

# CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



## NEWS>>

### **TEAMSTERS CONTINUE TO FIGHT McCORMICK PLACE BILL Union Leaders Meeting With Governor to Discuss Alternatives to Legislation**

Teamster representatives continue to fight the McCormick Place overhaul legislation, which would change union work rules.

Lawmakers want to lower costs at the convention center, but they are attempting to modify the wrong areas of operation.

“They want to change the work rules for our hardworking members instead of going after the contractors and their outrageous markups,” said John T. Coli, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 727. “The legislators succumbed to the trade show managers – and their own feelings of panic – and now workers could suffer because of that shortsightedness.”

Senate Bill 28 passed the Illinois state house and senate earlier this month, and is awaiting Gov. Pat Quinn’s signature. He also has the power of amendatory veto.

The bill is the result of an overreaction to a drop in convention business at McCormick Place that echoes a national trend of decreasing conventions. However, the Chicago Tribune reported that Chicago took a relatively small hit in the weak convention market with a 7 percent drop, compared to a 30 percent drop in Las Vegas and a 21 percent drop in Orlando.

Yet, by creating a crisis atmosphere, contractors and trade show managers may have found a way to repudiate work rules that they have been trying to change for years.

“The only ones being asked to make concessions are labor organizations,” said Coli. “The contractors have the ability to make Chicago cheaper to exhibitors, but they’re not going to do it.”

In April, legislators conducted a panel discussion with managers and officials without any input from labor union leaders. Under pressure from the Teamsters, union leaders – including Coli – were allowed to testify before the state panel to present their side of the argument.

Senate Bill 28 includes an exhibitor’s “bill of rights,” which, among other clauses, would allow exhibitors to load and unload materials from private vehicles in a designated area through the use of non-motorized hand trucks and dollies. In addition to taking away Teamster jobs, this raises serious security concerns.

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The bill also would limit crew sizes to a maximum of two people, but the trustee or MPEA board would have the power to cut it to one person at their discretion.

“They’re purely interested in the bottom line; they’re not taking into consideration the safety of our workers,” Coli said. “They would be cutting our work force by two-thirds, in most cases, just to try to save a little money.”

In addition, all stewards would be required to be working stewards and each union would be limited to one steward per building per show. Supervising stewards would not be allowed.

Teamsters contend the bill is unconstitutional because it would put into law portions of the collective bargaining agreement, thus tipping the balance of power in favor of the employers and violating National Labor Relations Board rules.

Coli has reached out to Gov. Quinn to work with him on developing possible alternative solutions. While Teamster leaders continue to fight the bill, it is important for members to do their part, too.

“This bill underscores the need for our members to become more politically active,” Coli said. “We have the power to hit the pavement and talk to voters, the ability to volunteer our time and really make a difference. Big business can’t match that.”

Teamsters Local 727 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, which represents more than 100,000 men and women throughout Illinois and Indiana.