



## Gathering Before the Storm

Thousands Attend Local 100 Mass Membership Meeting as Contract Talks Loom – PAGE 6



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Local 502's Grand Tribute to Air Division Director Andre Sutton



### RAIL / 16

How Sweet It Is! Bonus Payments for Amtrak Executives Given to Workers Instead



### TRANSIT / 18

Tech Conference for Transit Division Presidents Yields New Initiatives to Counter Automation

# New Brand of Elitism on the Rise



I GREW UP IN THE 1980s IN GERRITSEN BEACH, Brooklyn, where Irish American families long scorned by elites finally reached the middle class, thanks to the Transport Workers Union and other unions that fought for good wages, health benefits, and pensions.

I'm not speaking figuratively. The history of the labor movement includes pitched battles against hired strikebreakers, labor leaders getting thrown into jail, workers being hurt and even killed, all for demanding the right to improve and defend their livelihoods.

Now, a modern strain of tech-based elitism has emerged. It poses an existential threat to working families, including members of today's incredibly diverse transit workforce, with men and women from Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, India, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and many other countries.

In a recent guest essay in the *New York Times*, two academics who have worked for Democratic politicians at the highest levels of government, argue that Democrats need to change how they govern and reach "a new bargain" with organized labor in several areas, including technology. Nicholas Bagley and Robert Gordon contend that unions wrongly "resist technology that could save money and improve lives," citing two actions by the TWU: our groundbreaking contract requiring the transit agency in Columbus, Ohio, get TWU Local 208's approval before deploying autonomous buses; and our push for New York legislation requiring all subway trains to have a Conductor and Train Operator.

We're not against technology. Our job is to deliver people safely to their destinations, and we can work with any tool that helps us do that. But when Big Tech evangelists tout automation as "improving lives," they ignore that, unchecked, it will destroy millions of them — pushing countless workers into unemployment and leaving them economically and emotionally unmoored. Where will people work? What will they do? Those questions get little attention.

The primary impetus and massive investment behind robotaxis, autonomous shuttles, self-driving trucks, and self-driving buses is not safety. You can equip vehicles with sophisticated accident-preventing technology. Big Tech's motivation is more sordid — to make billionaires even richer by eliminating the need to pay blue-collar workers' wages.

Safety, satisfactory customer service, and ensuring riders feel secure are best achieved by maintaining — and even increasing — staffing in transit systems. Bus Operators and Conductors are lookouts for first responders and are on the scene before emergency

personnel arrive. They have located lost children, assisted women in labor, reported fires and crimes in progress, evacuated riders in danger, and relied on their training to respond to a wide range of other emergencies.

When a gunman opened fire on a subway train in 2022, Conductor Raven Haynes helped keep riders calm and directed them to another train across the platform that carried them to safety. In January, Bus Operator Christopher Accettulli helped deliver a healthy baby girl aboard the B37 bus in Gowanus, Brooklyn.

The TWU is proud to win contracts that force employers to listen to workers before implementing potentially job-killing technology. Authors Bagley and Jordon apparently believe that their elitism and tech-bro cronyism are reasonable political positions. They are not — at least not if the Democratic Party seeks to return to its roots as an ally of workers and a builder of the middle class.

The Democratic Party that I envision fights for workers. It stands up for blue-collar jobs, safety, pensions, and better wages — all the things these two brainiacs refer to as "inefficiencies." People must be the government's priority across the country. The policies presented by Bagley and Gordon assume that Democrats ought to govern by spreadsheet. It is heartless, cold, and electorally disastrous. It should be rejected.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



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# Cooperation is Key

*By International Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerome Lafragola*



**W**hen TWU locals and the International work together, we can achieve victory.

The beauty of the TWU comes from the bottom-up strength of our membership, from member-organizers to our political advocates at the local, state, and federal levels. All of these elements are critical to our success as a union.

But when the TWU works as one, we become even stronger. While all of our locals have complete autonomy to run their operations as they see fit, the TWU can secure meaningful contract and political wins when locals and the International work hand-in-hand.

Some recent developments show how a good working relationship between the International and locals can achieve real gains for TWU members and their families.

In Philadelphia, TWU International leadership joined Local 234's leaders when SEPTA stalled on contract talks. The presence of the International on the ground as strike preparations were actively underway made it possible for Local 234 and SEPTA to sit down at the bargaining table and draft a contract that was overwhelmingly ratified. The contract includes significant pension and benefit improvements, along with pay raises.

And in Akron, Ohio, TWU International remains engaged with Local 1 in their ongoing contract fight with Akron Metro management – as our members in Ohio have gone more than two years without a raise. The International and Local 1 worked together to raise public awareness about the issues facing Akron transit workers, such as stagnated pay rates, a sick time system that doesn't work, and unrealistic bus-route schedules that leave Bus Operators with little time to take breaks or even use the bathroom. The International has pummelled Akron Metro with negative TV ads, raised awareness through local media outlets, and provided assistance to Local 1 as members geared up for a potential strike.

Our Air Division has also worked closely with our locals on many critical contract fights, and TWU member-organizers are notching victory after victory at airports across the country,

including a successful organizing drive at Westchester County Airport in New York.

Locals with a few thousand or even a few hundred dedicated members can achieve a lot at the bargaining table – but a national union of more than 165,000 members that is willing to fight can achieve even greater success. We see this time and again with contract negotiations and with our Committee On Political Education, which works with locals on legislative and political issues that matter to our workforce, and the labor movement as a whole. The upcoming COPE Conference in Washington, DC, this spring is a great way to learn more about the TWU's legislative advocacy and meet with like-minded TWU members who want to create positive change.

Whether you are interested in bettering your workplace, your local, or the world around you, it all starts with a conversation. Talk to your local leadership about how you can become more involved. And, as always, the TWU International is here to help. We are able to provide support in areas like training, logistics, and drafting legislation. No matter the task at hand, we are here to help.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome Lafragola".



*The International's top officers presided over the International Executive Council and Executive Board's quarterly meeting. Seated: Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes, International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia, Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, and Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate. International President John Samuelsen, standing.*

# International Council and Board Members Start New Term

International President John Samuelsen swore in members of the International Executive Council and Executive Board in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Feb. 3, during their first meeting since the Constitutional Convention last year.

During the two-day meeting, divisional chairs, department directors, local presidents, and other representatives reported on union activities such as contract ratifications, negotiations, fightback campaigns, new member organizing drives, state conferences, and legislation considered beneficial for members of TWU's three divisions: Air, Rail, and Transit/Universities/Utilities/Services (TUUS).

The Council and Board adopted resolutions left unaddressed at the Convention held in September 2025. They included a pledge to continue advocating for legislation that would allow transit authorities to use federal funds for operational expenses, not just construction projects and infrastructure upgrades. This would enable authorities to increase transit service and staffing. Another resolution recommitted the TWU to supporting government representatives – regardless of their political affiliation – who



*Executive Council and Board members being sworn in*

back TWU causes. A third resolution stressed the need for federal legislation enabling all workers to take advantage of a federal tax deduction on overtime earnings up to \$25,000.

Council and board members serve terms extending to the next union-wide convention, scheduled to be held in four years.



# Local 100 Mobilizes as Contract Talks Loom



**L**ocal 100 President John Chiarello brought thousands of NYC transit workers to their feet at the local's Mass Membership Meeting on Jan. 24 with a fiery speech invoking the TWU's legendary founder, Mike Quill, and leading abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

More than 2,500 Local 100 members packed the Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan for the meeting, which was held just a few months before contract negotiations with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority were expected to begin. Chiarello warned his members – Bus Operators, Conductors, Mechanics, Signal Maintainers, Structure Maintainers, Subway Car Inspectors, Track Workers, Train Operators, and workers in other titles – that management would come gunning for concessions.

“When the fight comes, we all have to get up, put the gloves on, and fight,” Chiarello said. “That’s union power, and everything else is bullshit. We’re going to fight, and we’re going to win!”

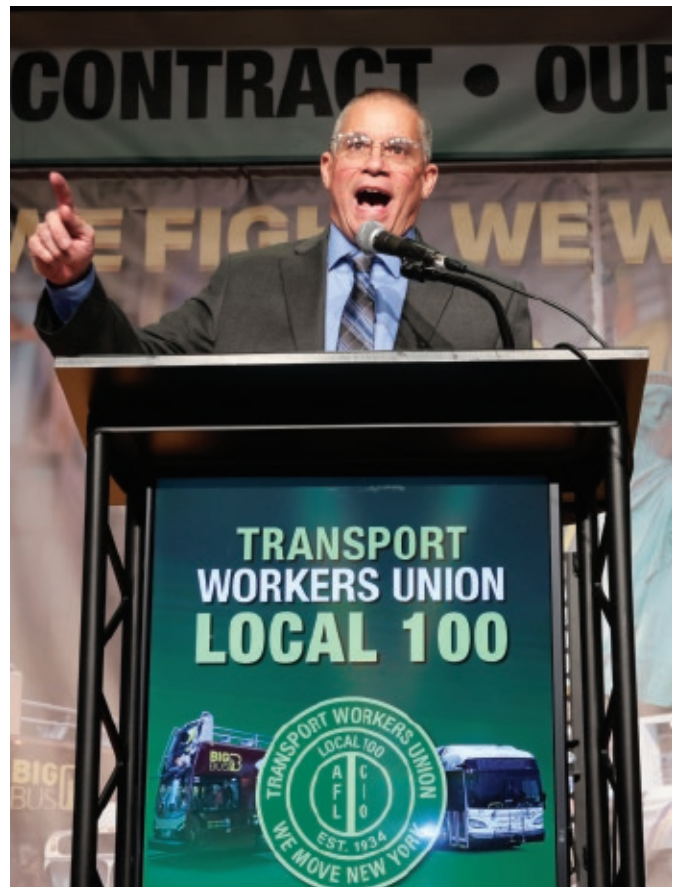
Local 100's contract with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority expires May 15. The authority has budgeted for annual raises of just 2%. The MTA has already started crying poverty, even though it is getting \$1.5 billion from the state's sale of casino licenses.

International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola pledged the International's full support.

“Whatever you need, we’re going to be there, step-by-step, shoulder to shoulder, making sure you get what you deserve and what you’ve earned,” Lafragola said.

International President John Samuelson was unable to attend due to pre-scheduled meetings with members of Congress. He later said that he expects the MTA to seek unacceptable concessions, including removing Conductors from subway trains and introducing part-time Bus Operator positions.

“We aren't going to be beaten,” he said. “We are going to aggressively



*Local 100 President John Chiarello fired up the crowd.*



*International President Samuelson expects the MTA to seek unacceptable contract concessions.*



*International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola pledged the International's full support to Local 100 as it heads into contract negotiations.*



*Local 100 Administrative Vice President Alexander Kemp served as Master of Ceremonies.*

fight back, and when the dust settles, the two-worker train crews will stay. There won't be part-timers in our contract, and our health benefits will stay intact."

The Mass Membership Meeting was held days before the 60th anniversary of Quill's death. He suffered a heart attack while jailed for defying a judge's order to halt a citywide strike. The contract resulted in big pay raises, improved pensions, and other significant benefits for workers.

"He gave his life for this membership," Chiarello said during his

speech. "He made this union second to none. He died standing for what was right. We owe it to him and ourselves to fight like hell."

To make the point that progress is only gained through struggle, Chiarello quoted Douglass, who, during an 1857 address in upstate New York, said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand."

Local 100 Administrative Vice President Alexander Kemp, who served as master of ceremonies for the event, reinforced the call for unity as negotiations are expected to be contentious.

"The truth is we are all the same," Kemp said. "Titles are for used cars. They mean nothing if you don't live up to what the title represents."

In a sign of the TWU's strong presence in New York, the second most powerful elected official in New York City, Council Speaker Julie Menin, addressed the membership, along with Comptroller Mark Levine and state AFL-CIO President Mario Cilento.



# Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles

## Audrey Spader

*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 Audrey Spader, an Assistant Transportation Coordinator, and a member of Local 220 in New Jersey. Spader has been a proud TWU member since 2009*

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

I have been the Assistant Transportation Coordinator for the Colts Neck Board of Education since 2020. Prior to that, from 2010, my job title was Assistant Mechanic for the Colts Neck BOE.

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

16 years

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

For the past six years, I have been our department's TWU Secretary. I have sat in on two contract negotiations with the Board of Education, and this year will be my third.

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

Through my involvement with the negotiations, I have learned how important it is to have the support of the union in our workplace.

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

When I was hired as the Assistant Mechanic, my job entailed working side by side with the Head Mechanic, diagnosing and repairing the district's school buses and the maintenance vehicles. In addition, I ordered parts and maintained all repair records. I am proud to say I was able to receive the first 100% on our semiannual state bus inspections for our school district.

Along with the Head Mechanic, we continue to strive for 100% and are very proud to have maintained that record on our state bus inspections. As an Assistant Mechanic, I also worked alongside the Coordinator on district duties and drove routes when needed.

In 2020, my job title was changed to Assistant Transportation Coordinator. I still work with the Head Mechanic and assist him in diagnosing vehicles, ordering parts, maintaining all repair and warranty records, as well as performing repairs when needed.

I also help the Coordinator with budgeting, scheduling, route coverage, maintaining employee records, pulling videos, and creating requisitions. Finally, I help drivers when they need assistance.

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

In high school, I wanted to take the Auto Mechanic Shop class, but at that time, it was not open to girls. I always had an interest in cars, and when I was old enough to drive, I taught myself how to tune my engine, change the oil, and keep the car running smoothly. When I bought my second car, I used to watch the mechanic work on it,



and I just picked up other things. As I got older, my husband and I owned a small roofing company. I worked physically with him on the roofs while also maintaining our employee payroll records, scheduling work, ordering materials, and communicating with our customers. I was always good at learning new things and working with my hands. A friend of ours was a School Bus Driver and said they were short on drivers. He convinced me to study and obtain my Commercial Driver's License. I started working as a Substitute School Bus driver. I enjoyed it so much that I accepted the Assistant Mechanic position when they offered it to me.

### When not working, what are your favorite activities?

Spending time with my family and pets, going to the beach, and traveling.

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

Like other women in male-dominated jobs, I get many disbelievers - until they see I get the job done.

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

If you enjoy what you are doing and are good at it, keep going and don't let others discourage you.



# TWU Plays Major Role in New Autonomous Vehicle Regulations

**T**he Transport Workers Union of America worked to ensure that pro-safety and pro-worker provisions were included in federal legislation that, if adopted, will establish the first federal standards for the deployment of autonomous vehicles.

The new bill, called the SELF DRIVE Act, is a bill that would require autonomous vehicles to be designed so that humans inside a vehicle can monitor, intervene, and stop it when an autonomous system fails. While the TWU is neutral on the bill, we fully support many of its provisions. Importantly, the standards established would be enforceable by federal regulators.

“The Transport Workers Union has consistently said that the unregulated deployment of autonomous vehicles (AV) of any size presents a danger to the public and a threat to good union jobs,” TWU International President John Samuelson said. “In the public transit sector in particular, no level of automation in a bus, van, or train should ever replace the highly skilled and licensed operators on board who serve our passengers and keep them safe.”

In addition, the bill from Representative Bob Latta of Ohio would require AV manufacturers to demonstrate that they meet federal safety requirements before deploying their vehicles – a basic principle of transportation safety that far too many tech companies have pig-headedly refused to adhere to in their AV deployments. These measures will impose long-overdue restraints on the industry

and remove several already deployed non-compliant vehicles from our roads.

The TWU continues to fight to ensure that our institutions, including Congress, do much more to ensure that AV profiteers, including Big Tech companies and their billionaire investors, live up to their own marketing claims on safety and job creation. Unregulated AVs are the most significant threat to roadway safety today. Bad actors have been enabled by a patchwork of inadequate and dangerously lenient state laws that encourage a race to the bottom on standards. A complacent federal government has allowed far too many risks into the system.

The TWU believes the proposed legislation would be a starting point for a more comprehensive effort to fully regulate AV safety and ensure workers are the primary beneficiaries of innovation. As this bill moves through the legislative process, the TWU will fight to ensure that public transit and commercial motor vehicles continue to be operated by qualified, certified human operators; that new jobs created by this industry are good, union jobs; and that the level of safety in our public transportation systems increases.

The TWU is highly focused on regulating autonomous vehicles. This is one of many legislative issues we are working on with Congress and the White House. The TWU is also gearing up for major surface transportation legislation in the coming months.

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***“In the public transit sector in particular, no level of automation in a bus, van, or train should ever replace the highly skilled and licensed operators on board who serve our passengers and keep them safe.”***

*– International President John Samuelson*

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# TWU Pays Tribute to MLK in Miami

The TWU honored Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. this January by helping the homeless in Miami.

Gathering in a hotel meeting room two days before that city's MLK Day Parade, TWU volunteers prepared boxes of toothpaste, deodorant, shaving cream, feminine hygiene products, and other items donated by TWU locals across the nation. The boxes were then delivered by van to two facilities housing hundreds of homeless individuals and family members operated by the Chapman Partnership, a charitable organization. The volunteers also packaged candy to give children along the parade route.

"Community service is important," TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate said. "As Dr. King said, it's about service. It's about giving back. It's about uplifting each other. And at the TWU, we strongly believe in that."

The International also gave a \$5,000 donation to the Chapman Partnership.

"This weekend is more than a celebration," Local 291 President Joseph D'Elia said. "It's a call to action. Dr. King taught us that



TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate volunteers along with other TWU members.



Flight Attendant local officers, members, and International staff representatives pose next to the well-traveled TWU bus.



TWU volunteers packaging candy to give to children along the MLK Day Parade route in Miami.



The TWU's front line in Miami's MLK Day Parade.



*TWU Civil and Human Rights Department Director Shirley Duff.*

progress is never guaranteed. It takes courage, unity, and relentless determination.”

The Chapman Partnership offers a range of services to empower the homeless and help them regain stability, according to Candice Myles, the organization’s senior manager of community relations and strategic partnerships. These services include job training, dental and medical care at on-site clinics, student tutoring, and even a dog kennel. The latter acknowledges the strong bond people share with their pets. Some members of the homeless community refuse services that require separation from their beloved dogs.

A large TWU contingent also marched in the parade. More than 300 officers and members from more than 30 locals marched behind the TWU banner.



SCAN HERE TO SEE MORE PHOTOS

The TWU’s Civil and Human Rights Department, led by Director Shirley Duff, organized the TWU events in Miami. Local 291 served as the host local, assisting with logistics and other aspects of the weekend, along with International staff.



*TWU on the march*

“This weekend is more than a celebration. It’s a call to action. Dr. King taught us that progress is never guaranteed. It takes courage, unity, and relentless determination.”

— Local 291 President Joseph D’Elia



# Emotional Visit to VA Hospital in Puerto Rico

**A**rmy veteran Johnny Acevedo, 82, stood at attention when members of the TWU Veterans Committee entered his hospital room in San Juan in January, but he wasn't wearing a military uniform. He was dressed in a pristine Local 501 jacket and a union baseball cap.

The committee went to the San Juan U.S. Veterans Affairs Medical Center to visit and deliver donated toiletries and socks to about 80 Vietnam-era veterans receiving long-term medical care there. The committee's visit was the community service component of its quarterly gathering. Members, however, had no idea that a retired American Airlines Fleet Service Agent would be among the patients.

"He stood up at attention like a soldier, chest puffed out in pride," Veterans Committee Chairman Brian Galarza said. "It was very emotional for all of us. Here was a union brother, wearing a TWU Local 501 jacket that looked brand new, as if it had just come off the rack, and he's also a veteran. It was a very emotional moment."

Born in Hormigueros, Puerto Rico, in 1943, and then raised in Brooklyn, NY, Acevedo worked a factory job after high school before joining the U.S. Army. He served four years as a heavy wheel mechanic at Fort Riley, Kansas, and at a military base on Okinawa, Japan, in the Pacific, before joining American Airlines in 1965. He retired in 2006 after 41 years on the job, first at Kennedy Airport, and then in Puerto Rico. The octogenarian was admitted to the medical facility in November 2025 for medical issues pertaining to one of his feet. He is expected to be released and go home later this year to Carolina, Puerto Rico, where he lives with his wife of 58 years, Elba.

"My dad was excited when he unexpectedly received your visit," Acevedo's daughter, Yelissa, later wrote to Galarza. "He was in high spirits that day and told us all about it. He talked about it for several days afterwards. We are very grateful for your visit. It was very encouraging for him and the other patients."



*Johnny Acevedo, center, flanked by Veterans Committee Chairman Brian Galarza, left, and Christopher Kiernan, Local 501 board member and past committee chair.*

Veterans Committee Liaison Jose Galarza said the patients at the VA facility served in all branches of the military; 78 are men and two are women. Their homes are in Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, and their nearest relatives can be many hours away, he said.

The TWU contingent provided each veteran with a blanket featuring a flag or a military-themed design, six pairs of socks, and toiletries like toothpaste, shampoo, and soap. But the most valued gifts were camaraderie and companionship, Jose Galarza said.

"They were just happy to talk with us and have us asking them questions," Jose Galarza said. "Most don't get a lot of visitors."

The San Juan trip was co-hosted by Local 501 and Local 555.



*Acevedo worked for more than four decades at American Airlines as a Fleet Service Agent in New York City and Puerto Rico.*



*Members of the TWU Veterans Committee and hospital staff in San Juan*



TWU officers and staff, from the International and Local 502, at the Andre Sutton Union Hall.

# A Lasting Tribute: TWU Local 502 Names Union Hall for Andre Sutton

International Air Division Director Andre Sutton has more than just a plaque to show for his years as president of TWU Local 502 in El Segundo, California. He has an entire union hall.

The local's newly elected President and Executive Board renamed their headquarters the "Andre Sutton Union Hall" late last year.

"He's had such a huge impact with his leadership and guidance," Local 502 President Gary Gill said. "He's just a great leader, a great friend, and we owe him a lot."

Sutton served as Local 502 president from January 2013 through December 2025. He was major force in negotiations with American Airlines that resulted in industry-leading contracts for the membership, Gill said. Sutton's professionalism and demeanor also led to fewer disciplinary actions by management, Gill said.

"This shows the incredibly high level of respect and appreciation members have for Andre," International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said of the union hall renaming. "This is undeniably a well-deserved honor."

International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes also offered high praise.

"I've known Andre for over 30 years, and what sets him apart from others is his willingness to learn and take accountability for his decisions," Mayes said. "And he's the most true and loyal friend anyone can have."

The El Segundo union hall now features a plaque with a quote from General Douglas MacArthur, the top U.S. military leader during World War II and the Korean War. It sums up how Sutton is viewed by those who have worked with him, Gill said. The quote reads: "A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader but becomes one by the quality of his actions and the integrity of his intent."



International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia and Air Division Director Andre Sutton next to a plaque with a quote about leadership by Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Sutton was hired by American Airlines in 1988 in San Jose, California, while still serving in the U.S. Army. He was elected Local 502 Shop Steward in 1996 and was promoted by members to Station Vice Chairman 10 years later. Sutton then advanced through the ranks to Chairman, Executive Board Member at Large, and then Local 502 President.

"To be honored by my local in such a prestigious manner was so moving and touching," Sutton said. "I'm very grateful to be recognized by my team and realize fully that we did things together that made us all successful. That's what makes a union strong and invincible - working together collectively to advance positive change for our members. I will forever cherish this moment for all my days."

During his local presidency, the International appointed Sutton to the position of International Vice President in 2017 and selected him to be Air Division Director in 2022. Sutton, who enlisted in active military duty in 1983, served a total of 13 years in the Army.

# TWU Flight Attendants at FSI Overwhelmingly Ratify a New Five-Year Contract

**F**light Attendants at TWU Local 578 ratified a new contract in December, with 86.7% of eligible voters participating and over 96% voting in favor of the deal.

The new five-year agreement dramatically increases wages, with raises approaching 50%, and delivers critical quality of life gains. The contract, for example, more than triples the amount of paid time off Flight Attendants can take to mourn the death of a loved one.

“These are life-changing raises and benefit improvements,” TWU International President John Samuelson said. “This is why workers form unions. I’m proud of the hard work our negotiators put into getting an agreement that offers real improvements for our members.”

The average immediate wage increase for Flight Attendants at Flight Services International (FSI), which staffs Atlas Air flights, is 31.9%. Wage increases range from 25.2% to 32.7% and increase to 40% to 48% over the duration of the contract. The contract went into effect on Jan. 1, 2026, and runs through 2030.

“I’m proud of our members for overwhelmingly ratifying this new five-year agreement through 2030 and for the hard work of our negotiating team,” TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton said.

The ratified agreement includes two annual pay increases—

an annual longevity step increase and a separate cost of living adjustment; a \$7 per hour premium for Pursers (lead Flight Attendants), up from \$6.50 an hour; an extra vacation week for senior Flight Attendants; a 14.4% increase in vacation and sick time credit per day; minimum standards for hotel accommodations; holiday pay for reserves; compensation for extended duty days; and a 25.7% increase in per diem.

In addition, the new contract significantly expands bereavement leave, increasing paid time off from four days to two weeks. Flight Attendants can take seven consecutive paid days off and then use up to seven accrued sick days following the death of an immediate family member. Flight Attendants may also request a personal Leave of Absence if additional time is needed.

“We know we didn’t get everything we hoped for, but the work does not stop here,” TWU Local 578 President Nikki Doby said. “We will continue collaborating with FSI to address remaining priorities and build on this success. But today, I am incredibly proud of what of what we were able to achieve for our members.”

“We went to the table to solve the problems our members face daily—both on the job and economically,” Thom McDaniel, TWU International Vice President, said. “It is clear by their overwhelming support that we accomplished that.”

## TWU Airbus Flight Simulator Technicians Win Big Gains in 5-Year Contract

Flight Simulator Technicians in Miami and Denver, who work for Airbus and are represented by TWU Local 525, recently ratified a new five-year contract that locks in a 20% raise, along with other significant benefits.

The Flight Simulator Technicians set up the massive simulators, which need to be constantly reconfigured to mimic different Airbus aircraft. They also maintain and install the flight simulators along with smaller simulators that train pilots from many different airlines. Currently, TWU members at Local 525 maintain and operate 13 large simulators in Miami and Denver.

“This negotiation strung out for a period of time, but we kept focused on delivering for our members,” Local 525 President Kevin Smith said.

The latest contract also comes with a \$15,000 signing bonus, bigger lead shift differentials, and a commitment that healthcare costs will not increase over the duration of the contract.

“This is a significant deal for our Flight Simulator Technicians, and this agreement reflects months of hard work, collaboration, and advocacy to secure meaningful improvements and a stronger foundation for our members,” TWU Air Division Director Andre Sutton said.



*Airbus Flight Simulator used for training in Miami and Denver.*



# Cabin Crew Coalition Setting Course for 2026

**A**t its January meeting, the Cabin Crew Coalition began outlining its 2026 priorities, including identifying legislation and key issues for Flight Attendant representatives to advocate for in Washington, D.C.

Toxic fumes in aircraft cabins and assaults against Flight Attendants will again be topics on the lobbying agenda, Coalition Chairman Thom McDaniel said at the Jan. 20 meeting, held in Miami after the TWU's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration.

Some progress was made in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. The Act, for example, doubled the maximum fine the FAA can impose on passengers who assault Flight Attendants. But more legislation is needed, and Congress must pressure the FAA to implement changes that legislators have previously directed it to carry out.

One area that requires federal attention is scheduling, McDaniel said. "We would really like to see some limitations on these really, really long duty days," McDaniel said. "Most Flight Attendants can be scheduled for up to 14 hours, but because of delays and things like that, you can go into 20 hours. You essentially go until you can't go anymore. Some contracts have limitations on that, but most of them don't."

Flight Attendants deserve parity with pilots regarding duty-day limits and overall respect, McDaniel said.

"Pilots have all these rules. Why? Because they're pilots," he said.

The TWU's biennial Legislative and COPE (Committee on Political Education) Conference is being held in Washington, D.C., May 3–6. Members divide into teams and lobby their Congressional representatives and staffers, explaining TWU issues and why the legislators should address them.

Each TWU Flight Attendant local has three seats on the panel: president, a legislative representative, and a safety representative. The TWU has four Flight Attendant locals: Local 556 (Southwest Airlines), Local 579 (JetBlue Airways), Local 577 (Allegiant Airlines), and Local 578 (FSI).



*The Cabin Crew Coalition met in January.*

## Johnson Wins Top Labor Post

TWU Local 514 Vice President Marla Johnson was elected Vice President of the AFL-CIO's Oklahoma chapter. Johnson was nominated on a slate of candidates for the vice president position and won in a landslide.



*Marla Johnson*



*Amtrak workers and TWU officers at the Beech Grove, Indiana, facility.*

# Fatcat Bonuses Rerouted to Amtrak Workers

Sometimes being blindsided is a good thing. Amtrak workers were happily surprised in mid-December when officials announced the railroad was cutting checks for \$900 for each front-line worker – instead of continuing its usual practice of doling out huge bonuses to a relatively small group of top executives.

“Most of us were off for the Christmas holiday, and my phone blew up,” Local 2003 President Danny (Dano) Groves, who represents Carmen in Indiana, said. “Members were asking, ‘Is this real? Is this real?’ It was a shock to put it mildly. We were blindsided.”

But not in a bad way.

“We were really happy about it, especially because it came out of the executives’ bonuses,” Groves said.

The TWU, which has a strong presence in Washington, D.C., helped trigger the redistribution years earlier. The TWU was the first union to call out Amtrak for its greedy bonus policy in 2021. In the midst of the pandemic, with some workers still on furlough, Amtrak quietly gave top executives more than \$200,000 each. Some executives, including former Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner, received bonuses totaling more than \$700,000 – in addition to their salaries – from 2016 through 2022.

The TWU argued that those working through the deadly COVID-19 crisis – on Amtrak trains, in the railyards and repair shops – deserved bonuses, not the “suits.” The TWU also supported legislation that would require Amtrak to officially notify Congress before giving bonuses to executives and to publish the information on its website.

The TWU represents Amtrak Car Inspectors, Carmen, Welders, Cleaners, and On-board Service Workers.



The 2025 payments to front-line Amtrak workers were announced by the railroad and the Federal Railroad Administration. Moving forward, executive bonuses will be cut in half, the FRA said.

“Frontline workers make Amtrak run every day, not railroad executives,” TWU International President John Samuelsen said. “This bonus acknowledges that fact and, for the first time in years, restructures the Amtrak budget to direct resources to workers on the line instead of into executives’ pockets. The TWU, in partnership with the FRA and our allies in Congress, has fought for this change since greedy executives at the railroad rewarded themselves while furloughing workers during the pandemic. Today is a major victory in that fight.”

The TWU is currently advocating for workers to receive an annual bonus.

# TWU Teams at Amtrak Win Ingenuity Award

A group of TWU Local 2003 members in Beech Grove, Indiana, won Amtrak's yearly Joint Oversight Committee Recognition Award, a friendly competition that rewards new ideas that improve workplace safety and efficiency.

The winning team received the Brass Bell trophy for a Truck Fixture Process Improvement Project that featured new tools designed and created by Carman Gus Mascari with the team's help. The tools included new alignment pins for the bearing adapters and another which Mascari originally designed using a 3-D printer at home: an O-ring retention system used to apply large nuts in blind holes. The invention reduced a 30-minute job to just five minutes. It also made the process of applying the bolts much safer by reducing pinch-point accidents.

"The JOC program recognizes TWU Rail Division workers, and other union sisters and brothers, at their best – designing and creatively implementing new ideas and solutions in the workplace that make the job safer, easier, and more efficient," TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz said. "I'm proud of our latest group of winners."

The winning team included Mascari and fellow Local 2003



*Gus Mascari (fifth from left), along with Evan Bonitz, Glen Powe, and Jerry Needham (7th, 8th, and 9th, left to right), were honored for improving a freight-train maintenance task.*

members Jerry Needham, Evan Bonitz, and Glenn Powe. They were awarded the Brass Bell at a ceremony in January. The Bell gets passed around each year, depending on who wins it, like the Stanley Cup but for Amtrak workers.

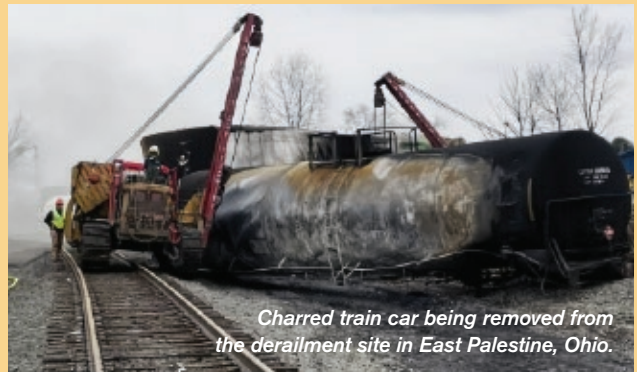
## Action in Response to East Palestine Train Derailment

Three years after a train carrying hazardous materials derailed and caught fire in East Palestine, Ohio, a bipartisan group in Congress is once again working to pass legislation aimed at making the freight-rail industry safer.

Introduced in February, the Bipartisan Railroad Safety Enhancement Act of 2026 would require railroad companies to inform states when hazardous materials are passing through their communities, to use defect-detection technology capable of stopping trains when problems are detected, and to ensure that they have two crew members operating each train. The Norfolk Southern train derailed on Feb. 2, 2023, near the Ohio-Pennsylvania border. In total, more than one million pounds of hazardous chemicals were released into the soil, air, and water.

"Everyone with a freight rail line passing through their community should be outraged that Congress has so far failed to pass these common-sense measures," TWU International President John Samuelsen said. "Too many members of Congress care more about losing campaign donations from railroad conglomerates than they do about preventing another dangerous derailment."

Previous attempts to pass a rail safety bill failed in the face of intense lobbying by the rail industry, which claimed the mandates are too costly and unnecessary.



*Charred train car being removed from the derailment site in East Palestine, Ohio.*

"We commend the legislators who have the backbone to keep fighting for this much-needed legislation," Samuelsen said. "They are not in the pocket of the greedy rail carriers."

U.S. Senators Jon Husted (R-Ohio), Maria Cantwell (D-Washington), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota.), Eric Schmitt (R-Missouri), along with other Congressmembers, introduced the legislation.

Area residents have reported respiratory problems, severe headaches, skin rashes, eye irritation, and other health issues. Several lawsuits were filed against Norfolk Southern and government agencies. One lawsuit alleges chemical exposure contributed or caused the deaths of seven people.



Presidents of 12 TWU transit locals attended a Transit Division tech conference along with International staff.

# New Initiative to Protect TWU Jobs from Big Tech

**T**WU International is expanding its program to help locals defend against jobs being eliminated by emerging technology and surging automation, like self-driving vehicles.

International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate has invited Transit Division local presidents to join – or appoint representatives – to a new tech-focused committee that will meet periodically with International leadership and staff. He also strongly recommended that local presidents form their own committees as extensions of the central panel.

“We’re not going to stop technology,” Tate said on Feb. 5 at a tech conference for local transit presidents that he convened in Miami. “There are billions and billions of dollars invested in this. Our objective is making sure we don’t lose our jobs to it.”

The new committees and structure will enable locals to tap into the expertise the International has developed in drafting strong pro-worker language for contract negotiations with employers, communicating about the havoc and harm autonomous vehicles are causing in the areas where they are deployed, and building relationships with elected officials and academics who are also alarmed about new technology. The TWU is recognized as a national leader in advocating for federal legislation and regulations to protect transport workers’ livelihoods from being wiped out by profit-seeking Big Tech corporations and investors.

The wave of technology heading to America’s workers has been described as a “tsunami.” Dr. John Dolan, a robotics expert from Carnegie Mellon University who addressed the conference by Zoom, said approximately \$80 billion has been invested in robotaxis. Ed Wytkind, TWU’s tech consultant, who presented at the conference, said industry leader Waymo operates robotaxis in 27 cities. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority in Florida last year became the first public transit agency to use AV vehicles in revenue service,



TWU Tech Consultant Ed Wytkind presenting at a tech conference convened for local presidents



The first autonomous shuttle was put into revenue service by a public transit authority in Jacksonville, FL.

he said. A small fleet of 9-seat electric vehicles is operating along a 3.5-mile corridor in downtown Jacksonville. The first semi-trucks with no one behind the wheel, meanwhile, are now traveling on I-45 between Dallas and Houston.

TWU’s goal is to build on its success in Columbus, OH, where the International teamed up with Local 208 two years ago to get strong job-protection language into the contract with the Central Ohio Transit Authority, Tate said. Under the contract, for example, COTA can’t deploy autonomous

vehicles without first negotiating with the union and obtaining its approval.

“This has to become as vitally important in your contract negotiations as wages and healthcare,” Tate told the local presidents. “If not, you won’t have to worry about wages or healthcare. There won’t be any jobs.”

# Victory in Philadelphia

Local 234, which has a strong history of fighting back against the bosses at the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, teamed up with TWU International late last year to secure a new contract after coming within hours of striking.

The might and full force of the International was behind Local 234 throughout the final stages of negotiations. The new deal was overwhelmingly ratified by Local 234 members in December, and the contract includes significant pension and benefit improvements, as well as a pay raise.

“Local 234’s contract fight and victory in Philadelphia is the quintessential example of ‘When we fightback, we win,’” TWU International President John Samuelson said. “When Local 234 reached out and told us that SEPTA management was demanding an unacceptable, devastatingly problematic contract settlement, the TWU machine geared up and sprang into action. Together with Local 234, we defeated SEPTA and won a major victory. The TWU International will always stand with our locals to strategically fightback to win contracts that better the lives of our members and their families.”

After a one-year contract expired in November, Local 234 members authorized a potential strike. After weeks of little progress, Samuelson and Local 234 President Will Vera told the Philadelphia media that a strike was “imminent” in early December. The announcement and a show of force by the International, that included Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate calling all Transit Division Local Presidents and staff to Philadelphia to assist with a strike, prompted SEPTA to return to the table for a weekend negotiating session. That session yielded a new two-year agreement.

“I am very pleased that we were able settle without a strike,” Vera said. “I want to thank TWU International for working so



closely with Local 234 and bringing their muscle to the table. The improvements in this contract will keep TWU members with Local 234 for the long term and make SEPTA an attractive place to work.”

The new contract in Philadelphia provides two 3.5% wage increases each year, an increase in pension benefits, and an increase in night pay differential, which had not been changed since 1995. It also features benefits for new hires, including vision and dental coverage kicking in after 90 days of work instead of 15 months, and an increase in the tool and clothing allowance. Local 234 members overwhelmingly ratified the contract on December 17.

Vera said Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro and his staff played a critical role in getting SEPTA to sit down and seriously negotiate with the local. Local 234 has also fought for more transit funding in the Pennsylvania Legislature over the past year.

“I’m proud that Local 234 was able to get a new two-year agreement in place that offers wage increases and significant improvements in benefits,” Tate said. “What happened in Philadelphia is a shining example of how the TWU International can work together with locals to wage successful fightback campaigns.”



The TWU presented a united front as it announced a strike was “imminent” at a December press conference in Philadelphia. Local 234 President Will Vera is at the microphone. Front row, left to right: International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, TUUS Division Director Willie Brown, International President John Samuelson



*TWU Local 100 TA Surface Vice President Gary Rosario at the podium praising Bus Operator Christopher Accettulli, standing in uniform next to Rosario, who helped a woman give birth on his bus. Other union officers and management participated in a plaque presentation at the Local 100 Union Hall.*

## It's a Girl!

### *Bus Operator Helps Deliver a Baby on his Brooklyn Bus*

**A** Bus Operator in New York City helped deliver a baby on his bus, springing to action when a panicked passenger went into labor.

As Christopher Accettulli was driving his B37 route in Gowanus, Brooklyn, on Jan. 23, a woman started walking up the aisle, saying, “Baby coming! Baby coming!” Accettulli recounted recently. “I thought she just really wanted to go to the hospital.”

It was too late for that. The woman’s water had broken. Accettulli called the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Bus Command Center and 911. With emergency responders on the phone, he delivered a healthy baby girl. He wrapped the newborn in his uniform sweater to protect the newborn from the January cold.

Emergency Medical Technicians soon arrived, along with members of the NYC police and fire departments. The ambulance crew determined that the baby was in good health and transported her and her mother to a local hospital.

“That’s all I thought about, making sure the baby was ok,” Accettulli, who has been operating a bus for 20 years, said. “Everything else was secondary to me.”

TWU Local 100 presented Accettulli with a plaque during a Union Hall event honoring him on March 6. The plaque cited Accettulli’s “extraordinary courage and presence of mind in an emergency.” It also commended Accettulli for “decisive action and compassion in a crucial moment.”

“What Chris Accettulli did was amazing,” said Gary Rosario, Local 100 Vice President of the TA Surface Department. “In my 27-



*Bus Operator Christopher Accettulli*

year career, I’ve never heard of anybody delivering a baby in a bus. I’m glad it wasn’t me!”

Local 100 Administrative Vice President Alexander Kemp made it clear that having humans on buses is a critical part of a well-functioning transit network. Autonomous transportation, including self-driving buses, is being tested in pilot programs across the country.

“This is the human component of the transit system,” Kemp said. “People talk about AI and they talk about the ability to create a harmonious world with autonomous vehicles. If this bus did not have a human operator, what would have been the reality in that circumstance?”

This is the value that transit workers add

to the day-to-day operations of how our city functions. This human hero is the essence of how we actually function in the city.”

TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate also praised the Bus Operator.

“Christopher Accettulli kept a mother and baby safe,” Tate said. “He used his training and took decisive action, which highlights why having a human worker on the bus or train is so important. If Big Tech had their way, there would be no Bus Operator on board to step up in an emergency like this.”

Accettulli downplayed was humble about his role and cracked a joke.

“It wasn’t as crazy as it sounds,” he said to media assembled at the Local 100 Union Hall in downtown Brooklyn. “The next time, when I deliver twins, I’ll let you know.”

# TWU Leaders at 2026 CES

**T**WU leaders were on hand at the 2026 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January, where the latest developments in automated transportation – and threats to jobs everywhere – were on full display.

TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola and Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate observed “more refined” developments in autonomous vehicles at the show, which is the world’s largest electronics and tech exhibition.

“These things are evolving,” Tate said. “First, they looked robotic, and now they are adding these luxury elements to them. These companies keep talking about how they’ve updated their guidance systems, computer matrices, and other stuff that’s supposed to make things better, but when an autonomous vehicle doesn’t stop for a school bus, or takes people into a cordoned-off police or fire area, as robotaxis have done, your technology isn’t what it’s supposed to be.”

Tate and Lafragola agreed that automation is coming to every sector of the economy, adding that they saw advanced human-like robots walking around the convention floor. Both emphasized that organized labor must play a pivotal role in pushing for laws and

***“It’s the labor movement’s job to identify and put in the forefront that technology is awesome when used in conjunction with workers to make things safe or efficient, but it’s not cool when it just takes jobs.”***

– Jerome Lafragola, TWU International Secretary-Treasurer

regulations that will ensure a pro-worker future, instead of letting Big Tech achieve its ultimate goal of slashing labor costs to the bone.

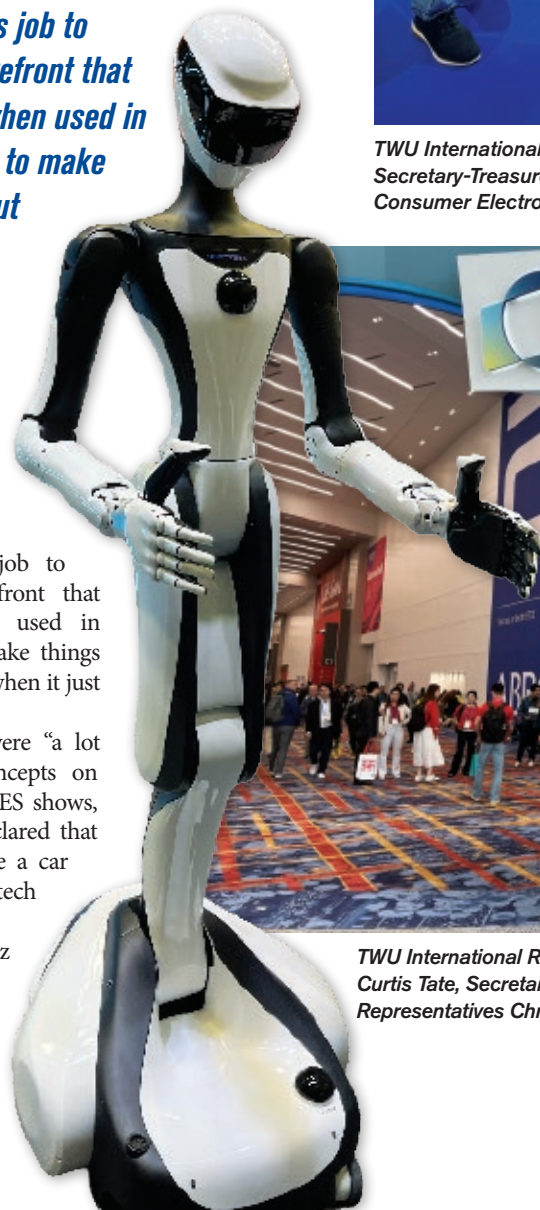
“It’s the labor movement’s job to identify and put in the forefront that technology is awesome when used in conjunction with workers to make things safe or efficient, but it’s not cool when it just takes jobs,” Lafragola said.

Lafragola noted that there were “a lot more” autonomous vehicle concepts on display compared to previous CES shows, and Business Insider editors declared that CES, at this point, “has become a car show as much as it remains a tech show.”

Rail Division Director John Feltz and TWU International staff also attended this year’s CES.



TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate and Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola next to a robotaxi at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas



TWU International Rail Division Director John Feltz, Administrative VP Curtis Tate, Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, TUUS Division Staff Representatives Christina Scott, Jeffrey Mitchell, and Nancy Martinez.

# Jersey Strong

TWU International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola was appointed to NJ Governor Mikie Sherrill's Advisory Task Force, which was established to assist Sherrill and her team develop policy.

The TWU has thousands of members across the Air, Rail, and Transit divisions who live and work in New Jersey. Four locals are based in the state: Local 220 (municipal and school bus workers in Brick), Local 225 in Hackensack (school and interstate bus), Local 229 in Hoboken (Hudson-Bergen Light Rail), and Local 1400 (the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey).

"The TWU is recognized as a strong and important voice for working families, and I think this appointment is recognition of that," Lafragola said.

Lafragola started his career with the Port Authority in 1985 as a Crew Chief overseeing the Lincoln Tunnel Emergency Response Garage. He advanced through the union ranks to become Local 1400 President, a role he held for over twenty years.



## Cifarelli Retires

Dozens of union brothers and sisters gathered with former Local 2055 President Bob Cifarelli in March to celebrate his retirement. Cifarelli spent 17 years on the job with Metro-North, most of those as a Carman. He served in various union positions, first with Local 2001 and then 2055, where he became President in 2019. Tony Crapio was appointed President by the Local 2055 Executive Board effective March 1.



## Remembering Former Local 504 President Boehm

Former Local 504 President Richard Boehm, a union member for nearly six decades, passed away in November. He was 83 years old.

Hired by Pan Am in 1966, Boehm served two terms as President: 1993 – 2009, and 2017 – 2021. Between those terms, Boehm was the TWU International Staff Representative for Service Locals 504, 525, 526, and 527. These were just some of the many union roles Boehm filled during his career.

"Richie served on many boards and committees over the years and left a lasting impression on those



he assisted and those he served with," Local 504 President Robert Payne said. "He had a wealth of knowledge learned from being an active trade unionist who held almost every title, from Shop Steward to International Rep., and his expertise and counsel will be missed."

Boehm was born on May 22, 1942, and passed away on Nov. 5, 2025. He leaves behind a wife, Matilda, two daughters, a grandson, and thousands of members

who depended on his leadership, Payne said.

"Richie was my friend and mentor, and he will be missed," Payne said.

# TWU Volunteers Pitch in to Help the Needy in Vegas

Members of the TWU Nevada State Conference volunteered at 3 Square, a North Las Vegas community food bank, to help thousands of families in need.

Flight Attendants from TWU Local 577 (Allegiant Air) and TWU Local 556 (Southwest Airlines) packaged food boxes for distribution, filling them with canned goods, pantry staples, bread, cereal, and other essentials. Altogether, the volunteers packed 6,000 pounds of food—enough to provide more than 5,300 meals for families in the North Las Vegas area.

To participate in future TWU community service events, reach out to your local president for information on future dates.



*Nevada State Conference members at the community food bank warehouse in North Las Vegas*

# TWU Advocates for Safety Funding

The TWU’s California State Conference is advocating for federal legislation that would put more security personnel in transit systems.

As part of that effort, conference members last year participated in a press conference held by Congresswoman Lateefah Simon (CA-12) in support of the RIDER Safety Act, or House Resolution 6069. The bill would provide federal grants to transit agencies to pay for more security personnel in their networks.

“A visible security presence is one of the most effective ways to deter assaults and protect both workers and riders,” TWU California State Conference Chair Chris Avila said. Urgent action is needed from all levels of government - and employers - to keep TWU members, riders, and passengers safe. The in-district press event also featured remarks from several other unions, including the International Association of Machinists and the Amalgamated Transit Union, as well as the directors of San Francisco transit agencies. The Transportation Trades Department, a national advocacy organization comprised of transportation-sector unions, also participated.



*State Conference Chair Chris Avila addresses the media.*

*(Left) TWU COPE Field Representative Matt Hettich, Congresswoman Lateefah Simon, Chris Avila, and TWU Local 556 Executive Board Member Janell Torres.*

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# Never a Dull Moment for Local 234's Gerwayne McElaney

**T**here's no such thing as a typical day for Gerwayne McElaney. When her phone rings, it could be about a stray dog on the street, a raccoon in someone's attic, a coyote pup in a park, an alligator in the creek, or even a 600-pound pig in a backyard. "Every day is different," McElaney, an Animal Control Officer for Upper Darby Township, a suburb of Philadelphia, said. "I never knew I would like this job as much as I do, but I absolutely love it."

The Transport Workers Union has 165,000 members. More than 30,000 are Flight Attendants, roughly 20,000 are Bus Operators, and there are large groups of other members with various job titles. But there are only two Animal Control Officers: McElaney and her Upper Darby co-worker, Lenny Villarose. Township workers are members of Local 234, which mainly consists of Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) workers.

Since being hired three years ago, McElaney has diligently pursued advanced training. She earned a Dangerous Dog Certification in June 2024, Animal Control Officer Level 1 status in June 2025, and ACO Level 2 in January 2026.

"This is the pride of union labor in action," Local 234 Vice President George Bannon said. "Geri is a dedicated TWU member; she continues to raise the bar through advanced certifications, hard work, and a deep commitment to protecting both our community and its animals every day."

The training gave McElaney the knowledge and confidence to handle various challenges, she said. The baby coyote was part of a litter that a mother was in the process of moving into a wooded area next to a park, one by one, when an Upper Darby resident spotted it. The pup was nestled, and almost perfectly hidden, at the base of a tree. McElaney moved the coyote into the woods where the mother, which howled all through the night, came and fetched it.

The alligator, which reportedly was about 2-feet long, was never found. The 600-pound pig was beyond saving. He was being prepared for a large holiday barbecue by new township residents who were unaware that butchering on such a large scale is frowned upon in residential neighborhoods. The chefs were given 45 minutes to finish their work – and a warning.

Dogs are a big part of the job: capturing stray canines, checking owners' compliance with licensing and vaccination rules, responding to noise complaints about barking dogs or investigating reported dog bites. There are also sad and enraging



*Animal Control Officer, and proud TWU member, Gerwayne McElaney.*



*Gerri works with animal rescue and shelter organizations to find homes for dogs in need.*

cases of abuse and neglect. Those that reach the level of criminality are turned over to the Humane Society.

In other situations, McElaney faces the difficult task of deciding what to do with a pet whose owner has been arrested for allegedly committing a crime unrelated to their animal. The best scenarios are when a pet owner is expected to be held for a short amount of time for a non-serious offense, and the animal can stay temporarily with a relative until they are reunited. The law treats pets as property, but the

owner-pet bond is almost always deeper and more complex than that classification suggests.

"Sometimes, their animal is all they have," McElaney said.

The most rewarding part of the job is teaching people how to properly care for their pets to prevent them from being taken and placed in a shelter, McElaney said. One reason she took the job was to serve her community in Upper Darby, where she has lived for about 30 years.

"I'm especially proud that I've built a strong network of peers and that I'm known for working hard to get dogs fostered and adopted whenever possible, rather than resorting to euthanasia when it isn't necessary," McElaney said. "Supporting both the animals and the residents in my community is what makes this work meaningful."



## TWU's Inaugural Recording Secretary Training

TWU Locals 555, 556, 577, and 579 took part in TWU's inaugural training session for Recording Secretaries at the International office in Washington, DC. The training was conducted by TWU Training & Education Coordinator Mitch Lieberman.



## Local 208 Grievance and Shop Steward Training



## Local 252 Grievance Training



## Local 502 New Officer and Board Training



### Worker Protection Task Force

Local 106 Recording Secretary Jose DeJesus was appointed to the September 11th Worker Protection Task Force as the representative for New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli. Jose was a Track Worker on September 11, 2001, and operated heavy equipment at Ground Zero. Jose spent several weeks participating in the cleanup effort.



### L513 Swearing In



The TWU's New York and New Jersey state conferences spread some holiday joy in December, giving toys to more than 1,000 needy kids at a joint event with Hudson County officials in Jersey City. "The conferences are always looking for ways to give back to the communities in which our TWU members live and work," Local 1400 President Patrick Reynolds said. "It was a great event. The overall TWU support was amazing."

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tial. We must support those who  
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and the essential workers who  
power our industry.”*

– D’Ann Johnson,  
Financial Secretary-Treasurer  
TWU Local 514



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