

512 POWER

Teamsters 512 members to vote on by-laws amendments at April 15th Union Meeting

Amendments would give freedom to add union stewards, strengthen union.

Unions are under attack around the United States and across the state of Florida. Anti-worker politicians, who are bought and sold by corporations like UPS, are passing laws that weaken our unions, our pensions, our wages and our rights on the job.

Meanwhile, UPS and other freight companies are gearing up to fight the Teamsters at the bargaining table next year. Just like 2013, UPS management plans to go after our health care, our pension, our raises and our protections in the contract – all while making billions of dollars in profits from our labor!

If we want to stop these anti-worker attacks – in Washington and at UPS – we need a strong union that can enforce the contract, create new energetic leaders, and organize members to fight back.

At the January Teamsters 512 meeting, several members proposed two by-laws amendments to make our union stronger and meet these challenges.

The first amendment gives members the freedom to add additional union steward positions by a petition of 50% of the membership in a given work area or shift. The members on that shift or in that work area would then nominate people for the positions and elect them in a democratic vote.

If we want to strengthen our union and win better contracts – negotiations with UPS begin in 2018 – Local 512 needs younger members and newer voices to become leaders and organizers in the workplace. We need to enforce the contract and give members the tools they need to fight back and win against management's attacks. To do this, members need the freedom to add more elected union stewards – and this amendment does that.

The second amendment would create a Volunteer Organizing Committee that focuses on increasing membership and organizing workers at non-union companies to join Teamsters 512. It allows members to get directly involved in making our union stronger. Union membership levels in the United States are at their lowest point since the Great Depression. If we want to win better contracts, we have to start aggressively organizing companies like Amazon, Centurion car haul, and the dozens of non-union trucking companies in Jacksonville.

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The by-law proposals were made by Teamsters United activists who campaigned for Fred Zuckerman in the 2016 Teamsters election. Zuckerman & Teamsters United ran on a platform of making our union fight for the members again – not taking sell-out concessionary contracts while corporations like UPS rake in record profits. Teamsters United and Zuckerman won the vote in Local 512, the city of Jacksonville, the state of Florida and the entire Southern Region.

We hope the Local 512 Executive Board reconsiders their position on these amendments. At the February meeting, several union officers spoke against granting members the freedom to add stewards by petition. Meanwhile, members from several work areas and shifts have asked these same Local 512 Executive Board officers to train and appoint more stewards to make our union stronger – and these requests have gone nowhere. Make no mistake: The only party that benefits from fewer union stewards and fewer workplace leaders is management. UPS hopes that young Teamsters don't get involved in the 2018 contract battle so they can push a terrible concessionary agreement like last time – and the stakes are even higher with our pensions and health care under attack!

All members in good standing will be able to vote for the proposals at the union meeting on April 15th at 11:00 AM which will be held at 1210 Lane Ave N, Jacksonville, FL 32254. Come out, vote yes on both amendments and support making Local 512 stronger.