



## LOCAL 2-21 C.A.T. Letter

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Distribution: # 32

Date: August, 2009

After 8 hours of discussion with the International on our first day in Pittsburgh, the committee felt we needed to get a CAT report out to set the ground work which will help us in upcoming negotiations. **The main purpose of this report is to inform all our members that there will be a special vote conducted at the union hall on Wednesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> from 5:30am to 7:00pm. This vote (depending on the outcome) will give the Bargaining Committee exclusive rights whether or not to bring a proposal back to the members for a vote.** This is a common practice but is being handled differently than you may have seen in the past. Instead of asking for a show of hands at a posted union meeting, we are conducting a full day of voting by secret ballot so everyone gets a chance to be heard. I've always said that the secret ballot never lies as this is the surest way of getting the honest feelings of our members.

I want to be very clear about something so you know our intent up front before you cast your vote. When negotiating our contract, this committee is not interested in what will benefit an individual or a small group of people. In fact we aren't interested in anything that doesn't benefit the majority of our members and moves the union forward. I'm bringing this to your attention because I want it understood that it is a common tactic for the company to tweak an offer just a little, too buy some votes from a select group while the rest get thrown under the bus. In this scenario we wouldn't bring it back to the membership for a vote if you gave us the authority to make that decision.

I am not saying the committee has to unanimously support a proposal before we bring it back to the membership for a vote. There may be circumstances where we feel we need you to send another message to the company so they can see it isn't just the committee saying "NO" and to show we are representing our members. Another scenario could be if the committee is split on a proposed offer by the company in which case we will bring you the facts and let you decide what to do.

I'm telling you all of this to explain that we aren't asking you to allow a dictatorship, we're asking for you to give us this authority to combat the strategy often used by corporations as negotiations get closer to an end. Another thing I'm concerned about is something I refer to as "school millage voting"; that is where the company sends you to the voting booth many times by simply changing very little. This tactic is used to wear you down to the point you say 'the hell with it,' in which case they win.

I'm very pleased to say the meetings with the International are going better than I thought they would, and we have a promise of solid support from the people right at the top. If you remember back when the company made their final offer to us, I asked the International to **not** allow us to bring it to a vote but instead of doing that, they ask us to bring it to our membership to make sure we knew where you stood. You spoke loud and clear and the International heard those numbers for 8 hours yesterday. Thank you all for sending us down here with such a strong message.

Please treat the vote on Wednesday with the same importance you treated the first vote. It's very important to the committee to hear from all of you on a subject as serious as this. You may direct any questions pertaining to this CAT report to me by calling 553-2559.

**Please get out and vote on Wednesday, August 12, 2009 (See sample ballot below)**

- YES, I give the USW Local 21 Bargaining Committee exclusive rights to decide whether or not to bring a company proposal back to the membership for a vote.**
- NO, I do not give the USW Local 21 Bargaining Committee exclusive rights to decide whether or not to bring a company proposal back to the membership for a vote.**

Thank you all for you continued support.

In Solidarity,

Bryon Branstrom