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Dozens gather for critical safety summit to share experiences and best practices



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Conrail workers receive double-digit raises and more vacation time in new contract



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Local 252 School Bus Workers in Long Island, NY, Ratify Contract

A United Front Against the Bosses

WHEN IT COMES TO THE TRANSPORT WORKERS Union, an injury to one of us is truly an injury to all of us. If you try to hurt any of our locals, no matter how big or small, we will respond to you with every weapon we have.

That's the lesson we just delivered to the elitist, arrogant bureaucrats at Barnard College, allegedly one of the most prestigious in the country. The all-women's college on Manhattan's Upper West Side clearly breached its contract with Local 241 in August when it started implementing cost-cutting measures, including cutting some Custodian shifts held by TWU members. Seniority rights were ignored. In the worst case, an eight-month pregnant custodian, Shakira Zahiruddin, was fired and stripped of her health insurance – even though a less experienced, superintendent remained employed.

Very quickly, Barnard found itself in a fight with every TWU local in the NYC area and the 163,000-member-strong International. International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, TUUS Director Willie Brown, Staff Representative Christina Scott, and I discussed strategy with Local 241 President Joseph Rose, bringing many decades of experience and expertise to the table. Brown and Scott joined Rose in meetings with college administrators, clearly stating that the TWU would not allow them to bully or violate the rights of our members. Legal advice was provided during the grievance filing process.

We also exposed Barnard's atrocious treatment of its workers. We blew the lid off their dirty little secret. The International organized a highly attended press conference where Zahiruddin accused Barnard of firing her solely to avoid paying her maternity leave. Five television channels, three newspapers, and two radio stations – with millions of readers, viewers, and listeners combined – covered the story. It knocked the Barnard bosses back on their heels.



Local 100 opened its doors and hosted the press conference. Members of Local 100's Women's Committee stood with Shakira to show their support as she shared her ordeal with the world. They comforted Shakira after she finished speaking and then provided her with school supplies for her two children, ages 7 and 13.

The International also created a series of video commercials blasting the all-women's college for its terrible mistreatment of Shakira and its anti-union stance.

Due to the TWU's united and aggressive action, Barnard assigned Shakira another custodial post, restoring her insurance and income. We continue to fight the college's violation of seniority rights through the grievance process.

The Barnard battle highlights our approach. It doesn't matter if a threat affects 40 or 40,000 of our members. We're going to leverage every resource at our disposal to win the fight - protecting and advancing the livelihoods of our members.

It sounds cliché, but it's true: We are a family. We are one big union, not a series of locals. We believe in the collective strength of industrial organizing and the power of presenting a united front to the bosses. An injury to one of us is an injury to the entire TWU. Seek to do us harm at your own peril.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samuels". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'J' and 'S'.



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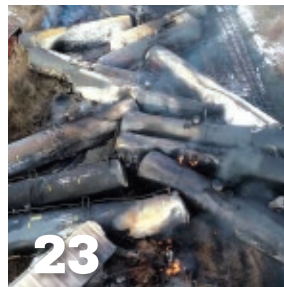
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The TWU's Legacy of Activism

*By International Secretary-Treasurer
Jerome Lafragola*



The history of The TWU is an essential guide for our future. I recently had the opportunity to honor some of the original founding members of what is now TWU Local 556 in Dallas, Texas, on their 50th anniversary. It was a memorable experience listening to the creative ways that Flight Attendants fought for better working conditions and treatment in the 1970s at a regional airline in Texas that has now evolved into one of the largest airlines in the country.

What started as a group of a few dozen women who simply wanted a say on the attire worn on board has turned into one of The TWU's largest locals – and we are proud to be the largest union at Southwest representing workers in several titles: Flight Attendants; Ramp, Operations, Provisioning, and Freight Agents; Meteorologists; as well as Flight Crew Training Instructors. We have fought for and won contracts that have significantly improved the lives of TWU members and their families – while setting the bar higher across the aviation industry.

The TWU's history of activism is rooted in our founding. In 1934, Michael Quill formed The TWU and began an active, militant campaign to aggressively organize thousands of transit workers who had seen their pay slashed and working conditions deteriorate during the height of the Great Depression. Today, the legacy of Quill lives on in our frequent fightback campaigns across the Transit Division.

In Philadelphia, we are fighting against draconian funding cuts to transit that would hurt our members and slash service for the traveling public. In New York, we called out the MTA for mismanaging the distribution of workers' compensation checks, depriving TWU members – some of whom were seriously injured on the job – of a critical source of income.

And in the Rail Division, we launched successful fightback campaigns against the MTA and Keolis, who both sought to cut wages and benefits from hardworking commuter rail workers in New York and Boston. TWU members showed up in state capitols, train stations, railyards, and in the media, to make sure their voices were heard. The early days of the TWU were marked by successfully using the media and word-of-mouth to generate support for workers. Today, we are using different tactics like targeted social media advertising and proactive advertising to achieve victories for our members.

I encourage all TWU members, but particularly younger members interested in future leadership, to brush up on the history of the TWU and speak with current leaders and retired members to get a better understanding of the past. A union with a strong sense of history and identity is a sturdier union that can more effectively fight corporate greed, win battles in the court of public opinion, and deliver victories.

The TWU has fought for decades to build upon the early victories of those who came before us in all divisions. The union today has built upon the fights of years past to successfully fight for pay increases, new benefits, and paid parental leave. I am proud to be part of a union where each generation learns from past struggles and builds upon its successes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome Lafragola". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Offering a Helping Hand to TWU Veterans

When Scott Chisum left the Air Force in 1996, he, in his own words, “didn’t want anything to do with anything” when it came to acknowledging his service – not even standing up in church when veterans were asked to be recognized during the holidays.

But Chisum, a Materials Logistics Specialist with Local 514 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, had a change of heart after getting involved with his local and the TWU Veterans Committee for a toy drive for kids who had family deployed overseas during Christmas. Chisum later joined Patriot Guard to provide escort services during veteran funerals and eventually became more involved with TWU veteran programs.

Now, Chisum estimates he’s helped more than 1,000 veterans file claims with the Veterans Affairs Department through his role as a Service Officer with Disabled American Veterans, a support organization for veterans across the country. Chisum helps veterans file the proper paperwork and documentation to get coverage for medical issues that are traced to a veteran’s time on duty.

“The first five years of being a Service Officer most of my service officer work was helping veteran employees, through veteran benefit fairs, at American Airlines. Now I’m helping, mostly TWU veterans, throughout the year” Chisum said. “Some people we can get the help they need in one visit and they are taken care of, and then there’s individuals I’ve worked with for five plus years to get them the benefits they have earned.”

Chisum is trained by DAV every year and is certified to help veterans file disability claims related to their time in the military. While any veteran can submit a claim on their own, Chisum said having a trained Service Officer is essential because VA requirements change every year. For example when the pact went into effect and the



Scott Chisum

disabilities related to it. Veterans need a diagnosis of a disability, evidence of an event that took place while serving, and a medical link that connects the current disability to past service to file a successful claim.

“If you do it on your own you don’t know those things. If you research on the internet you sometimes get bad information. And if you’ve talked to people who’ve gone through the process before, the VA evolves. The constant training allows us to help veterans better than they can on their own, as we are getting the latest info on how to help Veterans file their claims” Chisum said.

TWU Veterans Committee liaison Jose Galarza said Chisum has helped hundreds of TWU members across all divisions file claims. He

often attends Veterans Committee meetings where he helps file claims or is put in touch with veterans who need his services.

“Over the years he’s done hundreds of claims for TWU Air Division members, especially in Tulsa at their base. Now everybody from Transit or Rail, he helps them out too,” Galarza said.

Chisum, who also served as a Shop Steward and Local 514 board member, said he’s been working as a Service Officer on a volunteer basis for about a decade. Chisum said he worked about 40 hours on claims throughout the month of July, on top of his full time job at American Airlines.

“It’s a really awesome feeling when you get a phone call that someone is extremely happy with what you helped them achieve,” Chisum said. “When you hear that someone got the disability they earned with their service and is getting compensated for it, that’s a good phone call.”

Chisum said anyone interested in learning more about filing a VA claim can use dav.org as a starting resource.

Chisum said anyone interested in learning more about filing a VA claim can use dav.org as a starting resource.



Scott Chisum, second from top left, at a TWU Veterans Committee meeting at Local 513 headquarters in Southlake, Texas. Chisum has helped hundreds of TWU members file claims with the Veterans Administration.

Local 2003 President Danny Groves

Tell us about your Local?

We have approximately 250 members. We have members at Amtrak in Beech Grove, Indiana, and about 45 members at CSX in Avon, Indiana. It's a split local, so it keeps me busy.

You've got to know both agreements and the Federal Railroad Administration stuff. Carrying freight is different from carrying passengers. At Amtrak, we represent Carmen. A Carman can do anything that's not electric or pipe. Most of us weld and install seats, floors, carpets, and bathrooms. You name it, we can do it. On the CSX side, they're out in the yard switching cars, checking cars, checking airbrakes. It's fast-paced there because the train's gotta go. Those guys are busy.

What do you think makes your Local unique?

Local 2003 is unique because of the members we have. We have workers moving freight and workers moving passengers. So, you need to know both. The work itself, some of it's similar, but most of it is completely different.

A passenger car is like a big RV with a bunch of seats in it. Beech Grove is a huge place. It has these giant buildings that were built in the 1900s. I believe it has the most indoor space of any rail maintenance facility. On the freight side, those guys get hundreds and hundreds of cars ready every day to get them sent out. We have different needs on each side, which keeps us really busy.

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

To be frank, Amtrak management is very abrasive right now. We go round and round on the Amtrak side.

The CSX side has gotten better. We have a very, very aggressive management group. I've been president for 13 years, and we have had more discipline trials in the last three years than in the first 10 years I was president. We just are just trying to find a happy medium to do what we do best and prepare train cars.

Tell us about your job and work history

I was hired at Amtrak at Beech Grove in 1990 as a Carman Helper. I worked for about a year as a Helper, then I got set up as a Carman in 1992. I was laid off in October of 1992, rehired in May of 1998,



Local 2003 President Danny Groves, center, with Rail Division Director John Feltz and Local 2003 members, at the Beech Grove facility. International Representative Brian DeLucia, far right.



Local 2003 members working at the Beech Grove facility.

and I've been here ever since. I've got about four and a half years to go until I can retire. I'm fortunate and my team is awesome.

Why did you get involved in the union?

In 2008, there was talk of closing Beech Grove down. The local needed somebody to take on some work on the political side. I started as the political liaison for the president at the time. One of my good friends and mentor, Jack Ragland, was after me for more than a year to get involved. He told me that I could directly affect people's jobs, and I

decided I couldn't turn that down. We met with U.S. senators and congressmen. The union job has taken me to places I never thought I'd be. I've been to state houses, and I got to tour the White House.

What prior roles have you had in the union?

I started as the political liaison in 2008, and I worked my way through the ranks from there. I was Recording Secretary, stepped up to vice president, and then the president stepped down 13 years ago. I've been here ever since.

What advice would you give to members who want to get more involved with their Local?

Start low. Don't set sights too high. Be a steward, be a recording secretary, be an e-board member at large. I think that's the only way to learn every aspect of it. As president, you're responsible for every aspect of it so you need to learn every position.

Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles: Shalena Matlock

From ticket agents who worked in the New York City Subway system during the 1930s to aircraft maintenance technicians, journeyman carmen, power cable maintainers, and more, the TWU has a long history of representing women in nontraditional workplace roles. In this issue of The Express, we feature Shalena Matlock, a Local 513 member and American Airlines Crew Chief, on the ramp at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

What is your job and responsibilities?

I am a Crew Chief in charge of letting the crew know where to load the bags from the Load Planner. I'm out there on the ramp, basically delegating. If I'm on a gate, I'm overseeing a three-man crew. When I'm in the bag room, there can be up to 30 people.

How long have you been a TWU member?

10 years

What positions do you hold within the local, in addition to your job?

I'm chairperson of the Working Women's Committee, a shop steward, and I'm involved with the Future Leaders Organizing Committee.

What program did you recently complete?

The Ruth Ellinger Leadership Program through the Texas AFL-CIO. I learned a lot about politics. We learned how to conduct block walking on behalf of candidates that support our unions, and we learned about calling people on the phones. We also learned how to kill a bill that hurts working people. They gave us specific bills, had us follow them, and we gave testimony of why we were either in favor or against a piece of legislation. We learned why it's important to be involved politically.

What does being in the TWU mean to you?

It means stability. It gives me peace of mind knowing I have a union behind me fighting against the injustices we face day to day on the ramp. It also gives me a sense of security and peace knowing that I have job stability.

What are your favorite things to do outside of work?

I like spending time with my family, karaoke, watching movies and YouTube.

What challenges have you faced as a working woman?

Just being an African American woman on the ramp in a male-



Shalena Matlock completed the Ruth Ellinger Leadership Program offered by the Texas AFL-CIO.



Shalena Matlock

Don't doubt yourself, and if you aspire to move up within the union, always bring someone along with you. The fight doesn't stop!

dominated environment. Most times, they see a woman walking to the gate and think she's not strong enough to pull her weight. So, you have to kind of prove yourself, but once you do, you get that respect.

What advice would you give to other working women?

Don't doubt yourself, and if you aspire to move up within the union, always bring someone along with you. The fight doesn't stop!

From Hot Pants to Union Power

Southwest Flight Attendants Celebrate 50 Years with The TWU

A group of trailblazing Flight Attendants, who worked at Southwest Airlines when it first started, gathered in Dallas this summer to celebrate 50 years of TWU representation, initially as part of TWU Local 513 and then six years later as a fully chartered TWU affiliate, Local 556.

The retired Flight Attendants spoke about the impetus to unionize five decades ago, when SWA Flight Attendants had no voice at work and were hired because of their appearance. Attendants, known as hostesses, were required to wear hot pants and platform shoes. The company did not hire male Flight Attendants.

Sandra Bogan, a member of the first graduating class of SWA Flight Attendants in 1971, recalled approaching Southwest leadership to request a list of work rules, hoping to clarify responsibilities and safety practices. Southwest President Lamar Muse gruffly told Bogan, “Just go get yourself a goddam union.”

“So, we did,” Bogan said with a chuckle.

Bogan said the first major fights were over Flight Attendant uniforms, specifically the hot pants. The company promoted the Flight Attendants like the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders, retired FA Deborah Parsons Franklin said. Vicki Gale, a Southwest



TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola' attended the event in Dallas, Texas.

Flight Attendant who started in 1974 and is still working, recalled not being allowed to sit during turbulence because getting drinks to passengers was the top priority.

“It was a different time and a different world,” Gale said.

The suggestive attire resulted in unwanted harassment from passengers. Bogan and other early Local 556 leaders successfully fought for

Southwest Airlines advertisement from the provocative hot-pants era that started in the 1970s.



Attendees at the celebration of 50 years of TWU representation at Southwest Airlines, flanked by cardboard cutouts of two Flight Attendants in the company's original uniforms.



Graduating class of Flight Attendants during Southwest's early years.

uniform changes. Their efforts won over many workers who were skeptical of unions in Texas, where organized labor historically has struggled against anti-worker politicians and employers.

"When we started the union, we had maybe 25 [Flight Attendants] and the rest didn't want the union," Bogan said. "Now, this year, there are 22,000 Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines who are in the union, which is just amazing to me that we started from little bitty."

TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola congratulated the TWU Local 556 leaders at the reception.

"Fifty years ago, Flight Attendants were told what to do, how to do it, what they can look like, and they weren't being paid very much money," Lafragola said. "And a bunch of TWU folks got together and had the guts to form a union. They built a foundation, and little by little, everyone who came after them added to it and added to it."

Lafragola noted that Local 556 last year ratified "an industry-leading contract."

The reception also included current TWU Flight Attendant local officers who said the trailblazers' efforts 50 years ago continue to pay off today. The TWU now represents Flight Attendants at Southwest, JetBlue Airways, Allegiant Airlines, and Flight Services International.

"When I talk to the early pioneers, the trailblazers for our union, it just gives me a lot of pride," former Local 556 President and TWU International Vice President Thom McDaniel said. "It's a legendary story that [the Flight Attendants] went to Southwest Airlines and all they wanted was some work rules. And the company said, well, it sounds like you need a union."

After the company's response, Brogran said she reached out to The TWU, which a family friend recommended. The rest is history.



Southwest Flight Attendants, friends, and family celebrate 50 years of TWU at Southwest Airlines.

TWU Members Deserve Federal Overtime Tax Deduction Too.

Tens of thousands of TWU members – and millions of workers across America – are ineligible for a new federal tax deduction on overtime earnings, but The TWU is working hard to get transport workers what they deserve.

In July, President Donald Trump signed into law the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, revising the tax code to allow most hourly workers to deduct up to \$25,000 in overtime pay from their annual income for tax purposes. However, the law relies on an outdated definition of overtime dating back to 1938, which means workers employed by airlines, railroads, school bus companies, and motor coach carriers are excluded from the tax break.

TWU International President John Samuelsen raised the alarm about TWU members being excluded in media interviews, telling the Wall Street Journal, it's "a legislative and political blunder." Samuelsen predicted the exclusion of millions of blue-collar workers from the overtime benefit "will become a huge political issue, particularly for the Republicans, if it's not fixed."

Samuelsen also sent a letter to members of Congress, urging them to correct the tax-code flaw in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Legislation was introduced and is pending action.

"Providing tax relief to blue-collar workers is a great idea," Samuelsen said. "They deserve it much more than greedy corporate giants and hedge-fund vultures who never get their hands dirty and



never have to lift anything heavier than a cocktail. All blue-collar workers, however, must be deemed eligible."

Giving workers the ability to deduct \$25,000 per year in overtime earnings could provide up to \$6,000 in savings per year. The TWU will continue to fight to ensure that all workers will be eligible for tax savings that were drafted into law to help working families.

"Providing tax relief to blue-collar workers is a great idea. They deserve it much more than greedy corporate giants and hedge-fund vultures who never get their hands dirty and never have to lift anything heavier than a cocktail. All blue-collar workers, however, must be deemed eligible."

– International President John Samuelsen

PrimeFlight Fuelers in Orlando Unanimously Ratify First TWU Contract with 15% Raise

The Transport Workers Union of America successfully negotiated the first contract for PrimeFlight Fuelers at Orlando International Airport – locking in a 15% raise and replacing a management-controlled paid time off system with guaranteed sick and vacation time.

The Fuelers unanimously voted to ratify the three-year contract on July 21, and it went into effect on August 1. The 72 Fuelers will be part of TWU Local 504, which represents workers at airports across the country. The TWU is the nation's largest airport workers' union, and the biggest at the Orlando airport.

"This first contract for PrimeFlight Fuelers in Orlando provides significant economic gains for workers and their families," TWU International President John Samuelsen said. "The new contract immediately elevates the Fuelers represented by the TWU from the lowest-paid Fuelers on property to the highest paid, and gives workers both sick time and vacation time, instead of a management-controlled PTO system."

The agreement immediately increases Fuelers' starting pay to \$17.50 an hour from \$15 an hour. Workers' pay will also increase by \$1 an hour per year over the life of the contract, capping at \$20.50 an hour.

Previously, PrimeFlight Fuelers did not receive any paid sick time or vacation days, only a week's worth of PTO per year, which was subject to management's discretion. But under the new contract,

workers will get one week of paid vacation in their first year on the job, two weeks of vacation after three years of service, three weeks after five years, and four weeks after 15 years. All workers will now get six paid sick days per year. They can carry three of those days, if unused, over to the next year.

The new contract also includes a grievance and arbitration process, along with a discipline policy. PrimeFlight Fuelers were previously "at will" workers who could be terminated at any time without a reason. That classification no longer applies.

The contract also includes eight paid holidays per year, and guaranteed overtime pay for any hours worked above 40 hours per week. The company is now prohibited from suspending normal working hours to prevent workers from accruing overtime pay.

The PrimeFlight Fuelers are the largest group of Fuelers on property at MCO. They service flights on a contract basis from Southwest Airlines, American Airlines, United Airlines, Spirit Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Air France, and others. The Fuelers voted unanimously to join the TWU in January.

"This is a significant new contract that locks in major quality-of-life improvements for some of our newest members," TWU Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza said. "I'm proud that the TWU and Local 504 were able to deliver a first contract within months of PrimeFlight Fuelers voting to join the TWU."



PrimeFlight Fuelers at Orlando International Airport have their first contract as TWU members.

FOUR MORE YEARS

**SAMUELSEN, GARCIA, LAFRAGOLA,
TATE, and MAYES REELECTED**



Unopposed for the second consecutive convention, TWU International President John Samuelson and his entire United Unstoppable slate were reelected on September 16 for another term at the 27th Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas, marking a historic display of support and unity.

The convention – the largest gathering of delegates ever in the TWU's rich history – erupted in applause when the vote count concluded and the top five officers, standing shoulder to shoulder, raised their clasped hands high above their heads in victory: Samuelson, Executive Vice President Alex Garcia, Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, and Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes.

"It is with the utmost humility that we say thank you as a slate," Samuelson said. "The affirmation, the uplifting positivity of being elected without opposition, is just stunning. It's incredible. It really is. It's the entire body of the membership saying that we are in

"It is with the utmost humility that we say thank you as a slate. The affirmation, the uplifting positivity of being elected without opposition, is just stunning. It's incredible. It really is. It's the entire body of the membership saying that we are in total agreement with the fighting mentality that this leadership has brought to the International."

– TWU International President John Samuelson



TWU International President John Samuelson speaking to delegates.



International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia

WORKERS
UNION
AMERICA

ICA'S FIGHTBACK ON★

total agreement with the fighting mentality that this leadership has brought to the International.”

The United Unstoppable slate, led by Samuelsen, Garcia, Lafragola, Tate, and Mayes, also ran unopposed four years ago at the previous convention, meaning they have secured an unprecedented pair of wins in TWU history. Legendary labor leader Michael J. Quill and other transit workers in New York City founded the TWU in 1934. In total, 78 TWU International officers were declared victorious by acclamation on Tuesday. They are international Vice Presidents, Executive Board members, Executive Council members, and the top five.

Samuelsen said the International’s leadership is committed to maintaining the course it first set when coming into office in 2017.

“We will continue fighting aggressively for contracts that raise the living standards of Transport Workers,” he said. “We will continue fighting aggressively to organize the unorganized, and we will continue to invest in a robust political program.”

The electoral victory came after nearly 600 convention delegates

watched a video recounting how the International has helped locals secure solid, no-giveback contracts that, in many cases, are industry-leading agreements. Dozens of delegates then stepped, one by one, to the convention floor microphones to thank and praise the International. Without the International providing financial resources, union staff, strategic plans, and other assistance to their causes, they would not have been successful, they said.

“We’ve have never seen anything like the aggressive leadership that you have brought,” Local 591 President Gary Schaible said. “We were always used to being at the bottom of the industry. We are now at the top of the industry. So, we thank you...”



International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes celebrates reelection with his grandson.



International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola



International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate during the Pledge of Allegiance



AMERICA'S FIGHTBACK ★ UNION



Transport Workers Union 27th Constitution

September 15 – 19, 202



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n of America, AFL-CIO
nal Convention
5 ▪ Las Vegas, Nevada



Delegates representing the Air Division



Rail Division delegates



The Transit Division at the Convention
More Convention photos on page 18

TWU BY THE NUMBERS

Year Founded:
1934

First International President:

Michael J. Quill, 1934 to 1966

International Presidents to date: **10**



Michael J. Quill

Total Membership: **163,000**



27

**Constitutional
Conventions**

571

**Delegates & Alternates
at 2025 Convention**

9.5 Million People moved a day



11 Modes of Transportation

airplane, bus, subway/metro, cable car, school bus, tour boats, trolley,
bicycle, freight train, light rail, Central Park horse-drawn carriages





AMERICA'S FIGHTBACK ★ UNION ★



Scan to watch
Convention videos on
TWU contract fightback,
organizing, safety
initiatives and more.



Scan to review
photos from the
TWU Convention.

Local 291 President Will Vera and officers stood in support of a resolution committing the TWU to press forward on measures to improve workplace safety.



Convention Speaker Melissa Stockwell, first female soldier to lose a limb in the Iraq War, World Champion Para-Triathlete, with TWU veterans.

The Indiana-Illinois and Texas-Oklahoma State Conferences have recently joined forces

The Indiana-Illinois (right) and Texas-Oklahoma State (below) Conferences have recently joined forces to set ambitious goals, plan innovative initiatives, and collaborate on key priorities, including legislative advocacy, community service, and member engagement. Their teamwork not only strengthens local representation but also mobilizes members and ensures that TWU's voice is heard in communities and state capitals.

The 2025 State Conference Working Agenda is designed to focus on a variety of important activities. These

include meetings and training sessions, engagements with the AFL-CIO and its affiliates, outreach to state and local leadership, and the use of legislative and political tools. Additionally, the agenda emphasizes organizing and outreach activities, community service projects, and voter registration drives.

By working together, these state conferences are making a significant impact, fostering a sense of unity and purpose among members, and driving positive change in their respective regions.



Support for Suozzi

The TWU NY/NJ State Conference stands firmly with leaders like Congressman Tom Suozzi who fight for working people. Our voice is powerful, and we use it to lift those who support our members – and to hold accountable those who turn their backs on us

TWU Air Division Convenes First Safety Summit

Dozens of safety leaders across the TWU's Air Division gathered during the summer for a critical discussion of safety issues – an event that was sparked by discussions between locals about the importance of sharing safety information across workgroups.

The first ever TWU Air Division safety summit was held at Local 513 headquarters in, Southlake, Texas, with more than 70 attendees, including local presidents, officers holding safety-related positions, TWU staff, and outside speakers.

"We managed to finally get the people in place to hold such a great event," TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton said. "The event served to build stronger unity and relationships within the different workgroups. I would like to thank all the locals who attended the safety summit."

Speakers touched on topics such as professional standards, pushout safety, ramp safety, toxic fume events on aircraft, and gave an update on political and legislative affairs. The primary goal of the meeting was to bring different workgroups together to learn from each other. During one discussion, different TWU locals discussed a variety of strategies they use to promote workplace safety and accountability from their bosses.

"We made it clear to the locals that they have the full support of the TWU behind them when it comes to safety issues," said Assistant Organizing Director Sean Doyle, who was involved in putting together the daylong meeting of 18 locals. "Whether you are a Flight Attendant, Fleet Service Agent, Dispatcher, Flight Instructor, Aircraft Maintenance Technician, or a Fueler, there are many things we can learn from each other to keep our workplace safer for our members and the traveling public."

Ramp workers discussed the various dangers of working with tow bars, while Flight Attendants discussed the dangerous, toxic fumes that can make workers sick. In each case, the different workgroups were not fully aware of the issues facing other airline workers until they sat down together to discuss them.

TWU Local 555 Safety and Health Committee Co-Chair Karl Mager talked about the complexity of ensuring safe operations at



TWU International Assistant Director of Organizing Sean Doyle speaking to summit participants.



Local 577 President Christa Gifford makes a point during the safety summit

a busy airport. He brought up the dangers of severe weather on the ramp and said sometimes pilots become upset at ramp crews for not being outside during a storm.

"We know the dangers of lightning on aircraft runways, but sometimes the aircraft is at the gate and the pilot asks, 'Why isn't the crew out there?'" Mager said, adding that the example highlights why getting different workgroups from the air industry together to talk about safety issues is so important.

Jay Sleeman, Ground Safety Director and Tech Ops for Local 513; Bill Ainsworth, Safety Director at Local 513; and Karen Koziatek, Air Division Administrative Professional, were also involved in planning the safety summit.

The unified safety meeting was further evidence of the TWU's strength as the nation's largest airport workers union – and recent organizing victories for Shuttle Bus Drivers, Fuelers, Dispatchers, and Flight Instructors mean the next safety meeting will be even bigger.





Cabin Crew Coalition Discusses Critical Flight Attendant Issues

The TWU International's Cabin Crew Coalition met in Dallas this summer so Flight Attendant local presidents, safety officers, and TWU staff could discuss strategies for improving working conditions for Flight Attendants nationwide.

TWU International Vice President Thom McDaniel convened the meeting, which featured leaders from TWU Locals 556, 577, 578, and 579, TWU's Committee on Public Education, and TWU's Government Affairs Department.

"Everyone learned from each other at the meeting – and we discussed ways we can fight back against management policies that hurt Flight Attendants, such as substandard hotel stays that prevent Flight Attendants from getting the rest they need," McDaniel said. "We also continued important work on our Flight Attendant Bill of Rights."

The Bill of Rights will be a document that addresses many critical issues, such as assaults, polluted engine air circulating through aircraft cabins, and schedules that are inconsistent and unfairly applied.

TWU Local 556 President Kristina Peterson said her local is currently fighting with Southwest Airlines over a policy that eliminates trips that go through bases, which can be sliced off and

given to another Flight Attendant, along with addressing hotel issues on Southwest's new red-eye flights.

TWU Local 579 is working to get cabin air quality events classified as on-the-job injuries in Florida, where many JetBlue Flight Attendants are based, President Tyesha Best said. Crewmembers now get more support for filing on-the-job injury claims in states like New York, Best added.

TWU Local 577 President Christa Gifford reported that Allegiant Airlines recently implemented an assault policy and began providing Narcan and fire gloves on board for Flight Attendants to use in emergency situations. She also said Allegiant Flight Attendants are still forced to share hotel rooms when flights are delayed overnight while pilots are given their own rooms.

And TWU Local 578 President Nikki Doby said she continues to educate her members about the benefits of COPE and being politically engaged. Political engagement can go beyond donations to include door-knocking for a candidate or attending campaign events, Doby tells her members.

All of the Flight Attendant locals at the latest meeting pledged to keep working on the Bill of Rights and to keep each other updated about the latest developments in the industry.



Conrail Rail Workers Ratify New Contract with Significant Pay Increases

Conrail railroad workers in Detroit, Philadelphia, and New Jersey voted overwhelmingly in June to approve a new five-year contract with a 17.5% wage increase, raising Journeyman Carmens' pay to over \$100,000 a year. The workers are in Locals 2001, 2013 and 2051.

"This is a big win for TWU railroad workers," TWU International President John Samuelsen said. "This new contract locks in real wage increases and ensures that hardworking TWU members will be able to better provide for their families with increased pay and benefits."

The contract also includes bumps for dental and vision benefits and establishes an employee-only health plan. Improved vacation benefits will provide 15 paid days off for workers with six or more years of experience, 20 days off for workers with 15 or more years on the job, and 25 days off for workers with 23 or more years with the company.

"This ratified contract ensures significant wage increases without needing to resort to an extremely long and politically fraught mediation process," TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz said. "Our hardworking Conrail workers in Detroit, Philadelphia, and New Jersey now have the security of a five-year deal along with better benefits."

Conrail workers represented by the TWU play a critical role



TWU International Rail Division Director John Feltz says TWU members at Conrail now have the security of a five-year contract with improved benefits.



International President John Samuelsen calls the contract a "big win."

in inspecting and repairing railcars. By the end of the five-year contract, TWU rail workers at Conrail will make more than \$48 an hour and over \$100,000 a year in base pay, not including potential overtime pay.

The TWU will continue to negotiate for paid sick days at the local level with Conrail. Conrail currently operates three rail networks in the Detroit area, Philadelphia/South Jersey area, and North Jersey, with the shared assets of CSX and Norfolk Southern.

TWU Participates in Critical Freight Rail Safety Discussion

Members of the TWU's Rail Division participated in an important discussion on freight rail safety in East Palestine, Ohio, more than two years after a deadly derailment and environmental crisis caused by lax safety oversight.

TWU Local 2035 President Dennis Sabina took part in a discussion with U.S. Reps. Chris DeLuzio of Pennsylvania and Michael Rulli of Ohio, along with officers from other freight rail unions. They stressed the importance of passing the Railway Safety Act. The legislation is supported by politicians from both parties, and President Donald Trump has expressed his backing. However, it has not been passed by both chambers of Congress.

"We're looking to keep our work protected and keep people safe," Sabina said.

In February 2023, a Norfolk Southern freight train carrying hazardous materials derailed in East Palestine, releasing toxic chemicals and forcing community evacuations. The accident put a national spotlight on rail safety while raising questions about the effectiveness of existing regulations.

Sabina said the freight railroads are continuing to push for faster and automated car inspections. They also want conductors to do some car inspections. In their continued quest for maximum profits, railroads are undervaluing TWU Carmen and the work they do inspecting and maintaining freight rail cars, Sabina said.

The bill sponsored by DeLuzio and Rulli would set minimum car inspection times, require at least two crew members on all

Class I freight trains, and impose bigger fines on railroads for safety violations. It would also require railroads to enroll in a confidential close call reporting system and improve communications to warn first responders heading to an accident that they might encounter hazardous materials at the scene.

"It's long past time for Congress to act on freight rail safety," TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz said.

Sabina, whose TWU local is based across the state line from East Palestine in Conway, Pennsylvania, said freight railroads are continuing to cut corners on safety. Sabina said his members are forced to work overtime shifts "nearly every day," raising concerns about potential fatigue. Nearly all freight railroads, not just Norfolk Southern, are doing it, he said.

"When they talk about safety, it's all lip service," Sabina said. "How do you expect someone to work 16 hours a day? That obviously leads to safety issues because you're not fresh, you're not focused, you're not physically at the top of your game."

Local 2009 President Paul Calderone, who attended the event, said freight rail unions must remain united on safety. What happens in other crafts will inevitably affect TWU carmen, Calderone said.

"It's kind of like the Olympic rings," Calderone said. "Each craft is interwoven with the next. Even if something does not affect us directly, it can affect us. That is why we need to stick together and get this bill passed."



Left to Right, Dennis Sabina, TWU Local 2035 President, Tony Cardwell, BMWET International President, and Vince Verna, BLET International V.P.



TWU participated in a rail safety summit in East Palestine, Ohio. Below: Scene of the wreckage after the East Palestine, Ohio, freight train derailment.





TWU International President John Samuelsen speaking to Local 100 Bus Operators and Mechanics at the Quill Depot in NYC. Also in the photo, Local 100 Recording Secretary Shirley Martin, Executive Board Member Sean Battaglia, Manhattan Bronx Surface Transit Operating Authority (MaBSTOA) Vice President Donald Yates, and Local 100 President John Chiarello, far right.

A CALL to ARMS

TWU International President John Samuelsen told Local 100 members in New York City to get ready for a major contract fight with “the miserable bastards at the MTA who are trying to destroy our livelihoods.”

Samuelsen made the comments on Friday, July 25, while shopping in the “swing room” of the Michael J. Quill Depot in the heart of Manhattan with Local 100 President John Chiarello at his side.

Samuelsen told the packed crowd, comprised mainly of Local 100 Bus Operators and Mechanics, that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority may want to cut costs by eliminating positions and introducing part-time work.

“Let them try and screw with us,” Samuelsen said. “Let them try to take the Conductors off our trains. Let them try to implement part-time Bus Operators. You will see the TWU in full bloom, industrial trade union organizing at its best, because when they move against us, bus workers and subway workers will lock arms, and we will stick it up their arses like they’ve never seen stuck up before.”

Local 100 has about 44,000 members, the overwhelming majority of whom operate and maintain the NY MTA’s bus and subway system. It also represents Big Bus Tour workers in cities across the United States, school bus drivers and aides in the NY metropolitan area, and other workers.

Local 100’s contract with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority expires next year. Industrial-trade unionism involves organizing all workers at a company or authority into a single



TWU Local 100 President John Chiarello

union. This gives workers more strength than being divided into smaller groups by job title or craft. Industrial organizing equals worker power.

Chiarello told the large gathering that unity and member action will be necessary to secure a good contract.

“A fight has to be brought to the MTA, and to MTA CEO Janno Lieber,” he said. “There’s going to be a call to arms, a call to fight for a fair contract, and it begins with everybody.”

Local 252 Scores a “Great” Contract for 800 School Bus Workers

Hundreds of TWU school bus workers in Long Island, N.Y., are set to receive annual raises totaling 13.5% over a 3-year contract negotiated by Local 252.

The local and the Guardian Bus Company reached a tentative agreement in July and ratified it overwhelmingly the following month, Local 252 President Debra Hagan said. The local has about 800 members employed by Guardian in Nassau County. They work as Large Bus Drivers, Van Drivers, Driver Assistants, Adult Special Needs Drivers, Mechanics, Mechanic Helpers, and Fuelers.

The contract includes:

- Annual raises of 5%, 4.5%, and 4%
- Increases to company contributions to member 401k and healthcare plans, along with longevity pay to Van Drivers & Driver Assistants.
- More PTO
- Bigger tool allowance.
- No givebacks.

“As President of TWU Local 252, I am proud of our negotiating committee for securing a great contract!” Hagan said.

Hagan said the increased wages “far surpass” those paid by other bus companies in the area. Local 252 members are also keeping a contract provision that guarantees 2 hours of pay for any run drivers perform during their swing time. No other school bus company in the region offers workers such a guarantee, Hagan said.



Guardian Bus Company worker on Long Island, N.Y. overwhelmingly ratified a new contract in August.



TWU Local 252 President Debra Hagan



TWU Local 252 President Debra Hagan, TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, with local officers and staff



Local 514 Officers Sworn in. Danker Wins 5th Term

TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton and TWU International Representative Rollie Reaves swore in board members at TWU Local 514 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in August. President Dale Danker was re-elected to a fifth consecutive term, and the rest of the board was re-elected with an additional board member added due to headcount increases. Linda Dill is the newly elected board member.

Board members pictured right to left: Andre Sutton-Air Division Director; Terry Buck-Recording Secretary; Jay Potter-Executive Board; George Albano-Executive Board; Tracy Hardin-Executive Board; James Holt-Chairman of Facilities; Linda Dill-Executive Board; Gene Chapin-Executive Board; Daron Morgan-Executive Board; Dale Danker-President; Don McCormick-Executive Board; D'Ann Johnson-Secretary/Treasurer; Joe Brown-Chairman of Maintenance; Marla Johnson-Vice President; BJ Rackers-Chairman of MLS; Rollie Reeves-TWU International AA System Rep/Local 567 President



Local 282 History Honored

Local 282 leaders received a plaque honoring the local, which was established more than 50 years ago



LCLAA Convention 2025

TWU Locals 555, 556, 577, and 100 attended the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) National Convention in Georgia in August to celebrate the strength of Latino workers. The TWU was front and center for critical discussions on equity, safety, and fair wages to community service at Rockbridge Elementary. Central Florida LCLAA Chapter member and TWU Local 556 member Gisela Álvarez received the "Maria Porta Latin Trabajadoras Award" at the convention.

AROUND THE UNION



The Veterans Committee held its third quarter meeting in August.

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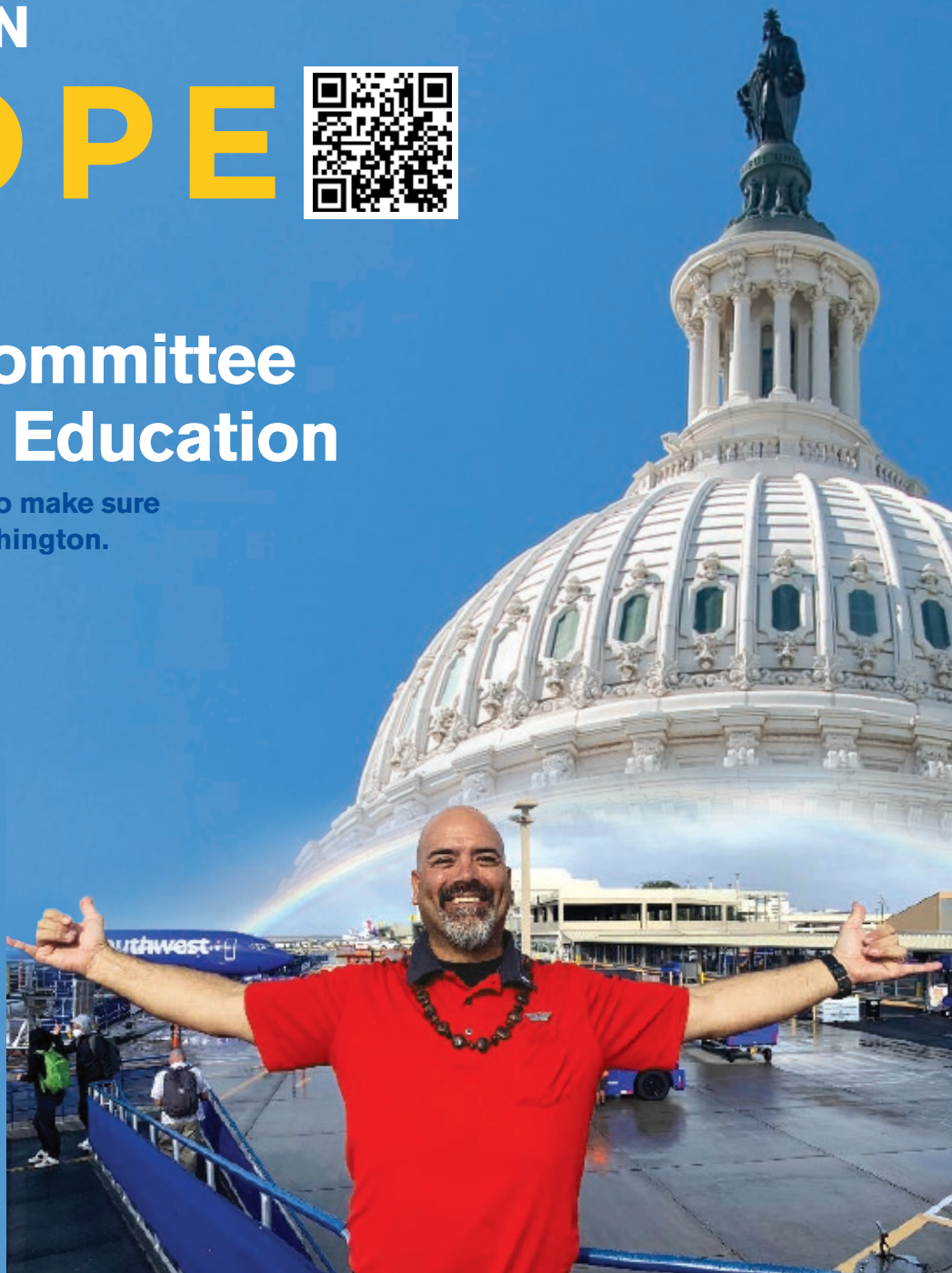
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**For more information,
contact**

**COPE Director Andrew
Rangolan
at arangolan@twu.org**

*"I'll be honest, nobody really likes
politics, but I understand that with
the stroke of a pen, politicians can
destroy hard-fought-for contractual
gains and workplace protections.
That's why I participate in the TWU's
COPE program. I give to protect and
advance my interests at Local 556 but
I also give for my teenage son and
my wife, who is a NEA educator of 32
years, so they can continue to reap
the benefits of the labor movement."*

– Brett Navarez, Local 556



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