



# Public Services

The Teamster Public Services

James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary-Treasurer • Carl Haynes, Director

## Employee Free Choice Now!

Teamsters Can Help Pass Legislation Expanding America's Middle Class

**T**he fight for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act is really about the survival of the middle class and the American Dream," said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President.

The Employee Free Choice Act would make it easier for workers to form a union, thereby restoring fairness and the promise of the American Dream to millions of people who have been shut out for far too long. This legislation would swell the ranks of the American middle class while being the engine for economic growth and shared prosperity. This act will also help employees secure a contract in a reasonable period of time and toughen penalties against employers who violate the law. The legislation is supported by

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## Rays of Organizing Victories Shine in Florida



Hernando County Workers, Panama City Cops, Post Wins

**T**here have been impressive organizing victories in Florida this year, as Public Services employees from police officers to county government workers have voted to join the Teamsters.

The victories have come in Hernando County and in Panama City. In Hernando County, public employees grew tired of having to endure unfair working conditions, a lack of job security and a weak voice on the job. Realizing that they would be stronger as a united force, the workers voted by a 3-1 margin in early March to form a union with Local 79 in Tampa.

"We joined the Teamsters because we wanted someone to stand up for us," said Rachelle "Shelly" Jones, an accounting technician who has worked for the county for about four years. "This is the opportunity for our employees to receive the respect they have earned and they truly deserve."

The workers voted 331 to 110 to

join the Teamsters in March. The non-professional bargaining unit includes about 550 employees who work in various departments such as recreation, the courts, public works and utilities. A smaller group of professional employees voted 5-2 to join the Teamsters.

"This victory was a cooperative effort between the new members, the Joint Council, our local union and the International Union," said Ken Wood, President of Local 79. "A strong committee of workers was developed, gained more confidence and built the support that was needed for this victory. We look forward to providing the top-notch Teamster representation these workers need and deserve."

"These brothers and sisters provide valuable services to the citizens of Hernando County each and every day, and they deserve to be treated with respect for the great work they do," said John

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## A Message From Division Director Carl Haynes

### Teamster Leadership in Tough Times

**G**overnment officials in Washington have taken a number of bold steps to address America's economic crisis. Regardless of whether public employers in your area will receive stimulus money, funding for public services may be strapped for the foreseeable future.

There are an increasing number of stories in the public and private sectors where employers are requesting to modify collective bargaining agreements. This creates a critical test of leadership to manage a union's responsibilities to effectively represent its membership, when forces beyond either party's control impact contractual terms and conditions.

The solvency of public employers and their ability to meet current and future obligations pose interesting challenges for Teamster local representatives who are headed to the bargaining table. In some instances, governmental entities have cut expenditures or transferred funds from reserve accounts as a way to address budget shortfalls. Others have delayed major building projects and moved money from capital accounts to general operating accounts for the purpose of covering personnel and other costs where citizens have approved such actions.

In the end, something has to be done. Teamster leaders are put to the test to craft viable solutions. When times are tough is when real Teamster leaders shine, and when Teamster members understand the tough decisions that need to be made in order to protect their livelihoods.



## Employee Free Choice Now!

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President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, a majority of U.S. Senators and Representatives, and a majority of the American people.

"Even with the support of so many, a flood of corporate cash is being spent on a misinformation campaign on this issue. Suppressing unions is part of a larger effort by CEOs and business interests to prevent working people from getting their fair share," Hoffa said.

### Union Workers Make 28 Percent More

Working people are struggling to make ends meet today, and we are in danger of seeing the American Dream disappear. Too often, corporations and their CEOs aren't treating workers fairly. They cut back on health care benefits and give raises that don't even keep up with the cost of living, while CEO salaries and profits go higher and higher.

"These millionaire CEOs and others fighting the Employee Free Choice Act bully their employees who want a union, but these CEOs wouldn't work one day without a written contract that protected their benefits," said Tom Keegel, Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer. "Due to this mindset, the American middle class has lost a lot of ground and is in danger of losing more if we don't all get involved in this fight."

An important way to help average people get their fair share is to remove unfair barriers to union representation and collective bargaining. The wages of workers in unions are 28 percent higher than those not in unions, and union workers are 62 percent more likely to have employer health coverage, and four times as likely to have a pension.

"The nation's economic mess didn't originate on the shop floor or from a union contract. It started at the highest levels of management. Their harmful ideas hurt the bottom line of their corporations. Wanting to deny workers the option of forming a union without management interference is another of their bright ideas," Keegel said.

### Setting the Record Straight

The corporate interests against the Employee Free Choice Act have incorrectly portrayed the bill as eliminating workers' rights to a secret ballot election. This is absolutely not true. The legislation simply gives workers, not bosses, the choice in how they decide whether to form a union, either through a majority of workers signing cards in support of the union, or through an election.

In reality, the corporate interests who are opposed to this bill are the same ones against their employees having a real opportunity of securing fair pay, health insurance, job security and a chance of living the American Dream. Greedy CEOs are realizing they are losing the ability to hold back change to a system that favors them, and they are engaged in an unprecedented campaign to mislead the public on the Employee Free Choice Act and anyone who supports it.

Please help the Teamsters Union make sure the middle class survives the current economic crisis by getting involved to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. For more information, visit [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org).



## Teamsters Come to the Aid of Rural/Metro EMTs and Paramedics in Buffalo

### Tentative Agreement Reached

Yard signs had been made and were ready to be posted on lawns across the greater Buffalo, New York area when word spread quickly of good news: Local 375 and Rural/Metro Medical Services had reached a tentative agreement on April 27.

The agreement marked the end of a nearly year-long effort to secure an agreement with Rural/Metro. Since June 30, 2008, 400 Rural/Metro paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) had been working without a contract since their five-year agreement had

expired. A one-year, retroactive agreement was negotiated to cover this time period and expires on June 30 2009. The second agreement is for four years and takes effect July 1, 2009.

Mike Wach, President of Local 375, thanked the workers for their hard work in building Teamster power that enabled the bargaining committee to leverage an improved wage package.

“These dedicated paramedics and EMTs are heroes—they provide daily lifesaving services to their community,” Wach said.

## Teamsters Secure Major Organizing Victory in Cook County, Illinois

The 10-month campaign in Cook County, Illinois resulted in victory for the Teamsters when more than 3,000 corrections officers voted to join the union.

Approximately 3,300 corrections officers have joined Local 714. The union expects to begin contract negotiations by the end of June.

“This is a landmark victory for the Teamsters of which so many should be proud,” said John T. Coli, President of Chicago’s Joint Council 25. “All of our locals throughout the Chicago area deserve a heartfelt thank you for their tireless efforts in this election.”

The officers overwhelmingly chose the Teamsters over two other organizations: their former representative, The Metropolitan Alliance of Police (MAP), and AFSCME. Of the 2,122 officers who voted in the election, 1,090 chose the Teamsters, 571 chose AFSCME and 457 chose MAP.

## Rays of Organizing Victories Shine in Florida

Sholtes, a Local 79 Business Agent, who was the campaign coordinator. “The workers came together, took ownership of their union and remained united and focused throughout the campaign. This is their victory.”

In Panama City, Jeff Candage, who has worked on many campaigns helping police officers in Florida form a union with the Teamsters, said the overwhelming decision by police officers there to join the Teamsters was extraordinary because it occurred in an extremely anti-union part of Florida.

“This was like the United States beating the Russians at hockey in the Olympics,” said Candage, a business agent with Local 385. “I can’t say enough about how unwelcome unions are there.”

In February, officers voted 46-17 to join the Teamsters. A few weeks later, the election was certified and the officers now belong to Teamsters Local 991 based in Mobile, Alabama. There are 66 officers in the bargaining unit.

Detective Brian Raffield was one of the core group of officers who thoroughly researched which union to join.

“It was the reputation of the Teamsters, their ability to take care of their members, that were able to win us over,” Raffield said.

Candage and officers and retired officers from Local 385 worked in coordination with Local 991 and Teamsters Joint Council 75 on the campaign.

Jim Gookins, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 991, called the election a major feat.

“We are now seeing workers knocking on our doors, especially in law enforcement, from the surrounding areas,” Gookins said. “We are hoping for a domino effect.”

## A Message from General President James P. Hoffa



### MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

There are many ways for Teamsters to get involved and show support for the Employee Free Choice Act, the most important legislation affecting America's middle class in decades. Our communities, friends, neighbors and members of Congress need to hear from real people why unions are important, and the sooner the better. This bill has broad support, but billions of dollars are being thrown at a misinformation campaign run by anti-worker groups and people are starting to believe the lies about this legislation.

It's important to let your elected officials in D.C. know that you support the this bill. When calling or writing, it's helpful to include your story about how you have benefited from a union or about management intimidation during your union election. The web site for the Teamsters Union, at [www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org), has a wealth of material on writing, e-mailing or talking to your elected representatives. If you want to get directly in touch with your congressional representative's office, you can call the Capitol switchboard at 800-828-0498 or e-mail them through [www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml).

Teamsters can also help correct myths while at the same time helping our communities understand why the Employee Free Choice Act is necessary to fix a broken system. Newspapers welcome letters from readers and you can usually find out how to send a letter to the editor by looking on the newspaper's opinion page. Sample letters that you can adapt and responses to the most common arguments are on the Teamsters Union web page devoted to the Employee Free Choice Act.

I urge every Teamster who cares about America's middle class to get involved and make your voice heard on this issue.

*DRIVE is a political committee that furthers labor-related goals, including making contributions to support candidates for local, state and federal offices. Individuals may refuse to join or contribute without fear of reprisal.*

Take a Stand for Working Families

Find out more about this exciting program by talking to your local union, or on the web at [www.teamster.org/drive](http://www.teamster.org/drive)

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