



Convention Report 8/07

LWC sets ILA negotiating agenda

After 8 years of struggle, the LWC forced the ILA leadership to adopt three main principles for the union in bargaining, enforcement and organizing.

LWC members and sympathizers reintroduced resolutions that had been presented at past conventions. This time, however, several of them passed. The difference is that the membership of the ILA has been informed through the LWC newsletter, *Pier Pressure*. Officers and delegates know they will have to answer for what they do at the convention and in bargaining.

End the Tiers: The convention unanimously passed resolutions calling to end the tiered wage provisions of the contract and end the cap on container royalties. This means that the convention recommends that these two principals be top bargaining demands when new negotiations begin and that they might be among several issues the membership is willing to strike for.

Safety: The convention unanimously passed a resolution that makes updating the ILA-USMX safety codes a top priority in bargaining, enforcement and organizing. The old codes have not been updated in years, even though the industry and equipment has changed dramatically.

Organizing: The convention unanimously passed a resolution that calls for building an organizing department. Many members don't realize that several of the expanding ports are operating without ILA union labor. Non-union technology work, warehouse work, and intermodal work is growing like a cancer across the country. If we don't organize that work into our union, we will watch our union be destroyed.

This is just the beginning of a long battle. To win these demands will require more than a resolution at the convention, it will require action by the rank and file. Stay tuned to the LWC for more info.

What Will It Take to Win Justice in 2010?

Convention resolutions are a start but they are not enough. We can judge the progress of our union by the following:

Communication: We must have constant information about what the union plans to do during bargaining. With feedback from the membership.

Corporate Campaign: We no longer bargain with shipping interests, we are bargaining with banks and pension funds. We must know how these corporations operate and how to affect their bottom line if we want justice. This info must be shared with members

Member Action: Members must be prepared to fight for justice on the dock, in the media and in the corporate board rooms. We must start early and never let up. The LWC will be there.

LWC Demands Direct Elections



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No Democracy

Once again ILA leaders lacked vision and voted down a LWC resolution calling for direct election of officers. The resolution would have meant that every union member would get to vote for their officers by secret ballot. Leaders would have to campaign for your vote in the region they seek to represent.

This would strengthen our union, forcing officers to address issues affecting the membership. It could also head off the possibility of government oversight of our union. (To see how your delegates voted go on line at www.lwcjustice.com "Convention Report")

No Contest

It was the usual behind the scenes jockeying to run an uncontested slate. After lots of talk about running for President, it appears that General Vice President Benny Holland was given a \$70,000 raise in exchange for not running for the number one or two spot.

The LWC ran a candidate as a protest to prove how the system works. Even if a candidate has stood for what is right, he or she has no hope of winning without the nod from top ILA brass. This is why we need direct elections of officers.

See side bar for nominations speech

No Accurate Count

Part of the problem is that the ILA relies on locals to report their membership. This means there is no accurate count. Two locals, the MMP and the UMD, controled 80 votes and only have one person each casting those votes.

Mismanagement of union funds

Our officers continue to collect more salaries and benefits than most other comparable unions in the county.

Feeding at the troth

Although John Bowers left the ILA in a financial crisis, he will retire collecting half his salary as a "President Emeritus." This will be around \$225,000. In addition, he will be eligible to collect a pension from his local and from the International.

After disgraced International Executive Vice President Cernadas plead guilty to racketeering charges he asked that he receive his \$16,000 per month / \$192,000 per year pension from the international. This is on top of whatever pension credit he receives out of his local.

After the ILA was notified that they had` under funded their own pension plan according to the ERISA laws, the union now pays approximately \$866,000 per month or \$10.4 million per year, to cover its 30+ international officers.

LWC nominates member in Protest of Election Process

The below was a speech given by an LWC member to nominate a candidate against the uncontested election of ILA officers.

In the spirit of democracy, we must have the courage and stand for what is right not what is politically convenient.

Charles Brave Jr. has always stood for justice, democracy, ending the wage tiers, safety and organizing in the ILA.

The delegates to this body belong to the leadership and the leadership could select whomever they want to succeed to power. The next leadership has been pre-selected.

This is not democracy. It is not in the best interests of our membership.

Although, this election is a protest, it is the seed of democracy. And it takes the courage of people like Brother Brave to make progress.

Vote your conscience, not what you've been told to do.

Fatih Shakir, ILA Local 1416, Miami, FL

No Mob Rule – No Government Rule

The LWC believes we should have direct elections and allow our membership to clean up our own house. We want a honest union run by the members, not the mob or the government.

During the convention, there was lots of talk blaming the governments Racketeering case for the financial situation of the union. If this was only true. The poor negotiating and excessive compensation of officers has lead to the current situation.

The Code of Ethics Cover Up

Meanwhile, two years ago the leadership appointed a former judge to act as an ethics officer to the union. The problem is, its the same officers who have the power to oversee and enforce his recomendations.

The code of ethics is, at best, a half-measre to real democracy inside the ILA.

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