



# Teamster Talk



*Members of Teamsters Local 117*

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## STOP THE WAR ON WORKERS!



Local 117 members at a Wisconsin solidarity rally in Olympia on Presidents' Day 2011.

Over a thousand members of the labor community, including dozens of Teamsters, packed the Capitol Rotunda in Olympia on Presidents' Day for a noontime rally in solidarity with workers in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has been in the national spotlight over the last several weeks as working families battle a renegade Governor intent on slashing their health care and pension benefits and stripping away their right to bargain collectively.

The struggle of working people in Wisconsin has galvanized the labor community nationwide. Rallies have been taking place in cities across the country in support of the protesting workers.

"This is a seminal moment in our fight

**WE ARE ONE - PUT PEOPLE FIRST!**

 **Labor Rally in Olympia**   
**April 8 @ 12 noon**

For more info, visit [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org)

to protect the rights of working people. If anti-worker legislation takes root in Wisconsin, it is only a matter of time before we face the same radical changes here in Washington State," said Teamsters Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer Tracey A. Thompson.

Indeed, anti-worker "Right to Work" and "Collective Bargaining Reform" bills have already been proposed this legislative session in Olympia. In a new political environment, Wisconsin's nightmare could

become our reality.

"Organized labor built this country, and it is important to show our support," said Becky Little, a Local 117 Shop Steward, who attended the Presidents' Day rally. Little is a Maintenance Technician at the Pierce County Parks and Recreation Department.

There are many ways you can join the labor movement that has been reignited by our brothers and sisters in Wisconsin. It starts by getting organized and getting involved:

- **Attend the April 8 - Put People First! Labor Rally in Olympia**
- **Join one of your Local Union's Political Action Committees.**
- **Join one of your Local Union's caucuses (Teamsters for Tomorrow, Comité Latino, Teamsters Black Caucus)**
- **Join your Local Union's Facebook page.**
- **Follow your Local Union on Twitter.**

Teamsters are working together with affiliates of the Washington State Labor Council to mobilize thousands of workers for a rally on Friday, April 8, at 12 noon on the Capitol steps in Olympia in support of Washington workers.

"We cannot allow a handful of radical politicians in Wisconsin and elsewhere to destroy the American middle class that Unions have fought for decades to build," Thompson said.

## A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Brothers and Sisters:

We are under attack.

We all know that corporate greed caused the devastating financial freefall in 2008. But do you know that Wall Street bonuses were 17% higher in 2009 than they were in 2008? While working people lost their jobs and families lost their homes, those responsible were being rewarded.

By 2010, corporate profits rebounded and surpassed pre-2008 levels. Those profits haven't trickled down to working people in the form of wage increases or retirement security, however. Instead, the gap between the richest people in our country and all the rest of us has grown. Today, 1% of Americans own close to 40% of America's wealth.

Our government has chosen not to achieve some semblance of balance by taxing the richest in America. Instead, federal and state governments are exempting wealthy corporations from taxes and allowing the already huge gap between the haves and the have-nots to grow. As a result, budget deficits continue to grow.

And who is the government blaming for the budget woes? Not the wealthy individuals that don't pay their fair share; not the wealthy corporations who are being allowed to keep more and more of their profits. The government is blaming working people: public employees who have committed their lives to public service and the working middle class who are trying only to hold onto their homes and feed their families.

In states across the country, the right to organize and collectively bargain is being stripped from working people. Make no mistake, the goal is to kill the labor movement.

We must fight back. There is no choice. This is a matter of survival.

I am calling on each and every one of you to commit to fighting the war on workers. We are an army of 16,000, and we will not be defeated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey A. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Tracey A. Thompson  
Secretary-Treasurer

## Teamster correctional employees demand greater voice on safety issues

Teamster correctional workers say that a National Institute of Corrections (NIC) report raises serious questions about the Department of Corrections' (DOC) commitment to staff safety and that they are skeptical of the State's assurance that it will implement the report's recommendations after the NIC's week-long investigation into policies and procedures at the Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC).

"The NIC report makes good recommendations, but it remains to be seen if they will be implemented," said Lynn Kunkle, a registered nurse at the Monroe Correctional Complex. "We have been urging the State for years to make these changes, but our input has fallen on deaf ears. It's disturbing that it takes the murder of one of our co-workers before the State promises to take action."

At the same time that the Governor was holding her press conference in Monroe to announce the NIC report's recommendations, several dozen correctional employees were appearing before the Senate Labor and Commerce & Consumer Protection committee in support of legislation that would enhance their safety through an interest arbitration process. That legislation – EHB 2011 – would give DOC employees the ability to engage a neutral third party if they cannot come to agreement with the State over working conditions that adequately ensure staff safety.

"The NIC report shows that staff safety and security has been compromised at MCC, but there is no mention of other prisons in the report. There are 11 other prisons across the State where staff safety and security is being compromised. We need a meaningful

# Shop Stewards gear up to fight for working families



*Teamsters Local 117 Shop Stewards preparing for battle.*

As the assault on working families in Wisconsin and around the country intensifies, Local 117 Shop Stewards are preparing for battle.

On Saturday, March 12, over 300 Stewards gathered at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle for the annual Shop Steward Seminar and Appreciation Day to discuss the ominous developments in Wisconsin as State governments across the country move to eliminate collective bargaining rights for Union workers. (For information about how you can support Wisconsin working families, visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).)

## STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

In her annual State of the Union address, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer Tracey A. Thompson emphasized the critical nature of the moment and issued a call-to-arms:

"As the foot soldiers of this Union, I am calling on Shop Stewards to take

the lead in our fight to protect and expand the rights of working families. We cannot allow a handful of radical politicians in Wisconsin and elsewhere to destroy the American middle class that Unions have fought for decades to build."

## POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM

After discussing the Union's strategic priorities, Thompson identified political action as the theme of this year's seminar and a critical component in the effort to combat the assault on working families.

"Over the last year, Local 117 has built a powerhouse political action program that has involved hundreds of members in the political process. Members have attended PAC meetings, lobbied in Olympia, called and written their representatives as we fight to protect the rights of working people," she said.

In keeping with the theme,

Washington Teamsters (JC #28) Political Action Director Heather Weiner demystified the lobbying process in an interactive presentation entitled "How to Date your Politician in 10 Easy Steps."

## INSLEE & MCKENNA SQUARE OFF

The two frontrunners in the bid for next year's Governor's race, Congressman Jay Inslee and Attorney General Rob McKenna, were also invited to address the group. Stewards were pleased to hear that both Inslee and McKenna committed in their talks to protecting collective bargaining rights for state employees and both said that they supported interest arbitration for correctional employees.

"We're going to hold them to that," said Sid Clark, a Steward at Larch Corrections Center and this year's Department of Corrections Steward of the Year.

Before lunch, participants attended two breakout sessions. Organizer Brenda Wiest and Political Action Coordinator Lily Wilson-Codega engaged Stewards in a discussion over the use of political pressure in last year's successful campaign against Waste Management, while Organizer Pedro Olguin and Business Representative Cecil Fouts led a panel discussion about building "Communication Action Networks" (CANs) as a means of strengthening our Union.

## TIME TO FIGHT BACK!

With the events in Wisconsin looming, this is a seminal moment in labor's effort to protect and expand the rights of working families. As the rank-and-file leaders of this Union, your Shop Stewards will be calling on all members of Teamsters Local 117 to get involved in the battle and fight back.

# JOIN US FOR LABOR'S WE ARE ONE PUT PEOPLE FIRST!



RALLY IN OLYMPIA

CAPITOL STEPS

APRIL 8 @ 12 NOON



The cynical attempt to destroy the American middle class in Wisconsin and elsewhere is having reverberations across the country. Working people from Ohio to Indiana to Idaho are fighting back.

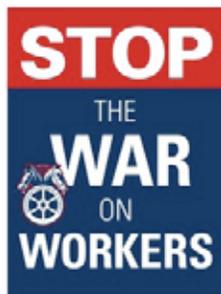
In Washington State, Teamsters have been attending solidarity rallies at the State Capitol in Olympia.

The stakes of this fight are high as political renegades like Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin and their corporate cronies attempt to strip working people of their hard-earned wages, benefits, and right to bargain collectively.

Washingtonians understand that a shift in the political landscape in our State could have a similarly devastating

impact on our fundamental rights as workers.

During the week of April 2, the Teamsters are helping to organize a series of solidarity activities that will culminate in a massive **WE ARE ONE - PUT PEOPLE FIRST** rally on April 8.



The message of the rally is clear: As working people, **WE ARE ONE** in our demand that the bankers and billionaires -- and their handmaidens in government -- end the attacks on working families, and that public policy makers **PUT PEOPLE FIRST** as our nation

struggles to recover from the economic havoc their greed and malfeasance has caused.

To join us on April 8, call 206-441-4860 ext. 1269 or talk to your Business Representative.

## LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**April 8** - Put People First! Labor Rally in Olympia

**April 30** - Teamsters for Tomorrow Bowl-a-thon

**May 1** - May Day March and Rally

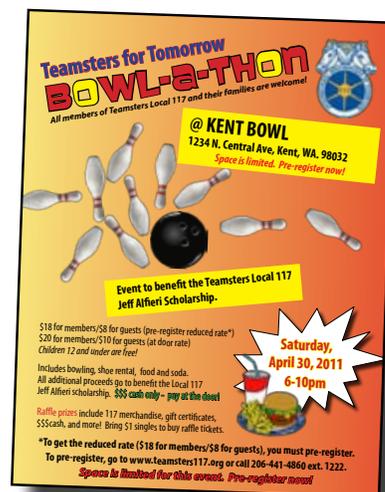
## Safety Now!

Continued from Page 2

process to address all safety and security issues in the future. EHB 2011 gives us that process," said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117.

Given the budget deficit, correctional workers remain skeptical that the legislature will place their safety above budgetary issues.

"I've worked at my institution for ten years. We have panic buttons that have never been activated and staff without radios interacting directly with inmates. We've paid a big enough price for the lack of attention to safety at DOC. We need interest arbitration rights so that our voices can be heard," said Sergeant Mark Francis of the Larch Corrections Center.



## TFT BOWL-A-THON!

Join members of Teamsters Local 117 for a great night of bowling, raffle, food, and fun. The Local 117 BOWLATHON, sponsored by the Teamsters for Tomorrow, takes place on April 30, 2011 at the Kent Bowl. All members of Teamsters Local 117 and their families are welcome!

For more information, talk to your Business Representative, or visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).