talk with PrimeFlight workers about the benefits of union membership.

Members from Local 510, Local 555, and Local 591 stepped up and played a critical role in educating the Fuelers about the importance of a contract and how it could improve their abysmal working conditions and low pay. The on-the-ground effort by multiple locals paid off – PrimeFlight Fuelers in February voted unanimously to join The TWU.

Relationships between locals make The TWU stronger just as much as relationships with elected officials or other influential members of the community. And they can pay dividends – like getting a bill drafted into law, an outpouring of public support, or a successful contract vote.

If you haven't already, I would highly encourage you to get involved with a TWU State Conference and get involved with any number of fightback campaigns we have going on in state capitols and in the halls of Congress.

We will keep fighting for good contracts, dignity in the workplace, and a greater TWU. Meaningful relationships are a critical component of a productive union.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerome Lafragola', with a stylized flourish at the end.



# A Fifth-Generation Railroader

**N**ot long ago, Ashlyn Gault was still figuring out what to do with her life. She attended college for a few semesters and then worked for two years as a receptionist in a medical office. In December, she took a job at the Norfolk Southern freight yard in Enola, Pennsylvania - and it felt like coming home.

Walking through the sprawling railyard on the western bank of the Susquehanna River, Gault experienced a “strong sense of self... like I belong here,” she said.

Gault may be very new to the rail industry as she is in training to be a Freight Car Repairman. But the 21-year-old grew up hearing stories about the railroad. From 1909 to 1930, Gault’s great-great-grandfather on her mother’s side, Edgar Gault, was a railroad pipefitter with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, which many years later became Norfolk Southern. Her great-grandfather, Carl, was a night watchman for the Penn Railroad from the mid-1930s to the mid-1970s, and her grandfather, Eddie, was a conductor from 1978-2012.

Today, an uncle, Allen Gault, is a Norfolk Southern foreman in nearby Harrisburg. Her father, Corrie Williams, is a Freight Car Repairman, also at Enola, working with and teaching Ashlyn.

“I was always fascinated by it,” Gault said of the railroad. “As a kid, hearing about trains was pretty cool, and we had all of this family history.”

Ashlyn Gault left college after a year because she didn’t like being idle in a classroom for hours on end, she said. Working as a receptionist also was too sedentary a lifestyle for her – and boring, she said.

“I don’t like sitting behind a desk,” she said. “I like change. I like being outside. I like being able to banter with my co-workers.”

She also likes fixing things. When not playing sports as a kid and teenager, Gault was often at her grandfather Eddie’s garage, where he maintained, repaired, and generally just tinkered with his cars. At first, she fetched tools and observed. Over time, the garage sessions became much more hands-on, especially when Ashlyn bought her first car. She learned how to change the oil, change the brakes, balance tires, and do other automotive tasks.



*Ashlyn Gault and her father, Corrie Williams, in Norfolk Southern’s railyard in Enola, PA.*

“I wanted to learn the upkeep of it so I didn’t have to pay an arm and a leg for somebody to do something that might cost just \$40,” she said.

Gault doesn’t dwell on the fact that she currently is the only woman in the freight car repair shop, or that the title is Freight Car Repairman. Still, she thinks the company could be more open and proactive in terms of hiring women. The work is physically demanding but not prohibitively so, she said.

Her father, meanwhile, is proud to have her on board. She enjoys the work, earns good pay, and won’t be saddled with college debt like many of her peers, he said.

“It’s also pretty cool that there have now been five generations in her mom’s family that have worked at the railroad,” he said. “She can look back and know that almost every step of the way, all the way back to her great-great-grandfather, someone has been out there working.”



*Ashlyn’s great-grandfather, Carl Gault, was a Night Watchman, at the Pennsylvania Railroad Company from 1936 to 1976.*



*Grandfather Eddie Gault, photo left, was a railroad Conductor from 1978 to 2012.*



# TWU Honoring The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Community service – and ramping up outreach to those in need – were central themes of The TWU’s annual Martin Luther King, Jr. commemoration in Houston this year.

Union officers and members from around the country gathered together to pack backpacks with school supplies and snacks for underprivileged students in Atlanta, whose principal asked The TWU for assistance. The union volunteers also wrote inspiring messages to the third graders.

Saying “more can be done,” TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate announced a \$5,000 donation to the Rockbridge Elementary School. He then told the volunteers, who had gathered in a hotel conference room to assemble the school supplies, that he had a “challenge, a wish, and some marching orders” for them to take with them from Houston.

“We have a whole bunch of local presidents and treasurers here,” Tate said. “I want you to go back to your cities and find a place, whether it’s a school, whether it’s a homeless shelter, whether it’s a haven for abused folks. Find a place. Reach out to your members and get donations. Pick a spot and give back.”

Local 572 President Council Creech said he was motivated by Tate’s call to action.

“It was an inspiring call,” Creech said. “It has given me the incentive to do more and to get my people more involved in community service.”

Local 555 Second Vice President Bryan Gaulle agreed that more could be done in the communities where union members work and live.



**What does Martin Luther King Jr. mean to you? The Express posed that question to participants of this year’s MLK commemoration. Boxed quotes are some of the answers we received.**

**“He means everything. Without Dr. King, I probably wouldn’t be in the position I’m in now. The job I hold as a Bus Operator was predominantly a White man’s job. Now, I’m not just a Bus Operator, but a local president. He had a dream, and I’m living his dream of everyone working together. Our local is very diverse.”**



– Tyson Brown, President,  
TWU Local 208, Columbus, Ohio



**Throughout these photos, TWU volunteers are writing encouraging messages to students and preparing items for their backpacks.**




**TWU members packed backpacks with school supplies for underprivileged kids, and The International donated \$5,000 to their school.**






**“In my whole heart, when you say, ‘Martin Luther King,’ it brings back memories of his fight for people like me, you know, to move on and move up in an organization that used to be all White. When I look around the place, there’s so much diversity now because of his legacy.”**



– Shirley Martin, Recording Secretary,  
TWU Local 100, New York City

**“When I think of Martin Luther King, I think of equality and respect. People should be able to come to work and be treated with respect and equally regardless of their race and religion. Also, as we interact with each other – socially, on the trains, on planes, in the supermarket, wherever – we should all be respectful of each other.”**



– Tim Hughes, President,  
TWU Local 507, Boston, Massachusetts

“What Brother Curtis stated was both a rallying cry and a validation,” Gaulle said. “The sky is the limit when it comes to community outreach. If we can do five events in one year, okay, let’s do six. Let’s do eight. Let’s raise the bar. The reality is that in our world, there are a lot of people who need our help.”


Every year, The TWU convenes to honor Martin Luther King. As a leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s, King rallied opposition to the racism and discrimination that denied Black Americans the opportunities White Americans took for granted, including access to a full range of jobs. Horace Marves, the President of Local 260 in Houston, recalled that his father worked as a Cleaner in the Houston transportation system for years before Blacks were allowed to be Bus Operators. Operator positions opened in 1961 to a small group of six Black Cleaners. Marves’ father was one of them.

The elder Marves’ pay tripled. He was able to move his family to an apartment with air-conditioning and buy a new car, Marves said. In a few years, the family moved into a house of their own.

“It was a huge, huge change, and it was a direct result of Dr. King’s movement,” he said.



**“Dr. Martin Luther King is an inspiration for me. He was a great leader and also a great organizer. If I could talk to him, I would like to thank him for giving us people of color the same equal rights that everybody receives, giving us chances in our workplace to be treated equally.”**



– Moisley Pawa, President,  
TWU Local 571, Chicago, Illinois



# MLK Grande Parade

*Houston, Texas. January 20, 2025*



**“** He represents me. I’m Puerto Rican, you know, and he represents everyone. He represents justice and equality for everyone.

He knew the possibility that something would happen to him, and he stood up strong until that day. He knew the risk, and he still did it. He gave his life for everyone. That’s what he means to me.”

– Anthony Ballester, President, TWU Local 250-A, San Francisco, California





## COMMITTEE UPDATES



**The International Executive Council and the Executive Board** met in February. Two new board members (photo right) were sworn in – Local 225 President Pedro Mercado and Local 555 President Abilio Villaverde. During the meeting, divisional and department directors gave reports on union activities related to contracts, federal legislation, worker organizing, state conferences, and other matters.



**The Veterans Committee** held its first-quarter meeting in Dallas-Ft. Worth in January. Locals 513, 575, and 591 hosted. Committee members distributed blankets and helped feed the homeless at a not-for-profit community center. The committee donated 3,000 blankets, provided by American Airlines, to the center.



**The Working Women's Committee** met in Detroit, Michigan, in October for two days of arbitration training by International Training and Education Coordinator Mitch Lieberman.



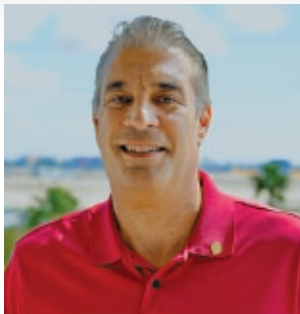
# Put Workers First

**T**he TWU is calling on our federal government to ensure workers are heard – and prioritized – when potential airline mergers are being considered.

The airline industry has consistently consolidated over the past two generations, forcing TWU members across all classifications and crafts to compete for fewer jobs at airlines that have fewer bases. Combined with the industry's willingness to use the bankruptcy courts to undermine collectively bargained contracts, this trend has made securing wins for TWU's airline members significantly more difficult.

In a letter dated January 7, 2025, The Transport Workers Union urged the U.S. Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation to “thoroughly weigh” the potential impact a merger would have on workers at both companies when deciding whether to allow a merger to proceed. The TWU stated that these impacts must include any adjustments to pay, benefits, seniority, and domicile requirements. Both agencies had requested that The TWU submit comments.

“Working people are the backbone of the air travel industry,” the



*TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia at the Miami International Airport.*

letter states. “While mergers and acquisitions affect travelers, these transactions also have a perceptible effect on workers. As such, The TWU strongly believes that the agencies have an obligation to ensure that any analysis of a pending transaction seriously considers its impact on the incumbent workforce.”

In much of the country, flight attendants, jet mechanics, ground workers, dispatchers, and other airline workers face a limited and uncompetitive job market. There often is just one potential employer for a skillset. This forces airline workers outside the most competitive markets to move or take long commutes. While some of this is the nature of the airline industry, much of it is caused by the limited number of airlines

left. Workers at merged carriers, on average, see a 5-9% decrease in their salaries and fringe benefits compared to non-merged carriers.

“We aren’t afraid of mergers,” TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said. “We will fight to protect our workers and to make gains for them no matter what. But a bad deal is a bad deal. Government regulators must make the economic stability of workers a big part of their calculations when reviewing proposed mergers.”

## Pro-labor Board Members Fired

President Trump dismissed pro-labor members from several independent labor agencies in his first months in office.

The National Labor Relations Board, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Federal Labor Relations Board, and the Federal Merit Systems Protections Board were all left without the legally required number of board members to make official decisions, making it impossible for these bodies to enforce any laws. These dismissals allow bad employers to violate labor laws without having to worry about consequences from the government watchdogs.

For the TWU, the National Labor Relations Board is ultimately responsible for resolving organizing disputes, enforcing penalties for unfair labor practices, and certifying

new union elections. Until the Board has a quorum again, employers can block any effort by workers to form a union. The President’s actions have stalled dozens of ongoing union elections across the country.

The law says these labor bodies are to be independent and that any dismissals occur solely for wrongful or illegal conduct. President Trump, however, stated his reason for firing these Senate-confirmed appointees was their policy positions supporting workers. All of the dismissed members have filed lawsuits to block these actions and restore the independence of these bodies. More than 260 members of Congress urged the president to reinstate the fired board members, and the courts could ultimately reverse the president’s actions.



# Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles:

## Q&A with Cheryl Pollock

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 nontraditional workplace roles. In this issue of The Express, we are featuring Cheryl Pollock, a Fleet Service Clerk with American Airlines, and a member of Local 513. She has been a proud member of The TWU since 1988.

### What is your job title and where do you work?

I work at American Airlines in Dallas Fort Worth (DFW), the Cargo Facility Building. I am one of the Fleet Service Clerks working at the Export Counter. My title is Dangerous Goods Specialist.

### How long have you been a TWU member?

I have been a TWU member for 37 years.

### What roles do you hold within the union?

Currently, I'm serving the membership of Local 513 as a Union Steward. Previously, I served in leadership roles for our local Working Women's Committee and as International Co-chair (Air Division) of The TWU International Working Women's Committee.

### What does the Transport Workers Union mean to you and/or how has The TWU impacted your life?

When I started with American Airlines, I had no idea that unions even existed! Knowledge is everything within a union. You have to know contract language, and know your stewards, because they fight alongside you and for you. More importantly, you must understand your contract to know where you stand. I love teaching new members how to make sure their rights are not violated. For knowledge is power!

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

Putting customers first is my job while preparing for the transport of live animals and human remains, some of whom have military escorts. I try to make the process of shipping as professional and painless as possible. From animals to humans, customer service is my niche!

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

I was laid off from building houses in the DFW area. Playing softball in Irving, Texas, my assistant coach would show up wearing the American Airlines uniform. I wanted to be a part of this company because I knew that if I could get my foot in



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***Working in the elements is not for everyone. So, if you accept the challenge, come rain, heat, snow, or frigid temperatures, then GIVE IT ONE HUNDRED PERCENT!***

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the door, there would be a chance for a career and stability, then retirement.

### When not at work, what's your favorite activity or activities?

GOLFING. A bad day of golf is better than a good day at work! Thrift stores are my guilty pleasure, such a great habit. Then there's always the casinos!

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

Being a woman of small stature, I had to demonstrate my work ethic was bigger than what they saw. Once that was proven, moving forward, there were no problems.

### What advice would you give other working women?

Working in the elements is not for everyone. So, if you accept the challenge, come rain, heat, snow, or frigid temperatures, then GIVE IT ONE HUNDRED PERCENT!

# Victory!

## Onboard Workers at Brightline Join The TWU

**O**nboard Attendants and Lead Attendants on the Brightline railroad in Florida voted to join The TWU after a hard-fought battle with management.

The National Mediation Board announced the election results in January in Washington, D.C. after weeks of balloting and an aggressive anti-union campaign by the privately-owned company.

Brightline employs approximately 100 Onboard Attendants and Lead Attendants who sell food and beverages and offer other services on trains between Miami and Orlando. They voted to join The TWU on a roughly two-to-one margin. This is the largest newly organized group of railroad workers nationwide in over 20 years.

“Brightline ran an ugly anti-union, anti-worker campaign against their own workforce, but we prevailed,” Transport Workers Union International President John Samuels said. “We look forward to negotiating a contract that improves the working conditions and economic security of Brightline workers and their families.”

Last year, Brightline workers contacted The TWU to seek representation, have a voice in the workplace, and address a variety of issues. These included a draconian sick time policy, heavy-handed discipline without due process, erratic work schedules, and a failure to secure improvements from management.

“This is an enormous victory. Brightline workers – in the face of an aggressive anti-union campaign – voted overwhelmingly to join The TWU,” Samuels said. “The Brightline president even went so far as



*TWU International President John Samuels (third from left), Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza (fourth from left), and members of The TWU organizing team celebrate a successful organizing drive at the Brightline railroad in Florida.*



*TWU organizers Danny Mendoza (front), Lyndi Howard, and Alejandro Arroyo.*

to call workers at home in an apparent intimidation tactic. It obviously failed, epically.”

Voting by mail-in ballot began November 27, 2024, and continued through mid-January.

“The TWU has secured historic, industry-leading contracts for members in our Rail Division, and we look forward to continuing that success with our newest members at Brightline,” TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz said.

Brightline retained Littler Mendelson, a notorious anti-union law firm that has squashed union organizing efforts at Amazon, McDonalds, and other extremely profitable corporations. In meetings and emails to workers, Brightline grossly exaggerated how much money workers would contribute as union dues. Management also told workers the company couldn’t give them a pay raise because of the ongoing organizing drive – even though there is no law prohibiting an increase in wages. Brightline also has stepped up enforcement of an already unforgiving sick-time policy, leading to the firing of several workers.

The company argued to the NMB that the organizing effort and election should have been handled by the National Labor Relations Board, but the NMB ruled against it. Brightline has a pending federal lawsuit making the same failed arguments.

Workers elected a team of peers to serve on a negotiating committee, which had its first meeting with management on February 28, International Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza said.





# Trade Unionism in Action

**J**ust days after a historic organizing victory at the Brightline railroad in Florida, The TWU was back on the rails, encouraging workers in other job titles to join.

On January 14, Attendants and Lead Attendants, totaling approximately 100 workers, voted to unionize with The TWU. There are an estimated 200 to 300 Brightline workers with other jobs. They include Baggage Handlers, Bartenders, Commissary staff, Conductors, Engineers, and Security Agents.

“We’re not going to rest here,” TWU Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza said. “The goal is to improve the livelihoods of all the workers at Brightline. So, we decided to jump right into these other organizing drives.”

Cucuzza and his organizers were back on Brightline trains shortly after the vote, having conversations with potential new members. The TWU also resumed distributing digital video messages about the merits of unionizing. The videos



*Videos of TWU members giving encouraging messages to Brightline workers as they faced an anti-union campaign by the company. Scan to watch.*

feature TWU members in other locals. (scan the QR code to watch)

Organizing a company or agency “wall to wall” was the model of trade unionism upon which The TWU was created, International President John Samuelsen said. TWU founder Mike Quill and his fellow organizers followed the organizing tenets of James Connolly, an Irish rebel and labor leader executed by the British in 1916 after the Easter Rising, a rebellion against British rule of Ireland. Connolly espoused organizing all workers, skilled and unskilled, instead of creating many separate unions by craft and titles.

“The more workers you have on a property, the more leverage you have to get the employer to adequately address the membership’s needs,” Samuelsen said. “Nothing comes easy. You must

either fight or be prepared to fight to gain concessions from the executives and bosses.”



**Organizer Alejandro Arroyo talks with a Brightline Security Agent as Onboard Attendant and Negotiating Committee Member Richelle Felix walks the aisle in the background.**



**Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza with TWU literature to distribute to Brightline Baggage Handlers, Conductors, Engineers, and other workers.**





# Fighting Big Tech in Their Own Backyard at CES

**T**WU leaders witnessed first-hand the latest developments in autonomous transportation at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas – and provided a critical counter narrative to the assertions of Big Tech boosters that driverless cars and automated trains are faster, more efficient, and safer than human-operated vehicles.

The first stop of The TWU tour at the Las Vegas Convention Center in January was a display of an Amazon-backed Zoox ride-hail vehicle. While other attendees elbowed each other to get in line for a selfie, TWU leaders asked tough questions, to the point at which Zoox representatives became rattled.

“The first thing we saw was a fully automated, driverless vehicle that is not ready for prime time and is not ready to be integrated into society,” TWU International President John Samuelson said.



*TWU International President John Samuelson speaking at the AFL-CIO's Labor Innovation and Technology Summit.*

“CES is designed to celebrate the end of human beings in the workplace and the decline of good-paying jobs. We visited Las Vegas to remind Silicon Valley and Wall Street that TWU workers will not stand by as they attempt to gut jobs and put the traveling public's safety at risk to appease investors.”

Waymo was also present in Las Vegas, despite a passenger being trapped in a robotaxi just days earlier in Los Angeles. As the AV manufacturer seeks to roll out autonomous rides in cities across the country, TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate viewed a display of different scenarios a Waymo might encounter on the road – and came away unimpressed.

“There's technology out there that can certainly help a human operator. But the underlying reality of Waymo and other AV companies is they can afford to lose money now because they are banking on creating a transportation system without needing to pay for operators,” Tate said. “What I saw at CES underscored my belief that human operators in a train, car, or plane are



essential for the safety of the traveling public and applying the judgement in certain situations that no algorithm can replicate.”

International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes also viewed the latest aviation technology at CES, though most of the tech present at the convention were small drones and vertical take-off and landing vehicles designed to replace a small helicopter.

Samuelsen, Tate, and International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola also took part in the AFL-CIO’s Labor Innovation and Technology Summit, speaking to attendees across the labor movement about The TWU’s efforts to ensure that bosses and Big Tech are not solely driving the agenda on modern technology in the workplace. The summit brought together dozens of unions in different industries who are standing up to corporate power that seeks to eliminate jobs through tech like AI.

Tate spoke on a panel about The TWU’s success in bargaining a contract in Columbus, Ohio. Local 208’s agreement reached last year gives the union power to veto any attempts at automation that are opposed by members.

“What we did in Columbus builds momentum for contract talks across the country,” Tate said. “We learned from this experience with COTA that tech issues are a top priority for transit agencies and private employers – meaning they want the option of cutting jobs if autonomous transportation is on the table. We know this and will fight them at every opportunity. This technology is not ready for widespread use and cannot replace the knowledge and essential presence of a human operator or mechanic.”

Samuelsen spoke to hundreds of attendees about his experiences in New York, where transit bosses have pushed for driverless trains since the 1960s. The TWU has successfully fought their efforts every time. Two-person crews are still the standard on the subway, and they will remain the standard, he said.

“The MTA has tried to replace jobs with automation in our trains since the 1960s – and we have beaten them at every attempt. We will do the same with Bus Operators, Mechanics, Ramp Agents, Rail Car Inspectors, and any other job the bosses think can be replaced with AI or other unproven tech,” Samuelsen said.



*Self-driving shuttle on display at the CES technology show in Las Vegas*



*Robots, like this one on display at the CES technology show in Las Vegas, are coming for humans jobs. The TWU is fighting back.*



# New Leadership at Local 568

**T**WU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia swore in new Local 568 President Luis Rodriguez and other local officers in Miami in January. Garcia emphasized the importance of TWU locals fostering unity among their members and actively forging solid working relationships with The International.

“Our strength comes from unity and working together,” Garcia said. “A united front is essential to effectively deal with management, protect members’ rights, and improve their quality of life. There are no shortcuts.”

Local 568 represents Fleet Service Agents at American Airlines in Miami.

“I’m more than blessed to be a part of this team. I take this job with a lot of pride, a lot of passion. I want to show our workers they have a leader that will be with them side by side,” Rodriguez said. “I have a



*New Local 568 President Luis Rodriguez, center, and fellow officers and board members after taking the oath of office. International Executive VP Alex Garcia officiated. Those also in attendance included International President John Samuelsen, Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, Air Division Director Andre Sutton, Air Chief of Staff John O'Donnell, and Local 513 President Greg Cosey.*

very good relationship with the International. I know have an open-door communication policy with them at any time to speak with them. I feel strongly supported and we have the right leaders in the right place to direct this local in the right direction.”

## The Cabin Crew Coalition Drafts Flight Attendant Bill of Rights

**T**he Cabin Crew Coalition held its first meeting of the year in January, and drafting a Flight Attendants’ Bill of Rights emerged as one of the goals for 2025.

The right to clean air in the cabins, adequate rest, and a safe work environment would likely be included in such a document, TWU International Air Division Rep. Thom McDaniel said after the meeting in Houston. The TWU could utilize the “bill,” which would not be an actual piece of legislation but an educational document for union outreach and advocacy efforts, said McDaniel, who also serves as the committee chair.

“The goal is to use a Bill of Rights to educate the public, legislators, and passengers about the real challenges and hardships that Flight Attendants face in their profession,” he said. “This could serve as a springboard toward securing federal laws and regulations that better protect the health and welfare of Flight Attendants.”

The coalition also discussed legislation that didn’t pass during the previous session of Congress that will likely be introduced again this year. The legislation includes the Cabin Air Safety Act and the Safe Airplanes Act. The former would require airlines to install air-monitoring equipment and train Flight Attendants on how to respond to fume events. The latter would phase out the use of bleed air systems and deploy alternative technologies.

A fume event occurs when engine oil or another chemical fluid leaks from the engine and contaminates the air being circulated. A bleed air system circulates compressed air from the engine



*The Cabin Crew Coalition held its first meeting of the year in Houston in January.*

compartment through the passenger cabin, providing oxygen and establishing a comfortable temperature.

The Cabin Crew Coalition comprises representatives from each of The TWU locals that represent Flight Attendants. It was established two years ago for The TWU Flight Attendant locals to collaborate on common goals.




# Airlines Sanctioned for Delays

**T**WU leaders wholeheartedly backed the federal government's punitive action against JetBlue Airways and Southwest Airlines for consistently operating delayed flights.

On January 3, the U.S. Department of Transportation fined JetBlue \$2 million. Less than two weeks later, the feds filed a lawsuit seeking financial penalties against Southwest.

TWU International President John Samuelsen and Air Division Director Andre Sutton said the enforcement actions were justified. The airlines caused the delays by not hiring enough Flight Attendants, Ramp Workers, and Aircraft Maintenance Technicians to provide the service they had scheduled.

"The DOT is sending the right message to airlines," Sutton said. "They should be prepared to pay the price for underinvesting in the workforce."

 Departures					
CITY	AIRLINE	FLIGHT	TIME	GATE	REMARK
LAS VEGAS	jetBlue	1523	10:30 AM	15	DELAYED
ATLANTA	Southwest	2470	10:50 AM	17	DELAYED
DENVER	jetBlue	1430	11:10 AM	10	DELAYED
SAN ANTONIO	Southwest	2550	11:35 AM	22	DELAYED
HOUSTON	jetBlue	1680	11:59 AM	07	DELAYED
PHOENIX	Southwest	2856	12:15 PM	09	DELAYED
LOS ANGELES	jetBlue	1201	12:40 AM	18	DELAYED
WASHINGTON	Southwest	2345	12:57 AM	02	DELAYED



***"Our members bear the brunt of management's bumbled scheduling and inevitable delays that increase the risk of fatigue, a serious safety concern. We, and our customers, deserve a company that properly staffs its operation and stops setting unrealistic flight schedules."***

– Local 579 President Tyesha Best

The DOT's \$2 million fine is the first of its kind. The agency cited JetBlue for operating four chronically delayed East Coast flights at least 145 times between June 2022 and November 2023.

DOT rules prohibit airlines from promising unrealistic schedules that do not reflect actual departure and arrival times.

"Unrealistic scheduling is an unfair, deceptive, and anticompetitive practice that disrupts passengers' travel plans, denies them reliable scheduling information, and allows airlines to unfairly capture business from competitors," the DOT said in a statement.

The DOT charged Southwest with operating two chronically delayed flights with 180 flight disruptions for passengers between April and August 2022. One flight was between Chicago and Oakland. The other was between Baltimore and Cleveland.

Tyesha Best, President of TWU Local 579, stated that chronic delays not only force Flight Attendants to manage frustrated passengers, but they also disrupt their personal lives.

"Our members bear the brunt of management's bumbled scheduling and inevitable delays that increase the risk of fatigue, a serious safety concern," Best said. "We, and our customers,

deserve a company that properly staffs its operation and stops setting unrealistic flight schedules."

"Flight Attendants are left to deal with the misguided decisions of management to schedule flights that weren't possible to run on time," Local 556 President Bill Bernal said. "Southwest customers and Flight Attendants deserve a company that hires enough workers to ensure that flights can arrive in a timely manner."

For thousands of American workers looking for employment, The TWU's strong contract have meant thousands of union jobs with good wages, affordable health care, and solid retirement benefits. For Local 555, it has meant more clout.

"More members equal more power at the table," Local 555 President Abilio Villaverde said. "We have more voices behind us and a bigger presence."

In addition to the penalties for Southwest and JetBlue, DOT also fined Frontier Airlines \$650,000 for chronically delaying three flights at least 63 times between August 2022 and April 2023.

"Frontier is an anti-labor company getting what it deserves," Samuelsen said.



Financial benefits that are available to railroad workers, like these CSX Carmen in Buffalo, have been restored.



Carman Ken Makowski was out four months last year after he tore a bicep and needed surgery. “Every little bit counts,” he said of payments from the Railroad Unemployment and Sickness Program.

# Benefits Boosted for Railroad Workers

**T**he TWU has accomplished a major legislative goal: restoring full financial benefits for railroad workers who are laid off or sidelined by long-term illness or injury.

The National Defense Authorization Act, which Congress approved in December, increases payments to eligible railroad workers by 5.7%. The payments were reduced by that amount years ago in a Congressional budget agreement that combined extensive spending cuts with an increase in the federal debt limit.

“Every little bit helps,” said CSX Carman Ken Makowski, who was out for four months last year because of an injury. “You’re counting on that extra money to pay the bills. You go back ten years, and you couldn’t carry \$100 worth of groceries. Now, you can carry \$100 in groceries in one hand.”

The NDAA adopted language from the proposed Railroad Employee Equity and Fairness (REEF) Act, which was a top legislative priority for The TWU. The TWU worked with supportive members of Congress to get it included in the larger bill.

“This unquestionably is the right move and a significant victory for railroad workers,” Transport Workers Union International

President John Samuelson said. “These higher payments will help workers who have fallen on hard times make ends meet.”

TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz agreed.

“Railroad workers were being wrongfully shortchanged at the worst possible time: when they couldn’t work,” Feltz said. “This had to be fixed. It was a long battle, but thankfully we prevailed.”

Railroad workers do not qualify for standard taxpayer-funded Social Security programs that offer benefits like steady income and medical insurance to retirees, the unemployed, and the disabled. Instead, the benefits available to railroad workers are fully funded by the railroad companies and the workers themselves through paycheck deductions. The federal Railroad Retirement Board administers them.

The 5.7% increase in current benefit levels restores the payout levels that were in place before the Congressional budget agreement in 2011. Railroad workers who are laid off or sidelined by a long-term illness or significant injury will now receive \$940 every two weeks instead of about \$886. That’s an extra \$107 per month.



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***“This unquestionably is the right move and a significant victory for railroad workers,” Transport Workers Union International President John Samuelson said. “These higher payments will help workers who have fallen on hard times make ends meet.”***

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*Victory After a Year-Long Fight!*

# TWU Wins New Tentative Agreement for Metro-North Workers

**T**he TWU secured a concession-free contract featuring 9.5% raises and a \$3,000 signing bonus for Metro-North Railroad workers in New York and Connecticut after a vigorous fightback campaign against NY Gov. Kathy Hochul and her transit chief.

Hochul's MTA insisted on increasing workers' healthcare costs by 150% while also reducing vacation days, personal days, and sick days. It aimed to eliminate certain paid meal periods and sought to extend the 36-month agreement to 38 months – a “pattern” that diminishes wage increases. Other unions accepted the two-month extension. However, the TWU successfully opposed that and all of the other concessions.

“The TWU International, along with Locals 2001 and 2055 at Metro-North, launched a multifaceted campaign that involved grassroots member organizing and political action,” International President John Samuelson said. “We once again broke the pattern. This is a key victory.”

The agreement, which was pending ratification in mid-March when The Express went to press, encompasses approximately 600 Carmen, Carmen Helpers, Cabinet Makers, and Cleaners. Carmen inspect and repair commuter trains. This agreement is retroactive from November 1, 2023, to October 31, 2026. Workers will receive raises of 3%, 3%, and 3.5% each – and substantial retroactive payments from the railroad. Compounded, that's a pay hike of nearly 10% over the life of the agreement.

“This is a good contract for our members and their families,” TWU International Rail Division Director John Feltz said. “It includes solid raises and a favorable signing bonus. Our healthcare contributions won't increase, and we made no concessions.”

The TWU spent over a year relentlessly criticizing Hochul and MTA Chairman Janno Lieber for their stubbornness and disregard for workers. The campaign included social media posts aimed at participants in Hochul's public events, interviews with New York and Connecticut media outlets, and distributing



*Rail Division Director John Feltz leads a shopgate at Grand Central Terminal in NYC.*



**Local 2055 President  
Bob Cifarelli**



**Local 2001 President  
Pat Howard**

leaflets to commuters on trains and stations. TWU Local 100 President John Chiarello sent a shot over the MTA's bow with a public statement of solidarity with the International.

“The MTA's demands were outrageous, but with the International's support, we were able to secure a great contract,” Local 2055 President Bob Cifarelli said. “The International's assistance provides us resources we don't possess alone.”

This marks the second successful contract battle with the MTA in the past year encompassing TWU's Metro-North Railroad workers. In early 2024, the two TWU locals ratified a retroactive agreement that did not include MTA demands for a wage package that would have placed Metro-North workers behind subway and bus workers. The TWU also defeated MTA demands for an unreasonable provision allowing the agency to eliminate wages and benefits in the contract at any time.

“In the past, negotiations sometimes dragged on for years,” Local 2001 President Pat Howard said. “However, in recent rounds, we have seen this pattern change. We are very fortunate to have the political influence our International Union now offers. Through the strength of our executive leadership, we have secured a contract that contains no concessions and ensures economic stability for our members.”

# Local 208 Secures More Funding, Service, and Jobs

**V**oters in Columbus, Ohio, voted in November to pay for a massive expansion of bus service, which will include the city's first-ever Bus Rapid Transit routes – a major win for Transport Workers Union Local 208,

The Central Ohio Transit Authority, or COTA, started hiring new TWU members shortly after the vote. Service increases are expected to begin in May.

"Hiring more Bus Operators, Mechanics, and Support staff will allow us to better serve the community while also providing more good-paying jobs in Columbus," Local 208 President Tyson Brown said. "I'm proud of everyone's efforts to educate voters and fight for Local 208, which will be made stronger by our increased numbers."

Local 208 members actively campaigned for a ballot measure increasing a municipal sales tax to fund mass transit. They knocked on residents' doors and went to City Hall to have discussions with elected officials.

"Local 208 fought hard and it paid off," former Local 208 President Jarvis Williams said.

The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes will have buses coming every 15 minutes or less. Cars will be banned from these bus-only lanes, which will also have boarding platforms for riders.

"This is a big win for Local 208," TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate said. "They did the hard work of knocking on doors to educate voters about the importance of increasing bus service. The TWU and the traveling public in Central Ohio will benefit."

Central Ohio voters in Columbus and surrounding counties voted to permanently renew a 0.25% sales tax and add another 0.5% sales tax – which COTA estimates will bring in \$6.2 billion by 2050. The



*TWU Local 208 Tyson Brown (third from right, front row) with International Administrative VP Curtis Tate, TUUS Division Director Willie Brown, the TUUS team, and Local 208 members in a Columbus bus depot.*

\$6.2 billion in additional transit revenue makes the Ohio ballot initiative the largest transit-related funding increase in the country that was approved by voters on Election Day.

The funds will be used to introduce BRT and expand the existing bus service by 45%. Sidewalks, bike paths, and trails will also be improved.

Last year, The TWU secured first-of-its-kind contract language that empowers the union to block the deployment of autonomous buses. It also stipulates Bus Operators and Mechanics cannot be laid off or have their wages cut due to modern technology.

"This funding victory builds on the ground-breaking contract," TWU International President John Samuelsen said. "Local 208 is doing some amazing work."

## Successful Contract Fight outside Philadelphia

TWU Local 234 secured a strong contract that enhances job security, expands maternity and parental leave, and includes 10.5% raises for a group of municipal workers outside Philadelphia – following a serious warning to the bosses about a potential strike. The workers provide essential municipal services such as garbage collection, snow removal, highway maintenance, street lighting, and animal control. However, union leaders cautioned that all these services would cease if township officials did not negotiate in good faith. To emphasize this point, Local 234 members voted unanimously on Dec. 17 to grant union leaders the authority to call a strike if necessary. "Upper Darby administrators have dragged their heels," TWU Local 234 President Brian Pollitt stated at the time. "We are sounding the alarm." Members ratified the three-year agreement in early January with a 72-2 vote. The contract includes provisions that limit the outsourcing of work to private contractors, gives two weeks of paid parental leave, and provides an additional four weeks for mothers during pregnancy or following childbirth.



*It was all smiles after a tentative contract was signed by Local 234 officers and Upper Darby government officials. Left to right: Section Officer Gene Oliviant, Local 234 Counsel Sam Schwartz, Section Officer Eric Long, Section Officer Bill Harrison, Local 234 Business Agent & Recording Secretary George Bannon, Upper Darby Township Chief Administrative Officer Crandall Jones, Local 234 Business Agent & Secretary-Treasurer Joe Coccio, and Upper Darby Township Director Amrinder Singh.*





*TWU officers from Ann Arbor, Columbus, Houston, Miami, New York City and Philadelphia observed a ballistics demonstration of bulletproof glass for Bus Operator compartments in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.*

# Bulletproof Compartments for Bus Operators

**T**WU International President John Samuelsen wants bulletproof cockpits in all buses operated by union members nationwide to guard against various forms of assaults and dangers—from spitting and slapping incidents to stabbings and gunfire.

To that end, Samuelsen invited local presidents and their designees to a ballistics demonstration of the bulletproof glass that will be featured in a pilot program in Philadelphia. Local 234, with support from the International, secured the pilot program in a contract with SEPTA that the union won last year after a vigorous fightback campaign. This campaign included members voting to empower leadership to call a strike.

The demonstration occurred in February at a law enforcement shooting range in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. SWAT officers fired multiple rounds from different caliber handguns at several large panes of glass. The glass absorbed the impact and deflected the bullets. Importantly, the glass on the Bus Operator's side didn't shatter or splinter into fragments, which means shards of glass would not have struck anyone in the driver's seat.

"This safety measure is necessary because of the outrageous and grotesque level of violence against front-line transit workers,"



*Local 291 President Joe D'Elia*

Samuelsen said. "We need to completely encapsulate Bus Operators to protect them from all sorts of attacks and threats, including gunfire. It's unacceptable that Bus Operators leaving home for work have to worry they might wind up in an emergency room or worse."

The cockpit design for Bus Operator compartments is a wall-to-ceiling, seat-to-windshield enclosure with no gaps.

SEPTA announced the first bulletproof compartment would be installed in a bus sometime this spring. The road tests will include eight buses.

"This is the precedent," Samuelsen said. "We're going to move forcefully in collective bargaining to secure this safety upgrade for our Bus Operators in all of our cities."

TWU Local 234 President Brian Pollitt stated that his officers and members "took a stand" during negotiations, insisting that SEPTA commit to installing bulletproof glass compartments. The idea emerged following the on-duty murder of Bus Operator Bernard Gribbin in October 2023. A deranged rider shot and killed Gribbin in the Germantown area of Philadelphia. Police have not uncovered a motive.

"When I started in 1990, it was a whole different world," Pollitt said. "Nowadays, our system has been under siege by the homeless, the drug-addicted and the mentally ill."



*TWU International President John Samuelsen, Local 234 Recording Secretary George Bannon and Local 234 President Brian Pollitt inspecting bulletproof glass pane.*



## HAWAII

### Discussing Paid Family Leave

Photo on right: Matt Mason, the Kahului Airport (OGG) Station Representative and a TWU State Conference Representative, met with state senators to discuss family leave in Hawaii. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that all workers covered under the Railway Labor Act (RLA) are included in any legislation introduced.



Photo on left: TWU Local 555 and the Hawaii State Conference volunteered at The Kaua'i Independent Food Bank. The volunteers helped prepare student backpacks with supplies and performed other tasks for warehouse staff.



## NEW YORK

### Toy Donation for NYC Students

The New York-New Jersey State Conference donated toys to a public school in NYC for students celebrating Three Kings Day. During the trip, conference members learned that the school operates a food pantry serving needy families. The conference plans to raise donations for the pantry to help neighborhood families.



### Author Among Us

TWU Local 555 President Abilio Villaverde, who also serves as the Colorado State Conference Chair, has authored a children's book. *We Are Family* breaks down what unions do and why they matter.





# Local 578 President Nikki Doby

### Tell us about your Local?

TWU Local 578 is a union that represents approximately 400 International Flight Attendants. In addition to myself, the executive board includes Vice President Jacob McCarthy and Finance Secretary-Treasurer Dionne Alexander-Fry. Our members are employed by Flight Services International (FSI), and we are contracted to provide cabin crew services to Atlas Air. Atlas Air's clients include the military and sports teams, such as NBA and NFL teams, celebrities, and dignitaries. We also do private event charters, such as weddings.



Local 578 President Nikki Doby

### What do you think makes your local unique?

Our local is unique because we operate differently from most airlines. While most airlines directly hire their Flight Attendants, we are contracted through FSI to provide cabin crew services to Atlas Air.

Additionally, Atlas Air is not a commercial airline but a private charter airline. Although we do some domestic flying, much of our flying is done overseas. Our schedules can keep us away from family and friends for weeks, sometimes even months. Because of these dynamics, we are unique compared to other Flight Attendant unions and must be creative and innovative in our approach to serving our members.

### What's the biggest issue, or some of the biggest issues, facing your local?

One challenge our local faces is that we are currently operating under our first contract, ratified in April 2021. The first contract is often not the best. There were some things that did not get properly addressed in our current contract that the local is unable to address until our next one, which will hopefully be ratified by April 2026.

We are also faced with the challenge of being employed by FSI, but most of our direction comes from Atlas Air. Despite this, Local 578 must deal directly with FSI when advocating for our members, rather than Atlas Air. This makes attempting to resolve real-time situations incredibly difficult.

Also, because Atlas Air is not our employer, they are not a part of negotiations, whereas most of the items being addressed in the contract are enforced by Atlas Air, not FSI. Technically, Atlas Air should be seen as a joint employer, as defined by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). But we are not governed by the NLRB; we are governed by the Railway Labor Act (RLA), and the RLA does not currently recognize joint employment. This dynamic has proved to be the most challenging issue we continue to face.

### Tell us about your job and work history.

I was hired by FSI as an International Flight Attendant in June 2019. I became The TWU Local 578 Union President in January of 2024.

Prior to working for FSI, I wore various hats. Immediately before being hired by FSI, I worked in the banking industry as an Executive Assistant to the Owner/President/CEO of a municipal bond banking firm. Prior to working there, from earlier in life to most recent, I was a preschool teacher, Retail Manager, Kindergarten Teacher, Business and Compliance Manager for a K-8 school, Executive Assistant to the Detroit City Council President, and an Operations

Manager for a non-profit.

My proudest accomplishment over the years, aside from being the President of TWU Local 578, would be when I worked as a Business and Compliance Manager for a school. I was a part of the startup team for that school. The team consisted of me, the principal, and our management company. We opened the school with grades K-2 and added a grade each year until it grew to a K-8 school. Today, the school has been open for 20 years and is thriving.

### Why did you get involved in the union?

Growing up in Detroit, Michigan, unions were a significant part of our community. I saw the value of unions firsthand through news coverage of strikes and interviews with striking workers, as well as personally knowing people directly affected by unions. Some were workers, and some were on the management side. This exposure made me appreciate the importance of unions in advocating for workers' rights. When a vacancy arose in our union, I stepped up to fill the role because I wanted to make a difference and support our members.

### What advice would you give to members who want to get more involved in their local?

My advice to members who want to get more involved with their local is to stay informed about union issues, attend union meetings, participate in union activities, volunteer for committees, run for elected positions and/or support those that do, and vote in elections. But not everyone can be "active" in the union. So at a minimum, be a positive voice for your union. Unions are advocacy groups advocating for their members' best interests, such as better pay, benefits, and working conditions. Union officers and committee members are working tirelessly on behalf of their members, and a lot of what they do is not immediately realized. Be patient with them and try to maintain a positive attitude towards them. They need this to help keep them motivated to keep fighting a good fight for you!



## TWU International President Samuelson Honored As Irishman of the Year and Aide to the Grand Marshal

**T**WU International President John Samuelson was honored as Irishman of the Year and appointed Aide to the Grand Marshal for the 2025 NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade by the Grand Council of United Emerald Societies. These

honors were officially awarded at a January dinner in Queens, NY, attended by the presidents of 20 TWU Locals and about 200 TWU members, officers, and staff in total.





# LA Bikeshare Workers Fight ‘Car Culture’ and Find Solidarity with The TWU

The car is king in Los Angeles, a city well-known for traffic jams and massive freeways. But the “parking lot” at one TWU local is a rack entirely made up of bikes – a sign that Metro Bikeshare workers under TWU Local 320 are passionate about their jobs repairing, inspecting and moving shared bikes around greater Los Angeles.

“Los Angeles could have a really amazing micromobility structure in general, but the city needs to improve infrastructure for biking,” said Bike Mechanic/Chief Shop Steward Anne Marie Drolet. “It can be hard to fight against the car culture.”

The TWU represents 42 bikeshare workers in Los Angeles, including Mechanics, Field Technicians and Dispatchers. Field Techs drive vans around the city to move bikes from station to station depending on demand, and they perform small repairs like swapping out electric bike batteries. Dispatchers work with the Field Techs to plan their routes – and, hopefully, keep them away from LA’s notorious traffic jams as much as possible.

The LA local is part of a larger TWU bikeshare organizing initiative that began in 2014, when Local 100 first organized a group of bikeshare workers in New York City. Local 320 was subsequently founded. It now includes bikeshare workers in Boston, Washington, DC, Detroit, Chicago, Portland, San Francisco and LA.

Drolet stated that the Los Angeles workers decided to join The TWU in 2021 as they faced challenges during the pandemic. Blue-collar workers observed their bosses barking orders from home while they worked in-person to repair and maintain bikes.

“We were unhappy with conditions during the pandemic and had no input into decision making,” Drolet said. “A lot of people didn’t know much about unions, but it wasn’t super difficult to convince people to join and start a union.”

Drolet stated that the process of starting a union demonstrated the power of collective action and the importance of seeking help, which enabled Local 320 members in Los Angeles to achieve a recent victory against the LA Metro board. The board had recommended replacing the current operator, BTS, with Lyft, but then backed



down. Lyft would have cut costs and gutted the Local’s contract.

“There are so many other TWU locals just in Los Angeles,” Drolet said. “We got airline workers out to our rallies, and we reached out to other shops in Local 320. I’ve made a lot more connections with The TWU.”

Joaquin Oseguera, a Bike Mechanic, said he worked in bike shops fixing and selling bikes for years – often working on commissions that led him to compete with his fellow workers for business.

“It’s awesome with a union. I’m not as worried, so it’s easy to stay focused and just work. The union takes care of a lot of issues I would have to take care of on my own,” Oseguera said.

Alexandria Terrones joined TWU Local 320 in November of 2023 as a Field Technician, her first job with union representation. She appreciated the support shown by The TWU across the country when their contract faced a threat from Lyft and said The TWU’s contract helps ensure that schedules stay reasonable, time off is granted, and breaks are permitted when the weather gets too hot while out in the field.

“Just knowing that someone would fight for my job and knowing that I have job security is really important,” Terrones said.





# Robust Training Program Rolls On

*Local officers and board members participated in training sessions conducted by TWU International Training and Education Coordinator Mitch Lieberman all across the country late last year and early in 2025. Topics included grievance procedures and arbitration hearings.*



**Local 223**



**Local 260**



**Local 264**



**Local 512**



**Local 575 & Local 502**



**Local 200**





### TWU Locals in LA Step Up for Wildfire Relief

*TWU locals in the Los Angeles area banded together to provide donations and support to victims of the Palisades and Eaton Wildfires, the two most destructive wildfires ever in Southern California.*

*The locals collected clothing, canned goods, toiletries, and over-the-counter medicine for wildfire victims. Monetary donations were gathered via a GoFundMe page. Retirees also participated in the drive, which collected four truckloads of donated materials.*

*"The TWU locals in California refused to stand by idly," Local 575 President Enrique Guzman said. "This collective response exemplifies the true spirit of solidarity, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to our members and the communities we serve."*

*In addition to Guzman, Local 575 officers who led the relief effort included Vice President Philip Castilleja, Member-at-Large Lorenzo Recendez, and LAX E.A.P. Chair Ebonie Young. Others who stepped up included Local 502's Gary Gill, Brendan Moriarty from Local 579, and Chris Avila from Local 555.*



*TWU International Chief of Staff Gary Peterson swears in Local 592 officers*



*TWU International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes and Air Division Director Andre Sutton led a TWU contingent on a visit with members on the ramp at LAS (Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas, Nevada). The group also included International Air Division Reps. Kevin Smith and Greg Cosey, International Organizer Klarissa Principe, and Local 567 President Rollie Reaves.*



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*“Participating in TWU COPE gives us the power to  
protect our jobs, wages, and rights by making  
our voices heard where they matter  
most. We are grateful for our strong  
relationships with elected leaders who  
support us during key legislative fights.  
For example, working with our allies in  
Congress for the 2024 FAA Reauthorization  
Act, The TWU led the way with progress  
being made to bring our aircraft work back  
to the U.S., ensuring safety, job security,  
and a stronger future for our industry.”*

– Gary Schaible, President TWU Local 591

**(L to R) Local 591 President Gary Schaible  
Local 567 President Rollie Reaves  
Local 514 President Dale Danker**



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