



# VICTORY!

**Contract Gains in the Air Division  
50,000 Members to Benefit**



## AIR / 14

Contracts with Raises, Parental Leave, and more!



## RAIL / 16

David Beats Goliath in Boston



## TRANSIT / 19

LA Bike Share Prevails

# Fightback Campaigns Paying Off

The TWU is enjoying an incredible run of success right now. I'm writing this directly in the aftermath of the April ratification of Local 556's blockbuster contract for our Southwest Flight Attendants, which makes them the highest paid FAs in the country – and the first at a major carrier to receive paid maternal and parental leave. This victory comes on the heels of similarly important wins at Allegiant Air (Local 577), Air Wisconsin and JetBlue (Local 592), and our other major group at Southwest: the Ramp, Operations, Provisioning and Freight Agents (Local 555).

It's beyond the Air Division too. In Columbus, Ohio, Local 208 in January settled a contract in which The TWU won unprecedented protections against the displacement of our Bus Operators by robots. Absolutely superb.

These victories have not come easily, and they didn't just appear out of thin air. They are the product of extremely hard work by our Local officers working in conjunction with an International leadership that is determined to win. They are the result of groundwork that has been several years in the making. And they directly correlate to the intense fightback campaigns we have relentlessly waged over the last seven years.

The employers we bargain with are now compelled to make a consequential decision: bargaining in good faith toward a settlement – or become the target of a continuous, bruising, multi-faceted, and very public fightback campaign by The TWU International, working together with our Locals, to protect and advance our members' livelihoods.

Allegiant certainly remembers the aggressive tactics we engaged in shortly after I became International President in May 2017. They included crafting a full-page newspaper advertisement scheduled to run in the Wall Street Journal that raised serious concerns about the airline's safety record. It depicted an Allegiant plane with an engine on fire. We didn't even have to publish the ad. The WSJ showed it to Allegiant airline executives, and they caved. That has become a tactic which we have successfully repeated in other fights.

In 2017, in Columbus, Ohio, we organized and threatened to go on strike for the first time in decades over the issue of automation. We publicly targeted the Democratic mayor and the Republican governor who colluded to remove our Bus Operators and pave the way for robotic bus operations.

I have no doubt that Southwest, and many other companies and transportation authorities for that matter, are well aware of our ongoing aggressive actions in New York and Boston on behalf of workers in our Railroad Division. In New York, we've had the audacity to take on the highest-ranking official in the state: Gov. Kathy Hochul. It's been nothing short of an epic, high profile roasting. We're exposing Hochul as an anti-union, anti-worker,



two-faced politician who talks about supporting working men and women – but quietly supports contract demands that would be incredibly painful to blue-collar workers.

The TWU has warned commuter railroad riders in New York of a potential strike, hounded Hochul's transportation chief as he attended galas and fundraisers, unleashed a torrent of negative social media and print advertisements, published searing opinion pieces in news publications, secured television news coverage, and much more.

Before we secured a contract in Boston, we made it clear that railroad workers were being shafted by Keolis, a greedy French conglomerate, and we would strike when cleared by the National Mediation Board.

The anti-merger JetBlue campaign that we conducted also has been a contributing factor to our recent burst of success. That fightback included extensive lobbying of state and federal officials. We let them know that JetBlue was an abusive employer who violated the existing contract and wasn't taking workers' merger-related concerns seriously. We explained how JetBlue failed initially to give the union its rightful say in what a post-merger future would mean in terms of work rules, seniority, and other very important areas. And we revealed the company's anti-labor record, enlisted the support of key elected officials, and pummeled the JetBlue brand until the company started a genuine dialogue with us.

We don't fight for the hell of it, but this TWU International will never back down when our members are in harm's way. We will come out swinging against any employer or public official that threatens the economic security, safety, and contractual rights of TWU members in any of our workgroups. Employers and politicians increasingly are aware that we are dead serious about this. They now must think long and hard about the consequences they will trigger if they don't behave themselves by bargaining in good faith.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samolay". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.



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# The Best Lobbyist is a TWU Member with a Plan

*By International Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerome Lafragola*



**W**hen most people think of the word “lobbyist,” images of a sports-car driving, smooth talking corporate lawyer come to mind. But the recent COPE Conference in Washington – a TWU tradition dating back to 1970 – reinforced for me how an effective “lobbyist” doesn’t need to be a high-priced backslapper advocating for large companies.

In reality, educated, everyday workers make some of the best lobbyists out there – and The TWU has plenty of them. Showing up to a lawmaker’s office in person shows an elected official, whether they are a governor, member of Congress, or your local city councilmember, that there’s a group of people who care passionately enough about an issue to take the time and effort to engage in a face-to-face conversation.

The COPE Conference is the product of months of hard work and preparation by TWU International staff and COPE members who take the time to get educated and come to Washington to advocate for transportation workers across the country. The recent passage of the FAA reauthorization bill into law is evidence of that advocacy paying off, as the legislation included critical language designed to bolster safety at foreign aircraft repair stations and protect domestic aircraft maintenance jobs.

Elected officials juggle many different policy issues and hear from lots of different perspectives, but when a TWU member shows up

for a meeting armed with facts and figures, their arguments tend to carry more weight. And it doesn’t hurt that TWU members are often speaking to their own elected officials who will show up on the ballot during the next election.

At this year’s COPE Conference, our members advocated for increased penalties for freight rail companies who skirt safety rules, protecting our hardworking Flight Attendants and Ramp Workers, and additional funding for transit agencies so they can continue to operate and provide crucial service. The legislative process is often a long, winding road but making contacts with elected officials is a key part in ultimately getting bills off the drawing board and signed into law.

I encourage any TWU member who isn’t involved with COPE to get involved. It is rewarding to see the power a motivated everyday voter has in a world filled with apathy and mistrust.

You don’t need to be a high-paid, professional lobbyist to get things done in Washington or in your local communities. All it takes is determination, knowledge and a willingness to show up and engage. The TWU has done that for decades and has no plans of stopping.

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



# A Hero In Houston

**A** Houston Bus Operator was hailed as a hero after risking his life to save a wandering 4-year-old girl from speeding traffic on a notorious and deadly road in Houston.

Vincent White, a member of TWU Local 260, was stopped at a light in September when he saw a small figure up ahead crossing Westheimer Road, an eight-lane thoroughfare that's better described as a highway. The speed limit is blatantly ignored. Pedestrian crosswalks are few and far between.

As White got closer to the unknown figure, he realized it was a little girl.

"It was the most terrifying thing I've seen in my entire life," White said. "It's dangerous for an adult to try and cross Westheimer, never mind a small child."

He's not exaggerating. In a four-mile stretch of Westheimer, 38 people were killed in a recent five-year period: 26 pedestrians, three bicyclists and nine drivers or passengers.

The girl, who had strayed from family members as they shopped at a nearby store, paused on a thin concrete median between the two rivers of traffic. But she appeared on the verge of continuing to cross. White frantically honked his horn, slammed on the brakes, and bolted from his bus. As he ran across Westheimer, the level of danger again became evident. The passenger-side, rear-view mirror of a passing car struck White in the left hand.

"There was this loud 'boom,' and there was glass, pieces of the mirror, and plastic, everywhere," he said.

That collision brought everything, and everyone, to a halt. The operator of an approaching firetruck turned on the rig's lights and



Scan this QR code to watch video shot by the on-board camera, plus an interview with BO White.



siren. Motorists realized White was trying to reach the girl, and intervened. She was saved.

White suffered a deep laceration that required about eight stitches to close. He wanted to go back to work immediately but was convinced to take two weeks off.

"He is great public servant and a model citizen of the Authority," TWU Local 260 Vice President Fidel Minor said.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County praised White in a statement for his "selfless display of public service," adding his story "serves as a powerful reminder that even a single act of courage has the potential to make a world of difference."

In this era of rapidly developing technology, including autonomous cars and trucks, White's story also is a powerful reminder why there always should be a Bus Operator on board, Minor said.

"We are irreplaceable," he said. "Technological advances will never replace compassion for the plight of humanity."

Do you know a TWU member worth featuring as "A Member Story?"  
Email [communications@twu.org](mailto:communications@twu.org)

# TWU International Convenes the Future Leaders Organizing Committee in Dallas

## Don't be intimidated.

That was one of the many pieces of advice members of the Future Leaders Organizing Committee (FLOC) received in March during three days of training that focused on handling contractual and disciplinary grievances. The employer-employee relationship changes when an authorized union representative sits across the table from management in a meeting or hearing, Training and Education Coordinator Mitch Lieberman told the group.

“At that point, you are not there as an employee,” he said. “You are there as a union representative, and you have a right to be there on the same level as management.”

More than 60 FLOC members from 20 TWU Locals attended the training in Dallas. The subject matter included: contractual



*Below: The TWU's Top Officers joined committee members in Dallas. Seated, left to right: International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes, Executive V.P. Alex Garcia, President John Samuelsen, Administrative V.P. Curtis Tate, and Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola.*

and disciplinary grievances, the three steps of the grievance process, contractually mandated timetables and deadlines, case investigation, hearing preparation, and arbitration, including the factors to consider when deciding what disputes to bring before an arbitrator.

Local 264 President Joseph Rose walked the attendees through several grievances his Local filed on behalf of members at Barnard College in New York City. Participants also broke into groups to prepare and argue cases in a series of mock grievance hearings. Local 513's Anthony Hardy gave an inspiring and thought-provoking talk about his life experiences and mentoring.



## MEMBERS IN ACTION



TWU International President John Samuelson told the training participants to challenge and fight management, not fellow union members or officers. That may not always be possible, given political motivations and aspirations, but it should be the goal, he said.

“You cannot effectively fight the employer when you are in a state of civil war,” Samuelson said. “Internal unity is the foundational point that everyone must start with in order to be able to take on the bosses, and the most important thing that we have to do here is take on the bosses.”

The training participants, who were sent by their individual

Local’s leadership, gave the program high marks.

“It’s been very informative,” said Morgan Bartel, a brand-new Shop Steward from Local 571 in Chicago. “The program is a great idea. The only way you are going to learn is by having others share their experiences.”

Lisa Vidal, a Local 556 Flight Attendant working out of Denver, also was positive.

“The thorough training we receive gives us an opportunity to bring that (knowledge) back to our Locals to better help other members,” she said.

## FLOC Explained

### What is FLOC?

The Future Leaders Organizing Committee is a TWU committee that provides training, networking, and other opportunities for younger members who are interested in assuming leadership roles for the first time or want to further their education to take on additional union duties. Many are shop stewards.

### What training is provided?

Training includes sessions on grievances, arbitration, organizing, legislation, political action, union history, building unity and facilitating member engagement. The program features workshops, guest speakers, and veteran union officers sharing their experiences.

### When does it meet?

The International schedules three FLOC gatherings a year in different cities around the country, such as Dallas, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles and New York City. Generally, individual committee members attend meetings throughout the calendar year, and a new group is cycled in for training the next year.

### When was it formed?

FLOC was established in 2018 by the International



Administrative Committee, which saw a need to empower the next generation of union leaders to protect and advance the livelihoods of TWU members in the years ahead. The program is coordinated by International Administrative VP Mike Mayes and Heather Laverty, TWU Legislative and Political Representative.

### How does one join?

Committee members are selected and sent to FLOC events by Local leadership.

# FAA Reauthorization With Big TWU Gains Becomes Law

President Joe Biden recently signed into law a bill that reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration for five years and includes major aviation policy – containing crucial victories for The Transport Workers Union.

Most notably, the bill includes language that subjects foreign aircraft repair stations to more stringent safety regulations, making it harder for airlines to offshore critical repair work abroad. All foreign aircraft repair stations would be subject to at least one unannounced safety inspection each year, along with minimum qualifications for mechanics and other workers abroad who work on aircraft registered in the United States.

“This reauthorization legislation raises standards at foreign repair shops, closes safety gaps and takes away the economic incentive for greedy airlines to offshore aircraft maintenance jobs,” TWU International President John Samuelsen said. “The TWU will keep fighting to ensure that critical safety personnel won’t see their livelihoods upended because bottom-line-obsessed corporate executives see workers and safety as impediments to maximizing profit.”

The TWU is also fighting separately for the FAA to require drug and alcohol testing at foreign aircraft repair stations. The FAA last year officially proposed a rule with a mandate, which is enormous progress.

“We want to make flying even safer, but we equally want to bring aircraft repair jobs back to America,” TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said. “By raising standards at foreign



*International Executive Vice President  
Alex Garcia.*

repair shops, we make it more expensive for U.S. airlines to use cheaper labor overseas. We start to level the playing field. We encourage airlines to expand operations here.”

In addition to the strong foreign repair station language, the FAA bill includes a directive to the FAA to develop a system for pilots, Flight Attendants and other airline workers to report fumes and smoke on planes. And the bill orders studies to better understand atmospheric radiation exposure on flight crews, and the health and safety impacts of unsafe cabin temperatures.

The bill also includes two other provisions that are designed to protect Flight Attendants. The Transportation Security Administration is directed to establish standards for basic security training, so Flight Attendants are

better equipped to handle unruly passengers. And the FAA is able to handle more civil penalties for unruly passengers who have inflicted violence or verbal abuse at Flight Attendants and other aircraft personnel instead of leaving it to district courts.

“I want to thank all of our members who talked with lawmakers and staff about the importance of passing this bill and ensuring that critical language protecting flight attendants and bolstering American mechanics is included,” Samuelsen said. “It was a long road, but ultimately a successful outcome for The TWU.”

After months of delays and debates on various issues for over a year, the bill was finally signed into law in May. The bill authorizes the FAA and provides billions of dollars for airport improvements and operations through September 30, 2028.

## New Minimum Crew Rule Finalized After Years

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced a final rule requiring at least two people operating every freight train – an essential safety measure that improves working conditions both on the tracks and in rail yards. The rule was announced after years of advocacy from unions, including The Transport Workers Union.

TWU Rail Division Representative Brian DeLucia and Political and Legislative Representative Heather Laverty joined Buttigieg and other freight rail unions at an event on April 2 to highlight the importance of the final rule that was first considered during the Obama administration.

“This final rule is essential for safety and is long overdue,” TWU International President John Samuelsen said. “The TWU looks forward to the swift implementation of a two-person crew requirement.”

TWU members include railroad Carmen who are responsible for

inspecting and repairing train cars. Carmen are dispatched when a train develops mechanical problems while in route – a job that is often performed by one Carman using a repair truck. In situations like these, the Conductor assists the Carman with inspections and necessary repairs. A two-person crew allows the Engineer to maintain the safety of the train, especially if the problem is related to a defective air brake system.

“The threat to safety of single-crewed trains is well documented. Disasters such as the 2013 train explosion in Quebec, Canada, which killed 47 people, are predictable consequences of under-crewed operations,” TWU Railroad Division Director John Feltz wrote in comments supporting the proposed rule submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration. “Canada now requires an operator to operate with two-person crews in their country; we should learn from their example and do the same.”



# Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles

## Q and A

**F**rom ticket agents who worked in the New York City Subway system in the 1930s to Aircraft Maintenance Technicians, 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 Anne Marie Drolet, a Bicycle Mechanic in California, and a Local 320 Shop Steward. Anne Marie has been a proud TWU member since 2021.

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

I'm a Bicycle Mechanic working for Bicycle Transit Systems. We are the operators of Metro Bike Share in Los Angeles.

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

We officially unionized in July of 2021 - so, almost three years!

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

I'm the Chief Shop Steward as well as the Western Regional Representative. I help with grievances in our shop and I talk about our contract with members in other West Coast shops. I organize events. I meet with management to discuss our needs and how they can be fulfilled. The work is really varied and there's a lot to do, so I stay busy.

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

The TWU has been a really positive force in my life. I've been able to accomplish a lot thanks to the support and backing of our union - winning a great contract, connecting with other unions, fighting to keep our contract and protect our workers. Being in a union has created so many opportunities and has really strengthened our workforce. We have collective power and that's what it's about. We've had some great wins and it's because of that collective power.

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

I'm a Bike Mechanic, and I work on a team of Bike Mechanics at



our central warehouse in Los Angeles. We build and maintain the Metro Bike fleet. The bikes have a lot of specialized parts that you don't see in your typical road or commuter bike, so it's a unique skill set that we acquire. I love being a part of this team - Mechanics and field staff are the backbone of the system.

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

I love bikes - riding bikes, working on bikes, using bikes as a tool for community-building. Bicycles and bike share can be such an incredible tool for mobility justice and increasing access and ease of movement in a huge and kind of disjointed city. They sit at the intersection of so many issues - our environment, climate change, social equity, access to the city, and of course, worker justice! I love being a part of that.

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

Sexism isn't always super apparent - it can be a really subtle thing, and it can be incredibly alienating. It has huge impacts. I've had my skill, my communication style, and my leadership questioned, and even my assertiveness can be construed as being overly aggressive or complaining. Power dynamics can be difficult to navigate working in a male-dominated field, especially if you work with people who haven't analyzed their own sexism. At the very least, it becomes an opportunity for them to learn from you and question their own beliefs.

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

Trust your abilities and your talents. Build solidarity with your co-workers. If you're in an atmosphere that doesn't support you, organizing is the greatest tool.

# Do You Want to Be a Crash Test Dummy?

*The Transport Workers Union has been the leader among transportation-sector unions on the issue of emerging technology that threatens worker employment and public safety. This opinion piece, or Op-Ed, by TWU International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, originally was published in The New York Daily News.*

BY CURTIS TATE

Being a crash test dummy is the role New Yorkers insanely will be thrust into under a plan to let Big Tech test autonomous vehicles on NYC streets, Mayor Adams announced last week. “The technology is coming whether we like it or not, so we’re going to make sure we get it right,” Adams said.

Well, we know where the technology has been: California, Arizona, and a few other states. Forget the tech-bro sales pitches. It’s been an unwanted disaster for many.

In San Francisco, autonomous vehicles have slowed police officers responding to crimes, blocked firefighters racing to fires, and impeded ambulances. There have been crashes, injuries, traffic jams, trash trucks trapped on streets, vehicle recalls, and even the death of a pet.

The situation got so bad for working people the city sued the state for the ability to limit the service. California even suspended one of two licenses it previously granted AV companies after they lied during an investigation.

In one case, a robotaxi struck an already injured pedestrian. It stopped, but then drove again, dragging the woman 20 feet down the road.

The technology is incapable today of being safely intermingled into a living, breathing, constantly changing and unpredictable urban environment. If AVs can’t handle San Francisco, they will fare far worse here. New York is America’s most densely populated big city. There’s a dizzying amount of activity from an unmatched number of pedestrians, bicyclists, pedicabs, and motorists.

Pedestrians cross streets in Manhattan like nowhere else in the country. They do whatever they want, whenever they want. These vehicles are not prepared to deal with that kind of pedestrian interaction.

Companies like Waymo claim a stellar safety record. But Waymo logged the vast majority of its 7 million miles in Phoenix. There’s no comparison to NYC. The population and density are not the same. The streets in Phoenix are on a wide, flat grid. Just 4.2 inches of rain fell there last year. It’s the equivalent of tee-ball.

NYC’s plan will require self-driving cars to have an on-board monitor. The hope is the monitor will quickly take control if necessary. But that’s just a hope. A self-driving car with a so-called safety driver killed a pedestrian in Arizona. The presence of a backup driver is a cold comfort to someone who is injured, or loses a loved one, because an autonomous vehicle went on the fritz.

Greedy companies like Waymo and Cruise have one goal: reaping enormous profits. They drool in anticipation of the day when they can operate taxis and trucks without humans siphoning off revenues. Humans who need jobs to feed their families, pay the rent, and survive. They don’t care that hundreds of thousands will lose their jobs in just those two industries alone, or that we could



*Tate at a rally against autonomous shuttles in Columbus, Ohio, with Local 208 Bus Operators wearing shirts featuring slogans like, “An empty seat can’t spot a lost child” and “An empty seat can’t help grandma get on board.”*

very well wind up with more cars on the streets, not less.

The issues related to AVs are too critical to allow individual cities and states to set their own rules without greater federal involvement. Before we allow driverless cars to hit our streets, we need federal assurances that the technology has advanced far enough to ensure the public’s safety.

We need enforceable standards that hold the manufacturers liable for the damage they cause. And we need clear limits on what kinds of vehicles can be fully autonomous. Driverless vehicles, for example, should not be used for public mass transportation.

Technology can be a tool to help bus operators avoid accidents, but it can never adequately replace them. In cities and towns across the U.S., they do much more than drive. They assist the elderly and wheelchair-users get on board. They spot lost children wandering the streets alone, call first-responders about crimes in progress, assist women going into labor, help disorientated elderly passengers, and more.

Bus operators rely on common sense and street smarts when confronted with unexpected events and emergencies, ranging from flash floods to terrorism. Bus operators memorably went off route and navigated around debris to safely evacuate people fleeing downtown Manhattan on 9/11.

A bus with an empty driver’s seat can’t do any of that.

In addition to setting automation limits, we need a greater realization of catastrophic job losses that are around the bend. We need real transparency in data collection so the public can call out corporate spin when crashes happen.

In the meantime, New Yorkers going about their lives — walking to the park or subway, driving to the store or church, bicycling to work — shouldn’t be forced to be subjects of a technology experiment designed to make rich profiteers even richer.

Tate is the international administrative vice president of the Transport Workers Union.

Note: Link to article: <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/04/03/do-you-want-to-be-a-crash-test-dummy/>



# A Union Man Through and Through

*Rail Division Director John Feltz Marks 50 years with the TWU*

There's never been a doubt which side John Feltz is on.

The TWU's Rail Division Director – a fourth generation railroad worker – joined the union 50 years ago after being hired as a Carman in New Jersey in 1974. He soon became a Shop Steward, representing workers and challenging bosses, in Penn Central rail yards and repair shops located in the gritty blue-collar towns of Kearny, South Kearny, and North Bergen that border the NJ Meadowlands.

Rising through the union ranks, Feltz was elected TWU Local 2001 President in 2008 and was named Rail Division Director in 2017. There were many other stops, and battles, along the way, including stints as Local 2001 Recording Secretary and International Staff Representative.

TWU International President John Samuelsen described Feltz as an extremely knowledgeable, tough, and respected union leader.

“Telling John to do something is like telling the Marines to take a hill,” Samuelsen said. “He’s going to take that hill. Whatever it is, John gets the job done.”

Over the last seven years, Feltz, 74, has more firmly and extensively integrated the Rail Division with the International's other industrial divisions, making it both stronger and more effective, Samuelsen said. He also has embraced and led the effort to change the division's culture, from top to bottom, to be more aggressive, Samuelsen said.

“The TWU Railroad Division is the envy of railroad unions across the country,” Samuelsen said. “From city to city, contract fight to contract fight, the Railroad Division is respected in an unprecedented way. John has been the catalyst for that coming to fruition.”

One big success that took place solely because of Feltz's persistence and passion for uplifting working men and women was the establishment of an apprenticeship program enabling Amtrak Coach



*Rail Division Director John Feltz (center) with TWU members. Scan QR Code, left for classic union song, “Which Side Are You On.”*

Cleaners to become Carmen inspecting and repairing trains at a higher pay rate. Feltz badgered and lobbied every mechanical boss on the issue for more than two decades. One Amtrak chief mechanical officer told Feltz to “stop beating a dead horse.” Amtrak wasn't interested in such a program, the boss said. Feltz replied, “I'll keep beating that horse until it comes back alive,” Feltz said.

Amtrak began an apprentice program two years ago in Beach Grove, Indiana. It was recently expanded to a second mechanical facility in Wilmington, Delaware.

While Feltz has been a TWU member for 50 years (the exact anniversary date was June 1), his family's ties to the railroad industry extend much farther back in history. His great-grandfather, who emigrated from Italy, found work at a railroad in West Virginia. His grandfather, lovingly called “Poppa John,” was an engine house foreman who repaired locomotives. His father, Phil, was a Penn Central Carman and Crew Chief in New Jersey, and John's three uncles worked for the company in various titles.

After working for a bank in Jersey City, NJ, Feltz took the Penn Central job in 1974 because he was about to marry his wife, Judy, and start a family. The railroad was a better route forward financially, he concluded. He raised so many issues and concerns at work his union Chair finally handed, or tossed, a copy of the contract at him in 1976 – and declared Feltz the new Shop Steward.

Getting suspended or fired workers back on the payroll so they could provide for their families has been a consistent motivator and source of satisfaction for the union veteran.

“He just staunchly believes in what he does,” Judy Feltz said. “He loves the fight and loves winning the fight. He loves to improve the health, well-being, and financial security for those he works for (the members).”



# Members and Officers Gather in at the Ca

**T**he Transport Workers Union took Washington, D.C., by storm with 130 members and officers from around the country descending on the Capitol to advocate for the union's top legislative goals.

During a day-long blitz on Tuesday, May 14, The TWU contingent - Bus Operators, Car Inspectors, Flight Attendants, Mechanics, and workers in many other job titles - lobbied Congress members and their staff. Their mission was focused on securing support for bills drafted to provide transit agencies with federal operating funds; impose new freight safety regulations on railroads; curb the outsourcing of aircraft maintenance jobs overseas, and better protect Flight Attendants from unruly and abusive passengers.

"We are pushing legislation that will improve the lives of TWU members in every division - and we're going to win," TWU International President John Samuelson said to the group, which was assembled in a D.C. Hilton ballroom before it headed to the Hill. "Some victories are years in the making, but our footprint here is enormous compared to what it was in the past. Ultimately, we will win."

The all-out lobbying effort was a major highlight of the TWU's Legislative and COPE Conference, which was organized by Government Affairs Director Zack Tatz and Committee On Political Education Director Andrew Rangolin, and ran from May 12-15. The conference also included training and educational sessions on communicating effectively, political campaigning, union organizing, and automation in the workplace.

One of the three bills promoted by The TWU, the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act, actually did pass the House during the conference (see Government Affairs update for more details).

International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola said these face-to-face meetings with Congress members and/or their staffers is good political strategy.



*Building bipartisan support for The TWU agenda. TWU's top five officers with Rep. Don Bacon (R-Nebraska), left to right: International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, Executive VP Alex Garcia, Administrative VP Mike Mayes, President John Samuelson, Rep. Bacon, and Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola.*





# Capitol to fight for Out Top Legislative Goals

“Nobody is a better advocate than a rank-and-file member or officer talking about the issues that they live with every day. Issues like on-the-job safety, job security, pay and benefits,” Lafragola said.

“It’s one thing when leadership or the legislative political department goes and makes a push for legislation. It’s more impactful when a transit worker constituent shows up and says, “You’re my member of Congress and it’s really important that you look at this issue and understand why it’s important to me and my co-workers.”

TWU members spent the lobbying day in wall-to-wall meetings. Lawmakers and their staffs were receptive to the asks made while also being impressed with the on-the-ground game of the union, TWU members said.

“As a Flight Attendant, it was great knowing how much enthusiasm there was for the FAA bill,” said Janell Torres, Oakland Domicile Executive Board Member for Local 556. “Every



*Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) at the podium. Brown is “THE pro-worker U.S. Senator,” TWU International President John Samuelsen said. “He is a great friend to America’s working men and women.”*

staffer we spoke to was very encouraging on the FAA bill.”

Oscar Gonzalez, Executive Vice President of Local 504, was attending his first Legislative & COPE Conference. His experience with members of Congress and their office was very positive, he said.

“We’ve been getting a lot of good answers,” Gonzalez said.

Brendan Moriarty, LAX Executive Board Member for Local 579, said it was encouraging to see the FAA bill pass Congress while COPE members were in Washington because it was evidence of how the years-long process of advocating for legislation can pay off.

“This is something we’ve been fighting for years,” Moriarty said. “Knowing how important air transportation safety is, having those same standards is common sense and the passenger assault and air cabin safety language is something the TWU has been seeking for years.”





## Big Victories In The Air Division

*Contract Gains Benefiting One-Third Of The Membership*

**T**he TWU has raised the bar for the entire aviation industry, securing industry-leading contracts with double-digit raises for approximately 50,000 Flight Attendants, Fleet Service Agents, Operations Agents, and Dispatchers.

These sweeping victories benefit approximately 30% of all members in The Transport Workers Union of America. And they come as other airline unions remain stalled at the negotiating table.

The most recent contract win was with TWU Local 556, representing more than 21,000 Flight Attendants at Southwest Airlines. The collective bargaining agreement, ratified overwhelmingly on April 24, makes Southwest FAs the highest paid in the industry. Southwest committed to paying an immediate 22%

raise and will increase workgroup wages 34% by 2027.

Voter participation was sky high: 93% of eligible members cast ballots, and 81% voted in favor of the pact.

Flight Attendants in TWU Local 577 also secured an industry-leading contract for low-cost carriers by ratifying a new collective bargaining agreement with Allegiant Airlines in April. This five-year contract delivers workers an immediate 25% raise on average, and boosts wages 41% on average by 2028.

Voter participation was nearly universal: 97% of eligible members cast ballots, 90% in favor.

“The new TWU contracts have so many significant improvements their impact will resonate across the industry as carriers like United,



Alaska, and American bargain with their Flight Attendants, who have been in contract negotiations with the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) and the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) for several years,” TWU International President John Samuelsen said. “This is a significant victory for Flight Attendants industrywide. The TWU has once again proven that we are an incredibly effective voice for Flight Attendants.”

Flight Attendants at JetBlue represented by Local 579 also saw a pay raise last fall, thanks to a mid-contract boost that TWU pushed for while the airline pursued a possible merger. JetBlue Flight Attendants will now see their pay rise 21.5% by January 2025.

“These deals provide significant raises and critical quality-of-life improvements for TWU’s Southwest, Allegiant and JetBlue

## AIR UPDATES

Flight Attendants who worked through historic operational meltdowns and a global pandemic,” TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said. “This is the least they deserve after years of hard work and negotiations.”

But the victories weren’t solely confined to flight attendants.

Close to 20,000 TWU-represented Ramp, Operations, Provisioning and Freight Agents at Southwest Airlines in Local 555 resoundingly voted in a contract that includes raises ranging from 14% to 46%. The Local 555 contract had 78% support. Garcia said the new deal “provides best in-the industry wages, bonus payments and other significant economic gains. It’s an excellent well-deserved agreement.”

Finally, TWU-represented Dispatchers at Air Wisconsin unanimously voted in a new contract that secured a 22% pay hike after years of hard-fought negotiations – and the real prospect of the first airline work group strike under the Railway Labor Act since 2010. Days before the National Mediation Board was expected to weigh in on Air Wisconsin’s failure to bargaining in good faith, the company stepped forward with a contract with overtime pay and better benefits.

“When workers stand together and refuse to settle for the scraps the bosses are offering, and fight for real economic gains, victory is achievable,” Samuelsen said.

While all of the contracts provide real economic gains for members, the deals also include crucial quality-of-life measures that will provide a measuring stick for the rest of the industry. The Southwest contract notably secured the first-ever paid maternal and paternal leave benefits at a major carrier, which will include healthcare coverage.

The Southwest deal also features additional compensation for time spent on the ground while on duty, higher pay for irregular



operations and the end a 24-hour on call system to give Flight Attendants more rest. Allegiant’s contract includes greater “duty rig,” which will increase the amount of time Flight Attendants are paid for being on duty. The contract also includes an improved 401k match and other health-insurance improvements.

Allegiant Flight Attendants receive paid parental leave, the first such benefit at a low-cost carrier.

“The improvements made in our contracts set some new benchmarks for other Flight Attendant workgroups to attain, and not just at the low-cost carriers, but the majors too,” TWU Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes said. “The TWU remains committed to negotiating contracts that improve the lives of Flight Attendants in our union and have positive ramifications across the entire industry.”

Samuelsen said the recent wins make it clear that the TWU is the “fighting voice” for aviation workers.

“When we win, aviation workers across the industry will benefit,” Samuelsen said.



# TWU Triumphs in Boston

*New Contract for Commuter Rail Workers*

The TWU scored a truly unprecedented “David and Goliath” victory over an international transportation conglomerate, securing a contract that raises wages for most of our MBTA commuter rail workers in Boston by 23%, provides paid sick time for the first time ever, and includes a \$2,000 signing bonus.

Coach Cleaners, who were earning very low starting wages, are really cleaning up. Their starting pay rate immediately moves from \$19.65 an hour to more than \$32 an hour – and will increase by more than 66% over the life of the 5-year contract. The long-standing, five-year progression to reach the top Cleaners’ rate will be now scrapped.

Transport Workers Union Local 2054 represents Coach Cleaners and Car Inspectors employed by French-owned Keolis. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority hired Keolis years ago to operate commuter rail service between Boston, the city’s suburbs, and part of Rhode Island. Keolis is owned by



the Paris-based National Company of The French Railways, which earned \$45.5 billion in revenues last year. That puts it on par with corporate giant Coca-Cola.

“This is really a David and Goliath victory,” TWU International President John Samuelsen said. “This corporation is huge. It has operations and holdings around the world. When they refused to bargain in good faith, we launched a strategic campaign against them, relentlessly pummeling them with a wide array of tactics. We fought back and we prevailed.”

The Local-International campaign included sending a barrage of digital messages to Massachusetts State Legislature members revealing how the company grossly underpaid workers here – and then sent profits back to France to subsidize transit operations over there. TWU repeatedly blasted Keolis as carpetbaggers driven by greed.

The TWU also lobbied elected officials in the State House, leafletted commuter railroad riders, and flooded Keolis’ Paris headquarters with negative digital ads. The ads berated executives for Keolis’ miserable treatment of U.S. workers. Local 2054 also took a strike authorization vote.

“It was an incredible campaign that resulted in a historic contract,” Local 2054 President Ed Flaherty said. “This contract will have a ripple effect across the industry.”

The collective bargaining agreement is retroactive to July 2023. The annual raises are 5%, 4%, 4.5%, 4.5% and 5%. Workers will receive retro pay: \$3,000 on average for Cleaners and \$7,500 for Car Inspectors.



# High Speed Rail Project Gets Moving



CREDIT: BRIGHTLINE WEST

Ground was broken in Nevada in April on the Brightline West rail project, which will provide high-speed train service between Las Vegas and Los Angeles – and opportunities for The TWU.

The Transport Workers Union will look to organize workers that will be hired in connection with the new rail line, which company and federal officials hope will be running for the 2028 Olympics in LA. Last year, Brightline West committed to using skilled union labor to build and maintain the railway by signing a memorandum of understanding with the The TWU and other rail unions.

“This critical infrastructure project will transform the way people travel and provide thousands of good-paying jobs,” TWU



International President John Samuelsen said. “Investments in big infrastructure projects like Brightline West provide more than just a way to get from one place to another, they provide jobs with a pathway to economic security for hardworking Americans.”

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which was signed by President Biden in November 2021, was a major catalyst in getting

Brightline West from the drawing board to groundbreaking, Samuelsen said. The Biden administration has awarded Brightline a \$3 billion grant from infrastructure funds and announced plans to issue \$2.5 billion in tax-exempt bonds for the project.

Brightline officials say they will operate trains exceeding 186 mph, describing it as the first true high-speed rail service in the U.S. Amtrak’s Acela trains hit 150 mph along the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston.

“Brightline West will be a major boon to commuters and tourists in Southern California and Las Vegas – along with the creation of highly skilled railroad jobs,” TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz said.

## Freight Rail Reforms Needed

The TWU participated in Railroad Safety Day at the U.S. Capitol where a contingent lobbied members of Congress about legislation needed to better protect workers and communities.

Specifically, The TWU is strongly advocating for the Railway Safety Act, which would phase in safer tank cars, increase fines against railroads for safety violations, require defect detectors and expand the list of hazardous materials that qualify for strict safety precautions.



TWU Rail Division Director John Feltz (far right), TWU Intern Shannon Jones, Local 514, and Intern/Local 171 President Delisa Brown meet with Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-12 NJ)

# NOT ON OUR WATCH! TWU Security Officers Take Out “Bully” Supervisor

An abusive, anti-union supervisor was indefinitely suspended from her Barnard College post in New York City after TWU Local 264 waged a campaign to get her removed.

Aided by The International, the Local leafleted students and secured media coverage in the Barnard College and Columbia University newspapers earlier this year. Students responded by starting a supportive petition while union officials also raised complaints against the supervisor to the highest level of Barnard’s administration.

The supervisor, Rosemarie Ronde, an associate director of security overseeing Local 264 Security Officers, couldn’t take the heat. She aggressively confronted an elected Local official in public - and then reportedly lied about it. Barnard suspended Ronde in March and did not give a return date.

“This was a tremendous victory for the Local and showed how fearless and relentless we are when the time calls for action,” Local 264 President Joseph Rose said. “Having the support of our fearless International President John Samuelson, and having International officers on the frontline with us, demonstrated to our members and to our employer that we have support outside of the Local. We have allies who are willing stand in solidarity with us and go to war with us.”

Ronde repeatedly violated the Local’s contract, Rose said. She blocked officers seeking to swap shifts, for example, and denied payment to officers doing grievance on release time, Rose said. Then, in November, Ronde authorized and encouraged two security officers to have female Muslim students remove hijabs worn over their hair at campus entry gates, Local leaders said.

Her near-directive and related comments “demonstrate either a startling insensitivity to Islamic religious beliefs and traditions, complete ignorance, or an indefensible bias against followers of the Islamic faith,” Samuelson and Rose wrote to Barnard College President



*The TWU campaign against a Barnard College supervisor included the distribution of flyers to students and the public seeking their support. Photo, left to right: International Representative Christina Scott, Local 264 Secretary-Treasurer Alex Ramirez, Executive Vice President Juan Ramos, President Joseph Rose, and Food Services Division Chair Elaine Wright.*

Laura Rosenbury. In addition, having security officers ask students to remove religious garments like hijabs could inflame passions in an already volatile on-campus environment due to differing opinions about the War in Gaza,” Samuelson and Rose wrote.

“That undoubtedly would put our members’ safety in jeopardy,” they wrote.

TWU International Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza spearheaded the International’s deployment of staff and other resources to the campaign.

“You don’t have to accept a bully boss,” he said.

## TWU Defends Workers’ Right to a Safe Workplace After Abuse at Columbia University

A handful of TWU members were caught up in the pro-Palestine demonstrations roiling Columbia University in NYC, including two Custodians held against their will when protesters stormed a building on April 30.

The Custodians fought their way out of Hamilton Hall after a protester said they couldn’t leave because the “moment” was bigger than them. A Security Officer escaped before protesters erected barricades, but she was verbally attacked in an aggressive and threatening manner.

TWU International President John Samuelson blasted the mistreatment and said the International was exploring

the possibility of legal action against the university and building occupiers.

The university “was aware that outside agitators were operating on campus and posed an increased risk to university employees, yet the university continued to assign their work routines as if it was ‘business as usual,’” Samuelson said in a letter to Columbia University President Minouche Shafik. “Your negligence as an employer is largely responsible for the dangerous situation and debacle which unfolded for TWU workers in your employ.”

Police cleared the building and arrested those inside.



## TWU VICTORY:

# LA Metro Board Cancels Proposed Takeover of Bikeshare Program, Keeping Local 320's Industry-Leading Contract Intact

The Transport Workers Union successfully fought a proposed takeover of LA Metro's Bike Share – keeping good jobs in place that provide economic certainty.

The LA Metro Board in March notified TWU it intends to cancel a request for proposals that would have potentially nullified an industry-leading contract for bikeshare workers that was agreed to a year ago. The move means that the TWU's three-month fightback campaign was successful, and TWU members at Local 320 will continue to benefit from a contract that includes the highest pay in the bikeshare industry, health and retirement benefits, paid sick days, paid family leave, immigration status leave, paid time off and other improvements.

"This successful political organizing fightback campaign is a big victory for LA bikeshare workers," TWU International President John Samuelson said. "I want to thank Local 320 members for their efforts in fighting back against a proposal that would have gutted

essential benefits and forced workers to reapply for their jobs. I also want to thank the LA Metro Board, led by Mayor Karen Bass, for making the right call and supporting workers."

The decision from the LA Metro Board means that hard-working bikeshare mechanics, rebalancers, electronic technicians, asset recovery and stock clerks will continue to reap the benefits of their contract through December 2025. The current contract was negotiated with Bicycle Transit Systems but faced a threat when Lyft underbid BTS for the contract. Lyft only promised to maintain current wage rates, not other key benefits.

Local 320 members and allies in Los Angeles were a constant presence at LA Metro Board meetings to make their voices heard – and underscore the importance of backing good jobs maintaining a crucial, environmentally friendly mode of transportation as the city ramps up investments in bike infrastructure ahead of the 2028 Olympics.

## LOCAL 271

The TWU conducted a dues-payment drive after Corpus Christi Regional Transit refused to process dues checkoffs for Local 271. International Rep. Jose Cruz (far left) and Assistant Organizing Director Sean Doyle (far right) pose with new dues paying members.





# Veterans Take The Spartan Pledge

**W**ith a sword forged from steel salvaged from the collapsed World Trade Center, The TWU Veterans Committee confronted the plague of suicides among current and former members of the military at the group's quarterly meeting held in Florida in March.

About 40 union members who served in the Armed Forces gathered around the "Spartan Sword" and recited the "Spartan Pledge." They promised to seek help before attempting to harm themselves and vowed to assist others wrestling with extreme mental anguish.

"It was very serious, somber, and for some, a very emotional moment," Veterans Committee Chair Brian Galarza, a member of Local 501, said.

The Spartan Pledge was written by Iraqi War Veteran Boone Cutler. It is short but weighty: "I will not take my own life by my own hand until I talk to my battle buddy first. My mission is to find a mission to help my warfighter family."



*International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia and International Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes joined the veterans in Florida. Photo, left to right, are: International Air Division Chair Andre Sutton, Air Division Chief of Staff John O'Donnell, Air Division International Representative Jose Galarza, Mayes, Garcia, and Veterans Committee Chair Brian Galarza.*



# COMMITTEE UPDATES



The sword was created in 2016 from steel collected from the wreckage of the World Trade Center's North Tower (1 WTC) and the South Tower (2 WTC). Both were reduced to rubble on Sept. 11, 2001, after being struck by commercial planes hijacked by terrorists. The sword is a replica of the weapons carried by the legendary Spartan warriors in ancient Greece.

The nonprofit Spartan Sword organization arranges for the revered weapon, and an axe created in 2020, to be featured in ceremonies around the country. Approximately 5,000 veterans have taken the pledge, according to the organization.

"The main message is help is available," Galarza said.

Nearly 6,400 veterans died by suicide in 2021, according to Department of Veterans Affairs statistics. Vets are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than non-veteran adults.

"Reasons for these sobering numbers may include high exposure

to trauma, stress and burnout, isolation and loneliness, easy access to and familiarity with guns, and difficulties reintegrating into civilian life," according to an American Psychological Association report.

There also were plenty of light-hearted events and moments, of course, at the committee's three-day gathering, which was hosted by Local 525. There was a 5k run, a barbecue, and live music in Merritt Island Veterans Memorial Park. Members had the option of participating in a motorcycle ride to the park, and the committee collected stuffed animals for needy children in Brevard County.

"The Veteran's Committee is a great group," TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said. "It's an invaluable resource for our veterans and does a lot of good work in our communities, partnering with local charitable organizations. We're a better and stronger union because of it."



# Working Women's Committee Takes Atlanta

As McFadden and Whitehead's "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" played through the speakers, 70 members of The TWU's Working Women's Committee got down to work on their mood boards to creatively outline their professional and personal goals, and their aspirations, for the coming year – a fitting cap to three days of productive speeches and activities at the committee meeting in Atlanta held in early March.

For three days, about 70 TWU members from across the transit, rail and air divisions heard from motivational speakers, learned more about leadership and the challenges that women can face in a professional environment, and gathered for good company.

"The Working Women's Committee has changed tremendously. We have 70 women here today," said Cassandra Gilbert, the new Chair of the Working Women's Committee. "At my first meeting years ago, there were 15 women."

Gilbert said the meeting was about lifting women up and showing how unity is strength. Despite a week of mostly rain that kept attendees inside, Working Women's Committee members gathered together in the evening for a game night to further build camaraderie.

Jessica Hayes, the Secretary-Treasurer of TWU Local 555, said that the Working Women's Committee shows other women "You can do it," especially in fields that are traditionally dominated by men.

"You can do it. Of course, you have to work a little harder, but you can definitely do it," Hayes said.

Group members listened to speeches from motivational speakers Tami Gamble and Tiffany Rashel, and Local 555 President Randy Barnes. They created mood boards to visualize personal and professional goals and aspirations. The final collection of boards created a colorful montage in the beige conference room and was adorned with photos of women leaders like Michelle Obama and Simone Biles.

"It was a very powerful moment to be with my sisters," Local 101 President Constance Bradley said. "The speakers brought out a lot from all of us as women. [Rashel] brought out emotions that people didn't even know they had, things that happened in their life or the person that was in front of them. That connection allowed us to love each other, respect each other, to be more aware of one another. Emotionally, it brought something new to what we used to do when we come to the Women's Committee."



*The TWU Working Women's Committee created mood boards to outline personal and professional goals for the coming year.*



# Cassandra Gilbert Named Chair of TWU Working Women's Committee

**T**WU International Representative Cassandra Gilbert was named the new Chair of the Working Women's Committee, assuming her new role during the Committee's recent meeting in Atlanta. She sat down with The Express for a question-and-answer session.

## **Q. Tell us about your background and how you worked your way through TWU?**

**A.** I started at Miami-Dade Transit in 2000 as a Paratransit Operator. We were doing the same work as Bus Operators but getting paid less. So, I got involved with the union fighting for more money for paratransit. I went to the union office. The president told me to start a petition and get 150 names. I think I got 180 names. That's how I got involved with the union.

I was always helping people, no matter what. I ran for office as a Secretary-Treasurer in 2012. I won that election. Alex Garcia saw my passion. Curtis Tate saw my passion, and John Samuelson as well. They brought me up to the International in 2021, and I got appointed as the Chair of the Working Women's Committee in 2024.



*Cassandra Gilbert, far right, with other members of the International Working Women's Committee in Atlanta in March.*

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**You really have to believe in yourself. You have to believe you can change the way some people think. You want to be a voice in the room, making decisions. At the same time, don't give up, don't quit.**

---

## **Q. What is the importance of the Working Women's Committee?**

**A.** If the International needs help for organizing, needs help for organizing a picket, John calls on the Working Women's Committee, depending on what he needs. If he needs people in New Jersey or Miami to do this or do that, we play a role with the International.

I do know the Working Women's Committee has changed tremendously since my first meeting in 2001 or 2002. It didn't look like this. There wasn't a lot of women. We have 70 people here today. There were 15 at my first meeting 20 years ago.

## **Q. What goals does the Working Women's Committee have?**

**A.** That's a good one. For me, building unity. Strength. Believing in one another and just being a pillar for my sisters. Another goal is to allow other unions and other people to see us. If we have the strength and unity that I want us to have in building each other up, I think we can show different communities there's a sisterhood that can't be broken, like a fraternity. Go out and do community service, help others, and do what we need to do as a unified group.

## **Q. What would you say to a young person who has joined the union in the last few years?**

**A.** Don't stop. Don't quit. Don't give up. You really have to believe in yourself. You have to believe you can change the way some people think. You want to be a voice in the room, making decisions. At the same time, don't give up, don't quit. If I would have given up after losing my first election, I wouldn't be where I am today.

## **Q. What do you want to accomplish as Chair of the Working Women's Committee?**

**A.** If we have 20 locals that aren't active in the Working Women's Committee, I want all of them to be part of it at some point. That's my main goal. The ones who don't have a local committee, I don't mind going to their city, their state, to help them form a Working Women's Committee. That's my main goal, to make sure we're all a part of Working Women's Committee.

# TWU Officers Sworn In

*Congratulations to our new officers and returning officers who were sworn in earlier this year.*



## LOCAL 512 - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

**American Airlines, Facilities Maintenance, Ground Service Equipment, Cargo, and Freight Agents.**

TWU Local 512 President Juan Elvira (center) and other Local 512 officers were sworn in on March 10 in Washington, D.C., by TWU International President John Samuelsen, who was joined by International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate (far right) and International Administrative VP Mike Mayes (second from right).

## LOCAL 555 - DALLAS, TEXAS

**Southwest Ramp, Operations, Provisioning and Freight Agents**

Newly elected President Abilio Villaverde (front row, fourth from right) was sworn in on April 18 with other Local 555 officers by International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia, who was joined by International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, Administrative Vice President Mike Mayes, Administrative VP Curtis Tate, and Chief of Staff Gary Peterson.



## LOCAL 557 - DALLAS, TEXAS

**Southwest Flight Crew Training Instructors**

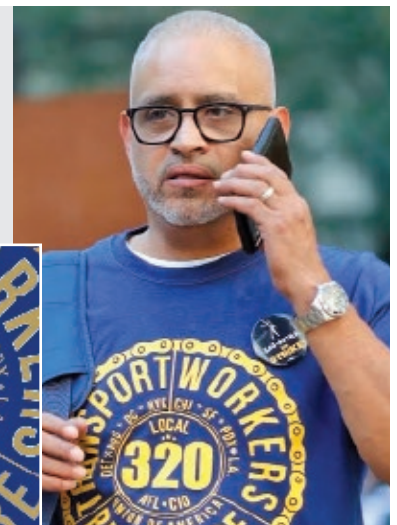
International Air Division Representative Jose Galarza swore in new Local 557 President J.C. Findley (right) and Secretary-Treasurer Jay Tarter on March 29.



## LOCAL 320 - SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

**BikeShare Mechanics, Rebalancers, Battery Swappers**

Newly elected President Ed Aviles (far right) and Executive Vice President Anthony Farrar (left), and returning Recording-Secretary Stan Jones (right), took their oaths remotely on April 4 via Zoom with other officers. International Representative Cassandra Gilbert officiated.





## Local 525 Swearing In

TWU International Executive VP Alex Garcia swore in Local 525 President Kevin Smith and E-Board members Mathew Bradford, Jackie Stephenson, Dennis McDonough and Tammy Wilson. Not pictured, E-Board Member Michael Orrison.



## TWU has a Hall of Famer in Texas

Tom Carlin, longtime Legislative Representative for TWU Local 513, was inducted earlier this year into the Texas AFL-CIO Hall of Fame.

Carlin, who was Legislative Rep for 30 years, was nominated for the honor by John Gardner, Local 513's current Legislative Committee Chairman. Submitting the nomination, Gardner wrote that Carlin was uniquely dedicated to making life better for workers across Texas and the United States.

"He walked many picket lines, and through the halls of the Texas and United States Capitols, advocating for the rights of workers," Gardner wrote. "He worked

on the TWU COPE Committee, screening candidates who were running for office and asking for Labor's endorsement. He made sure that they were willing to fight for the rights of workers.

"Tom and I hammered campaign signs, block walked and phone banked for countless labor endorsed candidates over many years. It has been my great honor to work with Tom and I believe that his decades of tireless work for workers and their families is deserving of the honor of becoming a member of the Texas AFL-CIO's Hall of Fame. I hope that you will also agree that Tom Carlin is deserving of this honor."



Retired TWU 513 member Tom Carlin



## Nevada Labor Training Grads

Nevada State Conference Co-Chair Maria Teresa Hank of Local 556 (second from right, seated), and Chair Klarissa Principe from Local 577 (second from right, standing), graduated AFL-CIO training on how to run for public office.

## California State Conference



*Pictured left to right, James Holden-Counts (Local 556), Jonathan Black (Local 556), Chris Avila (Local 555), Janell Torres (Local 556), Brendan Moriority (Local 579), and Philip Jugnet (Local 591).*

### TWU California State Conference Lobby Day

Members of The TWU California State Conference held their annual lobby day in Sacramento, Ca. on March 18 and 19. The lobby day was part of the California Labor Federation's legislative conference, bringing California unions together to advance labor's comprehensive legislative goals. The two-day event involved workshops and training on best practices for our members to develop their skills in legislative advocacy, while providing an opportunity for members to network and learn the issues other unions are advancing.

### Legislation Addressing Autonomous Vehicle (AV) Technology

The TWU State Conference continues to support legislation in California that aims to address the threats posed by autonomous vehicle technology. At the lobby day, State Conference members spoke to numerous legislative offices on two bills supported by TWU: a bill requiring local government approval of AV deployment (SB 915) and a bill requiring a human operator on all vehicles weighting over 10,000 pounds (AB 2286). Both bills help to add much needed guardrails on unproven and dangerous AV technology that presents a major threat to our jobs and our communities.

### Ways to Get Involved and Join the Efforts

If you are interested in getting involved in legislative issues that impact your workplace, talk to your local president about attending an upcoming State Conference meeting. Be on the lookout for Action Alert! emails asking for members to act on important TWU issues impact our members and places of work. As always, consider giving to TWU COPE and help elect candidates that support TWU issues, TWU members, and working families.

### Advocacy Addressing "To Go" Alcohol in California Airports

TWU members also spoke to legislative offices opposing a bill that would expand alcohol consumption areas in California airports. AB 2615 would allow passengers to consume alcoholic beverages outside of airport bars and restaurants, in airport gate and boarding areas. The TWU opposed this bill due to the risks posed by increased alcohol consumption and the rise in unruly passenger behavior, aviation worker assaults, harassment, and intimidation. Weeks later, AB 2615 was removed from consideration in the Assembly, a victory for TWU efforts to protect airline workers from unruly passengers.



*Left to right, Matt Hettich (TWU International.), James Holden-Counts (Local 556), Assembly Member Liz Ortega (Chair, Assembly Labor Committee), Janell Torres (Local.556), and Jonathan Black (Local 556).*

## AROUND THE UNION



International President John Samuelson and Local 501 President Victor Gonzalez (center) at a Local 501 Fleet Services Shop Steward meeting.



International Transit, Universities, Utilities, and Services Division Representatives Christina Scott and Jose Cruz attended a FTA conference on drug and alcohol policies in Atlanta, Georgia.



The TWU attended the Texas AFL-CIO Women's Summit 2024



The TWU Local 291 Working Women's Committee participated in a beach/park cleanup in Miami-Dade.

TWU Local 555's Tim Rice, Hawaii State Conference Representative, attended a Unite Here rally May 1 in Honolulu in support of hotel workers negotiating new contracts this year.



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UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO**  
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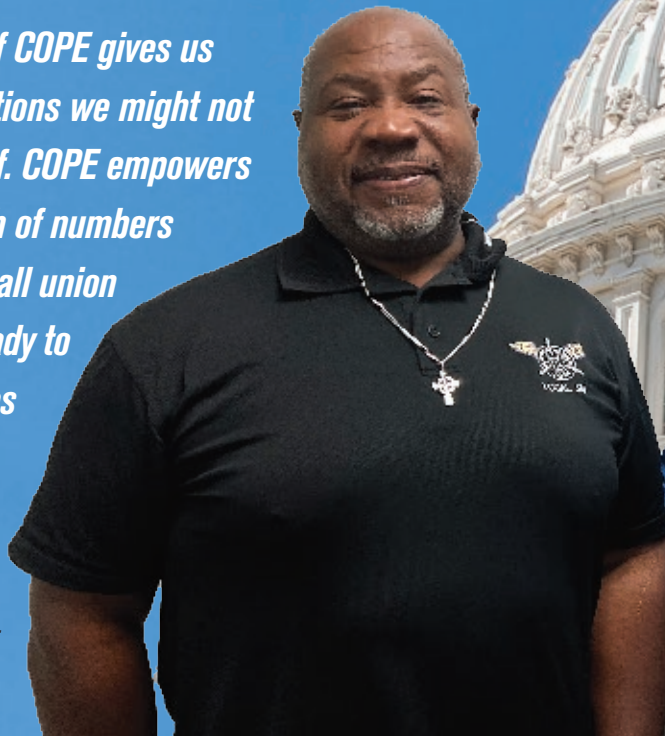


## The TWU Committee on Political Education

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