

CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



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HUNDREDS OF SCHOOL BUS WORKERS RATIFY TEAMSTER CONTRACT

After Three Years, 270 Workers Win Fight For Better Benefits, Wages

After enduring anti-union tactics and workers' rights violations for nearly three years, school bus drivers, mechanics and aides with Durham School Services in Elgin have succeeded in ratifying their first Teamster contract.

Voting by a near two-to-one margin to approve the contract with Teamsters Local 330, the workers' prolonged efforts have brought 270 total employees under the protection of the Teamsters Union. With this victory, workers are guaranteed a bevy of improved benefits for the next three years, including higher wage increases, stronger health and life insurance and seniority rights.

"I am incredibly proud of all the employees of Durham School Services," said Dominic Romanazzi, Local 330 President. "This was the longest battle I've ever experienced as a unionist, but these workers were united to gain a Teamster contract. As their commitments pay off, our new members will begin to see improvements to wages and working conditions across the board."

The Durham workers were tireless in their efforts to become Teamster members, persisting against intense efforts by the company to obstruct their freedom of association. The workers' rights were repeatedly violated through captive audience meetings and the distribution of anti-union materials by Durham, the North American subsidiary of National Express Group, a transportation company based in the United Kingdom.

According to Romanazzi, due in great part to the company's delay tactics, it took nearly two years for the workers to get to an election for representation. After voting to join the Teamsters, a negotiating committee met with Durham management 15 times this year between February and August to finalize a contract. Workers, who serve District 300 in the Fox Valley, voted 70-42 this week for final ratification.

"These men and women are role models for what workers in this country can do when they stick to what they know—that they should be treated fairly and justly," said John T. Coli, President of Teamsters Joint Council 25. "They never backed down and, with assistance from all levels of our union, were able to gain strong Teamster representation."

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The victory is the latest in an effort to organize private school bus and transit workers across the country. Drive Up Standards is a national campaign to improve safety, service and work standards in the private school bus and transit industry. Since the campaign began in 2006, more than 14,600 workers have become Teamsters.

Teamsters Joint Council 25 represents more than 100,000 hardworking men and women throughout Illinois.