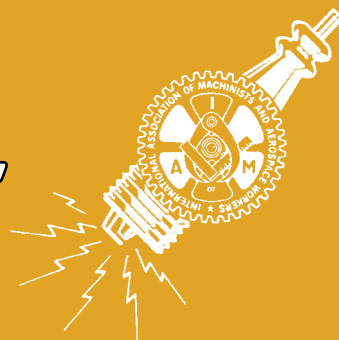


The IAM District 190

SPARKPLUG



VOL. 27 NO. 1



JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

Serving the active and retired membership of IAM District Lodge 190

What to expect from the new administration

As the saying goes, “elections have consequences.” The early weeks of Donald Trump’s presidency have already shown impactful consequences for workers’ rights and unions, most of which are negative.

Besides calling for controversial plans such as buying Greenland, annexing Canada, seizing the Panama Canal, and transforming the Gaza Strip into a U.S.-owned tourist destination, the president has signed hundreds of executive orders that strip rights from transgender individuals, target immigrants, and close agencies.

President Trump imposed a 10% tariff on China and levied—and quickly rescinded—even larger tariffs on Mexico and Canada, our largest trading partners. “The IAM supports tariffs when used properly, but the proposed 25% tariffs on Canadian goods imported to the U.S. will result in job losses, increased prices, and a variety of other negative impacts,” said the union in a statement.

In its second week, the administration froze all federal funds, leading to the immediate closure of programs such as Head Start for young children and Meals on Wheels for the elderly and sick, and much more. This order was quickly rescinded—for the moment.

The transition has been far from typical, with Trump heavily relying on Elon Musk, the richest man on the planet and a private citizen, to execute a rapid and hostile takeover of the federal government. Musk and his young team of computer geeks gained full access to the Treasury Department’s payment systems without proper security



clearance, accessing highly restricted government records not only of millions of federal employees but also of all Americans who receive money from government programs.

They offered federal employees a likely illegal “buyout,” promising pay through September 30 for those who resigned by February 6. (As of this writing, a judge has stayed the call for resignations.)

The goal of these personnel actions is to remake the civil service as we’ve known it for a century by stripping workplace protections from hundreds of thousands of non-partisan career federal employees.

Although several of the administration’s recent actions have already been reversed—due to bad PR or court mandates—Musk and his team will likely find new ways to achieve the same goals.

Our focus here is to highlight how the new administration’s policies will impact workers’ rights and unions.

Changing Leadership

One of Trump’s first major moves was to fire National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) member Gwynne Wilcox and General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo. This unprecedented action signals a shift in labor policy enforcement and stifled the Board, legally unable to take any action without a quorum, which it now does not have. While Abruzzo, likely the most pro-labor NLRB counsel since the agency’s creation, expected to be replaced with the arrival of a new president, Wilcox is suing, arguing that the President does not have the right to fire members of independent agencies like NLRB.

Trump named William B. Cowen, the NLRB Regional Director from Los Angeles, to serve as Interim NLRB Counsel. “We’ve worked extensively with the LA office, and it’s known to be the slowest in the nation,” says District 190’s Dir. Business Rep Don Crosatto.

“It took them two years to issue complaints in the Lexus of San Diego and Mercedes Benz of San Diego cases even though we had submitted overwhelming evidence to sustain the charges. Then, it was another year to get a hearing,” Crosatto explains. “If this model extends to the NLRB, which

is already slow, we know that contested cases will drag on for years on end.”

The nomination of Lori Chávez-DeRemer as Secretary of Labor has garnered mixed reactions. According to the AFL-CIO’s congressional ratings, she has voted for worker-friendly policies 10 percent of the time, only slightly above the 6 percent score of the average House Republican. Although this daughter of a Teamster backed the PRO Act, a major labor priority, and maintains a moderate record on certain labor issues, would or could she stand against efforts to weaken key labor policies? In an ideal world, the Secretary of Labor should serve as the Administration’s chief advocate for workers. Will Chávez-DeRemer take on that role?

Government by billionaires

In addition to Elon Musk, President Trump has tapped an unprecedented 12 billionaires to serve in his administration. It’s no surprise that the term “oligarchy” — government by and for the rich — has become the word of the day.

Back to Musk: even before working to remake the federal government from the inside, he joined Amazon founder Jeff Bezos to challenge the NLRB’s constitutionality in court, so as not to be held accountable for allegedly illegally firing SpaceX employees who tried to raise workplace concerns.

As the Trump administration continues to implement its policies, workers can expect more challenges, including the rollback of pro-worker laws and increased employer power. The NLRB is expected to revert to an anti-union, pro-business stance, undoing much of the progress achieved during the Biden administration.

The effects of these changes on workers’ rights and unions are yet to be determined, but these initial actions indicate a difficult path ahead for labor advocates.

Unions fight back

The AFL-CIO launched a campaign called the Department of People Who Work for a Living, a play on Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). “Government can work for billionaires or it can work for working people — but not both,” Liz Shuler, the AFL-CIO president, said in a statement. “Rejecting federal workers’ collective bargaining agreements is union busting, plain and simple. These attempts to break our contracts will not silence our voices.”

In February, the AFL-CIO and the federal employee unions sued DOGE in hopes of preventing the rogue agency from “raiding” the Department of Labor and gaining access to the personal information of potentially millions of American workers. Unions have also held demonstrations at numerous agencies that DOGE is attempting to undermine.

To get involved in labor’s fightback, join the AFL-CIO at departmentofpeoplewhowork.org.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Retired and active members: Please write in if something in *The Sparkplug* makes you happy or mad or inspires you to action. All letters from members will be used, space permitting. They may be edited for length or grammar, but not for content. Letters may be submitted as follows:

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mail: IAM District 190, 10260 MacArthur Ave., Oakland, CA 94621

Get your IAM news on the web!



Visit the District 190 website at: iamdistrict190.org

The International IAM website is at: goiam.org

Local Lodge websites:
Local 1101: www.iamlocal1101.org
Local 1414: facebook.com/IAMLOCAL1414/

Twitter / X
Union Organizer: @union1484

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The IAM District 190

SPARKPLUG

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Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor



UNION PEOPLE

After 60 years, Local 2182 honors Pinky McNeely in many ways

For 30 consecutive years, Pinky McNeely served as president of Local 2182. Having passed the torch in December of 2023, he is currently the local's Vice President.

"Pinky served as a delegate to the district and has been there for us for as long as we can remember," says ADBR Mark Martin.

He joined the union in 1964, working as a painter. The last Machinist shop that he worked at was Capital Oldsmobile in Sacramento, which closed in the 1980s.

"In October, 2024, at our local lodge meeting, we dedicated our meeting hall to Pinky. It will forever be remembered as the Pinky McNeely Hall," Martin adds.



Not only was he recognized for his 60 years of membership in the IAM, and 30 years as President, but Local 2182 named their meeting hall for dedicated leader and member Pinky McNeely.

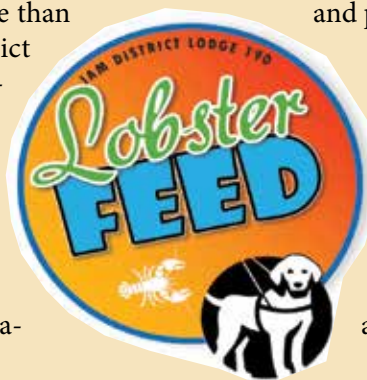
2025 Lobster Feed meets funding goal for Guide Dogs

The exact numbers aren't yet final, but it looks like the sponsors and more than 200 people who attended District 190's 2025 Lobster Feed in Burlingame on February 8 will have raised more than \$12,000 to contribute to the Guide Dogs of America, the IAM's long-time charity.

In addition to lobster, guests feasted on artichokes, garlic, pota-

toes, sausage, corn, fresh baked baguettes, salad, and pasta.

"We got to meet some guide dogs and their people, enjoy a fabulous feast, and we even launched our first silent auction at this event," says Directing Business Rep Don Crosatto. "We look forward to many more years of supporting this important cause."



Upper Left: Chief chef—Business Rep Robby Pintos displays a live lobster.

Above: (from left): GDA VP Zach Gittlen, Tracy (the mom) and Ian, her autistic 16 year-old who doesn't talk, but whose GDA dog Timone enables him to connect with his family. Speaking is Pastor Albert Macklin from the New Sweet Home Temple of Deliverance, also a GDA recipient.

Top: District 190 and event staff Patricia Larriega and Donna Davis. Above: Some of the silent auction items.



Above and Center: The food is prepared outdoors. Right: In the kitchen, the 1101 crew—Richard and Ali Breckenridge, and Pedro Gonzalez—make pasta.



After the cooking is done, the food is carefully laid out on tables, for the diners' delight.

All photos by Chris Perry



NEWS FROM THE TRUST FUND



Pension Plan 2024 year-end tax documents

The Trust Fund Office has mailed the Pension Plan 2024 1099-R Tax Forms to all retirees receiving monthly pension payments. Please review this document carefully and contact the Trust Fund Office at AISupport@hsba.com or by phone at 800-635-3105 if you believe an error has been made on the form.

After January 31, 2025, the 1099-R Tax Forms will also be available on the Trust Fund website at www.aitrustfunds.org and can be downloaded or printed directly from the website.

If you don't already have access to the website, creating an online account is simple and takes minutes to complete. Visit www.aitrustfunds.org for details on how to create an account so that you can review your benefit information.

Your Rights and Protections Against Surprise Medical Bills

Effective January 1, 2022, the No Surprises Act went into effect; this law constrains medical providers from what's called "balance-billing," which may happen when you get emergency care or get treated by an out-of-network provider at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center.

You are protected from balance billing for:

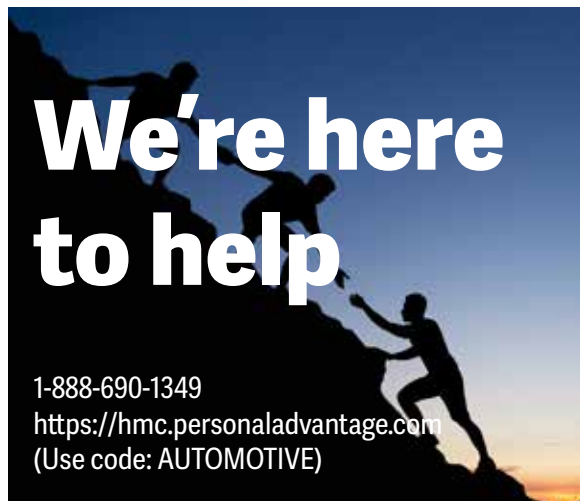
Emergency services: If you have an emergency medical condition and get emergency services from an out-of-network provider or facility, the most the provider or facility may bill you is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount, such as copayments and coinsurance. You cannot be balance-billed for these emergency services. This includes services you may get after you're in stable condition unless you give written consent and give up your protections not to be balanced-billed for these post-stabilization services.

Certain services at an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center: When you get services from an in-network hospital or ambulatory surgical center, certain providers there may be out-of-network. In these cases, the most those providers may bill you for is your plan's in-network cost-sharing amount. This applies to emergency medicine, anesthesia, pathology, radiology, laboratory, neonatology, assistant surgeon, hospitalist, or intensivist services. These providers can't balance-bill you and may not ask you to give up your protection not to be balance-billed.

You are never required to give up your protections from balance-billing. You also aren't required to get care out-of-network. You can choose a provider or facility in your plan's network.

If you believe you've been wrongly billed, you may contact the Automotive Industries Welfare Plan at 800-635-3105, by email at AISupport@hsba.com, or by visiting www.aitrustfunds.org for assistance. Visit www.cms.gov/nosurprises for more information about your rights under federal law.

The Member Assistance Program can help with many life-related stresses



The Trustees of the Automotive Industries Welfare Fund partnered with Uprise Health to provide an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and a Legal/Financial Program (LFP). These resources can help you resolve personal problems in the early stages.

Uprise Health offers a confidential support

service and referral program. It is designed to help you and your family with personal issues such as:

- Stress
- Parenting
- Aging
- Grief/Loss
- Anxiety
- Relationships
- Adoption
- Estate planning
- Bankruptcy
- Immigration
- Child custody
- Real estate
- Family
- Marriage
- Work issues
- Alcohol/Drug issues
- Finances
- Depression
- Criminal issues
- Tenant's rights
- Divorce

Customer Care Professionals will help you find the right resources and services including counselors, legal representatives, and financial professionals who can provide counseling sessions, coordinate the appropriate treatment, and provide referrals if needed. Office hours are 6am to 5pm PST. After hours calls will be returned the following day. Crisis support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The services provided under the EAP and LFP program are 100% confidential and are at no cost to your or your dependents. For more information or to get assistance in making an appointment, call Uprise Health at 1-888-690-1349 or visiting <https://hmc.personaladvantage.com> using AUTOMOTIVE as the access code.

Reminder: Pension Plan Searching for Former Participants

The Automotive Industries Pension Plan currently has about 2,000 participants who are entitled to receive a pension payment under the plan but have not made an application for their money.

If you know someone who used to work in the industry during the 1970s or 1980s, is over age 65, and is not receiving a pension payment from the Trust Fund, they could be missing out on a monthly payment from the plan. Have them contact the Trust Fund Office at 800-635-3105 for a review of their work history to see if they are eligible.

Celebrating with Local 1484

From Thanksgiving until year's end, Local 1484 found numerous ways to celebrate. Forty people showed up for Local 1484's annual year-end retiree luncheon. The Ports America holiday party was a blast. And back in November, the Local turned out in plaid for the Guide Dogs of America annual gala in Las Vegas.

Ports America Holiday Party



Retiree Holiday Luncheon



Guide Dogs of America Annual Gala



Photos by Lynette Singleton

Local 653

Fresno Unified

Business Rep Jeremy Celaya reports that he has cases pending at the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) for three roofers who work at the **Fresno United School District**. “We’ll know more after the hearing in February,” he says.

Local 1101

New dealership contracts include big raises

Business Rep Richard Breckenridge reports that he settled three dealership contracts

Mountain View BMW: Forty-nine techs and service writers ratified a three-year agreement in June. They got \$10/hour the first year, plus \$8/hour for EV certifications with an additional benefit for Master techs. Everyone else gets more pay as they train.

Mini of Stevens Creek: The 17 technicians and service writers ratified their new three-year agreement. The Master techs get \$12/hour total while everybody else gets a percentage of that. They also get \$1-2/hour for each cert that they have.

Lexus of Stevens Creek: The 50 mechanics here ratified their new three-year contract. Wage increases are 8% in year one, and three percent in years two and three.

Local 1173

More raises at dealerships

Cindy Gagliardi, office manager and soon-to-be-named Business Rep, reports that, with help from Local 1101’s Richard Breckenridge and advice from Area Direc-

tor Jesse Juarez, they complete the contracts for the Local’s Big Three dealerships: Winter Chevrolet, Lehmers GMC, and Antioch Auto Center.

“Basically, each shop ratified three-year contracts that primarily raised their wages, and provided some improvements customized to each shop’s needs,” Gagliardi says. “We got better than usual, but not as much as desired.”

At Lehmers, the techs will get 15% total: 7% in the first year and then 4% each the next two years.

The techs at Antioch Auto Center will get the same percentage increases, the Teamsters and Parts people will get 13% over the three contract.

And, the percentages are the same for the techs at Winters Chevrolet-Honda in Concord

A little tougher in Novato

Novato Toyota was recently bought by San Francisco Toyota’s owner who wants to make the Novato contract more like San Francisco’s.

“Novato was a family-owned low-pressure place,” says Area Director Steve Older. “The owners want to go from hourly to flat rate. The techs are not pleased.”

What’s coming up

Older reports that the Sonic contracts—Concord Toyota and Concord Honda—are up soon, as is Cole European.

And, he’s starting to talk to the members at Smart Train to come up with proposals for later this year.

Local 1414

Setting contract language through arbitration

The contract with Magnussen Toyota had been long-expired, and

talks were more often delayed than held. “After the members rejected the first contract offer, we were able to make some changes in rates and the members accepted these and were pretty happy,” says Area Director Steve Older. “But the new owner never read the final contract, and when she did, she didn’t want to agree to it.”

The union took the case to arbitration. “We finally came to a real agreement.”

Contract was long time coming

With a contract that had been expired for nearly five years previous, the 11 members at Western Grinding, a machine shop in Santa Clara, finally ratified a new three-year agreement.

Business Rep Jerry Gutierrez reports that management may have had good reasons, but for nearly two years, he couldn’t get a meeting.

“The boss gave raises even while the contract was expired, but that really wasn’t enough. They were underpaid and had issues with the medical and pension to get resolved.”

Gutierrez says that he, the shop steward, the owner and his attorney met starting in March 2024. “The company wanted our members to pay for the pension, but they refused. We finally agreed that if the pension liability fees topped a certain percentage, the employees would be liable for the rest of it. After voting down the contract once, the employer forked over a little more money and the members ratified it in July, 2024,” Gutierrez adds.

However, that wasn’t the end of the story. “The employer didn’t sign the contract and basically went MIA. The pension program reached out saying they needed a contract and a subscriber agreement. After

pressing and pressing, we finally got the agreement signed, sealed and delivered in January, 2025,” Gutierrez says. “Our members got several months of retro pay, but not as much as they should have gotten.”

Local 1484

Getting an early start

Several waterfront contracts are opening soon—WWL and Oceanwide Ship Repair both open on April 1, and Marine Dockside’s contract expires on August 1. Area Director Kevin Kucera reports that he’s already started surveying the bargaining units at the three shops. “I’ll meet with members to review the survey results so we can prepare our proposals/demands for these negotiations.”

Mandatory chassis inspections may be coming

If AB3151, sponsored by Asmb. Mike Gipson (D-Gardena) passes, it will require mandatory inspections of chassis being brought to the ports.

“There have been some terrible accidents recently. In one incident, five terminals had to close for more than 24 hours and neighbors had to be evacuated,” says Kucera. “This law is a public safety measure – for the drivers, for port workers, and for the communities that these trucks drive through. The chassis’ need to be properly inspected and it needs to be mandatory.”

Gipson, who heads the California Transportation Committee, is working to develop support for the bill from the California Federation of Labor Unions and the Los Angeles Federation. The Longshore Workers are also in support.

Local 1414

Member wins arbitration and promotion is restored — back pay to come

Dermot Walsh began working as a mechanic for the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) in 2015, servicing buses at various SFMTA locations. In November 2021, the Local 1414 member was promoted to Assistant Supervisor for the mechanics.

In August 2022, an incident occurred involving an external consultant who accused Walsh of using unethical language. Twelve days after the allegations were made, the SFMTA held an investigatory hearing where witnesses testified against him. Two months later, he finally had the chance to respond to those allegations was joined by top District 190 leadership at the new hearing.

“In October, following that second hearing, I received a notice that I had to go home as part of the disciplinary action,” Walsh explains. “Even though I hadn’t had any disciplinary issues prior to this incident, I was out for six months without any knowledge of what was happening. The

following April, I was told to return to work as a mechanic—a demotion in both title and salary.” Walsh also notes that the SFMTA required him to undergo training to prevent harassment and discrimination.

Walsh states that once the union heard his side of the case and reviewed his evidence, they swiftly sought to move the case to arbitration, which still took another five months.

Attorney Caren Sencer led Walsh’s case in the arbitration. After several sessions, the union filed an unfair practice charge against SFMTA. Ultimately, the arbitrator ruled in Walsh’s favor and ordered the SFMTA to make him whole.

Although Walsh has regained his assistant supervisor position, he states that the case “is still ongoing” and will continue until he receives the back pay he is owed. “We expect it to exceed \$60,000,” says Business Rep Donte Vickers.

“Our attorney is still working on the back pay

with the MTA’s HR department, but the MTA has suddenly lost the case notes related to me and the plaintiff,” Walsh adds. “I believe this is an ethics violation; regardless, it’s just too convenient. I still haven’t received any official documentation. This lack of professionalism—missing deadlines and failing to provide the proper paperwork—was something we were able to prove easily at arbitration.”

Walsh is pleased to have gotten his job back, but he’s determined to collect the 21 months of back pay he is owed at the shift supervisor rate. “I want to know where I stand with the city; I want my 5:00 start time back, and I want to ensure there’s no blemish on my record.”

Most importantly, Walsh expressed his satisfaction with the union. “They supported me from the start, and they’re fighting for me until the end.”

THE LOCALS

Local 1584



Local 1584 members' month-long strike at GP Gypsum results in increased wages and better contract leverage.

Strike results in more money and bargaining leverage at GP Gypsum

Sixteen members of Local 1584 work as electricians and/or do plant maintenance at GP Gypsum in Antioch, a wallboard and building materials factory. Back in September, they went on strike for a month in solidarity with the 85 ILWU members who had voted to strike. When the ILWU unit decided to settle with the company, the IAM had to move quickly to settle their own contract.

"The company initially offered 3% per year with a four-year contract

which is what they gave the ILWU," explains Business Rep Jerry Gutierrez. "The members were not happy with this. In the end, our members will see a 6% increase in year one, and 3% each in years two and three, getting the same 12% in three rather than four years. And most important, they are no longer on the same schedule as the ILWU, so if the ILWU feels like they have to settle, our members have more freedom to fight until they get what they deserve."

Local 1528

Silgan Riverbank

Negotiations are coming up with Silgan, reports Asst. DBR Mark Martin. "Since the last agreement, Silgan shut down one of its other Modesto-area plants—a Teamster facility. As a result, two can lines from that plant were installed at Riverbank, adding about 25 more members to the operation and significantly increasing production," he explains. "The company also experienced a fire in their Coater department last year, and that section should be up and running by around April.

"Our members have worked through all these challenges and deserve a fair contract. We'll be working hard to deliver that to them," Martin adds.

Local 1546

Great settlement at Golden Gate Truck Center

If you talk to any of the techs at Golden Gate Truck Center, they tell you how happy they are about their new five-year contract, except for one thing: they had to go from weekly to bi-weekly paychecks.

"I know that's a big, potentially disruptive change," says Dir. Business Rep Don Crosatto, "but hopefully the wage increases make up for it."

A quick rundown of some of those increases is:

Expert Class: Raise of \$5.80 (up to \$50/hour).

Certified in basic engine: Same increase (up to \$54/hour).

Those with four certs: Increase is about \$7.80/hour first year.

Everybody gets a \$1/hour increase each subsequent year.

In addition, employees were paying more than \$600/mo for their health insurance (AI Plan A). By switching to plan C, their payment goes to \$0 – which is equivalent to a raise of \$3.80 an hour.

"Across the board, our members will see an increase of between \$8-11 hour. This is the most lucrative package we've ever gotten from Golden Gate," adds Crosatto.

A healthy increase

Crosatto reports that the nine members who work Central Concrete facilities in San Jose, Pleasanton, Hayward ratified a new three-year contract that increases wages and health care by \$2.50/an hour each year.

Good deal in Fremont

The dozen or so members who work at Republic Services in Fremont recently ratified a contract that will see them through the end of the decade. All-told, reports Crosatto, they get wage increases every six months to a total of \$12.25/hour.

Also, they got an additional \$500 on their health and welfare cap, and increases in employer contributions to both their IRA and 401K plans.

Talks coming up

Contracts coming up for negotiation are: ConGlobal, Ford Store of San Leandro, Waste Management, Penske Truck Leasing, Reyes Coca Cola Bottling, Hertz, and McKevitt Volvo.

CalOSHA cites Safeway for numerous violations

In June 2024, Area Director Steve Older got a notice from Cal/OSHA that they were imminently going to inspect the Safeway Distribution Center in Tracy and they

invited the union to be there for the walk-around. Older joined for the several hours it took the inspector to thoroughly comb through the shop.

After taking several more days to inspect the 2.2 million square foot warehouse, Cal/OSHA issued their report in January, 2025. "I was impressed by how thorough the OSHA person was," Older says. "And as a result, they cited Safeway with \$182,000 in proposed penalties" for significant safety violations that put approximately 1,700 workers at risk of serious injuries.

Cal/OSHA issued citations for 27 violations, including eight that were serious in nature.

Older says that the violations included manual material handling injuries, recordkeeping violations, indoor heat hazards, chemical and health hazards, electrical hazards, and insufficient training for truck operators. In the shop, Cal/OSHA found issues with machinery guards, exposed equipment, access to cool-down areas during summer heat, and some electrical problems.

"Currently, 80 Teamsters are out on Workers Comp and we have four members out as well," Older adds. "Several years ago, one of our members died out there due to the heat; that's been an ongoing problem."

Upon releasing the Cal/OSHA inspection report, Chief Debra Lee said: "It is critical that employers recognize the physical demands and potential dangers faced by warehouse workers and take measures to protect their safety. Our inspection revealed that Safeway's demanding warehouse quotas put its workers at risk of serious injury."

Not surprisingly, Safeway is appealing the fines. "They take every opportunity to discipline people. It's a tough place to deal with," he says.

He adds that "for the first time in the 17 years that he's been representing IAM members out there, they're having members who are out on Workers Comp come back to do 'light duty.' The two members who were cleared to do so are having a rough time. One has a lot of pain issues and has to take time off, for which he's getting disciplined. I think they're trying to break him and get him off the rolls so they no longer have to pay the workers comp insurance. It's nasty."

Local 1584

Good cop, bad cop

The nearly 100 members at Henkel (an aerospace company in Pittsburg) got a good new contract without having to resort to strike. With Business Rep Jerry Gutierrez and Area Director Steve Older playing "Good cop/bad cop" in the negotiations, they were able to turn the company's first offer of 3% total increases over three years up to 7%.

"The members turned down the first offer and threatened to call a strike vote," says Gutierrez. "Ultimately, we didn't need to go there."

Local 2182

Preparing for Sacramento talks

Contract negotiations for the members who work at the City of Sacramento—Automotive and Building Trades divisions, are approaching. "We're in the preparatory stages, coordinating with our fellow labor partners and ramping things up" says Asst. DBR Mark Martin. "The City, as usual, is complaining about a lack of resources."



IN THE NEWS

New laws that impact the workplace took effect on January 1

The state legislature passed several laws in 2024 that expand employee protections and benefits. Most took effect on January 1, 2025. Here are some of the highlights.

Minimum wage increases

The statewide minimum wage for most California workers will increase to \$16.50 from \$16 per hour because of inflationary adjustments.

Higher minimums already took effect for workers in two industries in 2024: fast food workers' minimum increased to \$20/hour and health care workers (depending on the type of facility) will see minimum rates rise to between \$18 and \$23. Eventually, they'll reach \$25/hour.

Disability, Family Leave enhancements

The State Disability Insurance and Paid Family Leave programs enable people to replace a percentage of their pay when they temporarily need time off for a non-work-related illness, injury, or pregnancy; to bond with a new child; to care for a seriously ill family member; or to participate in certain events because of a family member's military deployment. This year, the program's wage replacement rate will increase to 90% of regular income for those who make up to \$62,000 per year, and 70% for everybody else. The cap also increases from \$1,619/year to \$1,680. To pay for these benefits, participating workers will have 1.2% of pay withheld from their earnings, up from 1.1% in 2024.

Additionally, California employers can no longer require employees to use up to two weeks of accrued vacation time before they start receiving family leave benefits.

Help for freelancers

Freelancers earning \$250 or more within 120 days must sign a contract with the "hiring party," which can be created by either party. The contract must specify the services to be provided, the amount and method of compensation, and the due dates for invoicing and payment. Full payment must be made by the due date or within 30 days after the work is completed if no date is specified.

An unpaid freelancer can file a civil action; if the freelancer wins, the client will have to pay the freelancer's attorney fees up to double the amount due.

Captive audience' meetings

Employers will now be prohibited from requiring employees to attend meetings intended to communicate the employer's opinion about "religious or political matters." These include elections for political office, legislation, regulation, and the decision to join or support any political party or labor organization. If an employer takes adverse action against an employee who refuses to attend the meeting, the worker can file a civil complaint.

More help for crime victims

Employers with at least 25 employees must give workers who are victims of certain crimes or domestic violence (or who are caring for a family member in that situation) unpaid but protected time off to attend to their needs and ensure their safety. The law somewhat expands and redefines the types of crimes that qualify for this leave. It now covers those who experience a "qualifying act of vi-



olence," which includes domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and any act or conduct that causes bodily injury or death to another person, the use or brandishing of a firearm, and an actual or perceived threat to cause physical injury or death.

Employers may cap the total leave an employee victim can take off for this reason at 12 weeks and five or 10 days for the family member who is not the victim.

Who needs a driver's license?

Employers will be prohibited from stating in a job advertisement, application, or recruiting material that the applicant must have a driver's license unless the employer "reasonably expects" the position to require driving and "reasonably believes" that using alternative forms of transportation — such as walking, biking, ride-hailing or taking public transit — would not compare in travel time or cost to the employer.

Workplace discrimination

California's Fair Employment and Housing Act and education code prohibits discrimination based on race, age, gender, and many other factors. A law that took effect in 2020 amended them to include "traits historically associated with race," including hair texture and hairstyles such as braids, locs, and twists. The new law removes "historically" from that definition because whether a trait is "historically" or "culturally" associated with race is ambiguous and beside the point.

Workplace safety

Two new laws, SB553 and SB428, could help protect employees from violence or harassment at their workplace. Together, they will allow an employer or an employee's union representative to seek a temporary restraining order to protect an employee who has suffered harassment, unlawful violence, or a credible threat of violence, Saad said.

SB1105 lets agricultural employees who work outside use their paid sick leave to avoid smoke, heat or flooding conditions created by a local or state emergency.

Digital replicas

Employers are prevented from using AI-generated "digital replicas" of a performer's likeness or voice as a substitute for a human performer without that performer's consent under certain circumstances. The law applies to new performances and is not retroactive to digital replicas created or used before January 1. It was sponsored mainly by unions representing performing artists.

By Kathleen Pender, Freelancer for the SF Chronicle

Whole Foods workers form first union in Amazon's grocery chain

Whole Foods employees at a Philadelphia store voted to form a union in late January, marking the first successful organizing campaign at the upscale grocer owned by Amazon since 2018, reports CNBC.

With a vote of 130 for and 100 against joining the union, the 300 or so employees will be represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in upcoming negotiations. The vote is the latest instance of Amazon workers putting pressure on the company to deliver higher wages, safety improvements, and "a fair workload that doesn't leave us burned out," according to a UFCW webpage detailing the campaign.

In November, UFCW and some store employees said that management at Whole Foods engaged in an "aggressive anti-union campaign" after they filed for a union vote. UFCW filed numerous unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB over Whole Foods' conduct during the union drive.

"This fight is far from over, but today's victory is an important step forward," Wendell Young, president of UFCW Local 1776 said in a statement. "We are ready to bring Whole Foods to the bargaining table to negotiate a fair first contract that reflects the workers' needs and priorities."

The labor victory comes as Amazon has faced a groundswell of union activity among its warehouse and delivery workforce in recent years. Employees have sought to unionize to obtain higher wages and improvements to working conditions.

Amazon has challenged criticisms from its employees, lawmakers, and advocacy groups that its rapid pace of work has led to high injury rates among its frontline workers. The company also denies it has engaged in union-busting activity, however, last year, Amazon joined SpaceX and Trader Joe's in arguing that the NLRB is unconstitutional. The NLRB has accused Amazon of violating federal labor laws in several cases.

In 2022, the employees at a Staten Island, NY facility formed the company's first union at a U.S. warehouse, however Amazon has refused to come to the table to negotiate a first contract. The group voted to affiliate with the Teamsters last June.

Workers at an Amazon warehouse in North Carolina are slated to hold a union election later in February.

Support for unions is higher than ever, but the percentage of unionized workers fell in 2024

The good news is that a solid labor market added 2.2 million jobs in 2024 and that a record 48% of nonunion workers say they would vote to have union representation—which is up from 1977 and 1995, when only about 32-33% of nonunion, non-managerial workers said they would vote to unionize if they could.

The bad news is that with all the new jobs created, nonunion positions grew faster than union ones. This meant that the share of American workers in unions dropped by one-tenth of a percentage point to 9.9 percent last year, even as the year was marked by a surge in union election filings and several high-profile strikes, reports the Economic Policy Institute.

According to the Labor Department, approximately 14.3 million workers were union members in 2024, reflecting a decline of about 100,000 members from 2023. The private sector experienced a loss of around 184,000 members in 2024, while the public sector saw a gain of approximately 15,000.



ORGANIZING UPDATE

Several organizing drives launched during the pandemic finally move ahead

Volvo Cars of Walnut Creek

The 12 technicians at Volvo Cars of Walnut Creek voted for union representation in September. Area Director for Organizing Jesse Juarez states that after four bargaining sessions with an anti-union attorney from Littler Mendelson, “it’s been nothing but surface bargaining.” He adds, “nobody votes for the union to maintain the status quo. Our main goal is to improve the subpar, costly medical coverage the dealership currently provides.”

Juarez notes that the company also wants to withhold union security. “They believe that people shouldn’t have to pay union dues. Clearly, we differ on that.”

MV Transportation of Pinole

Juarez reports that in 2020, he organized the 13 WestCAT service workers, and ABC mechanics who work for MV Transportation. “We had gotten a three-year contract. But when the time came to negotiate a new contract, we learned that the General Manager had convinced our members to drop the union and he made promises about what they

would get if they did.” Juarez says that the members believed the manager and the unit was disclaimed.

In the fall of 2024, after the manager was long-gone and most of his promises had been kept, the members called Juarez and asked to come back into the union. “Fortunately, the company voluntarily recognized the card check and the NLRB has confirmed that we are again the bargaining agent for these workers,” Juarez says. “We’re currently gearing up to negotiate their second contract.”

Juarez says he tips his hat to this employer who didn’t campaign against the union. “The members also learned a valuable lesson: when it isn’t in writing, it doesn’t matter. Only trust what’s in writing!”

Tracy Toyota

Tracy Toyota techs voted for the union during the pandemic. “In the fall of 2023, they fired one of our main union supporters for violating a shop policy that had never previously been enforced,” says Juarez, who adds that he used to be foreman and was a witness in an NLRB hearing.) The union filed unfair labor practice charges. In November 2024,

the NLRB issued a complaint for unlawful termination and gave the employer an order to resolve it by apologizing to the worker and by informing the other workers they have the right to organize.”

A hearing will be held in May for the unlawful termination of a union supporter.

Audi of Concord

This is another shop that was organized during the pandemic. “The employer appealed the election results and fired a service advisor who happened to be a strong union supporter. “It was always a trumped-up case,” Juarez says.

In November of 2024, one year later, the NLRB issued a complaint for unlawful termination, and they ordered reinstatement. “Of course, the company is so far refusing to comply. We expect the labor board to set a hearing date soon,” Juarez adds.

Lexus of San Diego

The members at Lexus of San Diego voted for union representation in 2020, during the pandemic. “It took the Labor Board more than two years to determine that the company unlawfully ran a decert election,” says Juarez. “The hearing will be held in July.”

UPS Production Specialists

The Production Specialists at UPS are the last group of employees in the company to get organized, but as of October 2024, those in Fremont, Richmond, and Lathrop are now union members.

The Specialists work closely with plant engineering employees to clear logjams in the automated package sorting systems. They also maintain the computer software needed to keep the electronic systems up and running.

According to Assistant Directing Business Rep Mark Martin, “they got the same increases as our mechanics, they immediately began paying less for benefits and they now have access to our pension plans and health benefits. In addition, there were a lot of positive changes in their conditions of work.”

Martin adds, “We’ve experienced some growing pains with changes in work assignments and working conditions that we are currently sorting out. But this group is definitely a welcome addition to our union.”

Interim Business Agent Cindy Gagliardi added that while the company didn’t fight the union drive, they’re not accepting the members’ new union status gracefully. “We’ve filed so many grievances. Hopefully, it will calm down soon.”



UNION JOB BOARD

Here’s a list of some of the jobs available at IAM shops. If you’re interested in making more money or changing location, start here or contact your business representative.

IAM District 190: If you’ve ever thought about working directly for your union, helping negotiate and enforce contracts or organizing new members, for the first time in a long while, you have that opportunity. Several long-time union staff members will be retiring this year and their big shoes must be filled! If you want to support your fellow members by becoming a servicing representative or an organizer, pull your resumé together and send it to: DBR Don Crosatto, IAM District 190, 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605.

City/County of San Francisco is hiring a heavy duty mechanic/automotive machinist (Job Code 7323). Pay is \$59.55/hour. To start application process, go to: careers.sf.gov/knowledge

Waste Management’s Davis Street Transfer Station in San Leandro needs heavy duty mechanics. These positions pay \$54.35/hour. Look for them at WMJobs.com

UPS (numerous locations) is looking for plant mechanics. They pay in the \$46/hour range, offer the IAM National pension & the AI pension. To apply, go to ups.com/careers.

SFO Shuttle will be hiring mechanics at its location just outside of SF Airport. Check Indeed for Diesel Fleet Maintenance Mechanics in San Francisco.

Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District: Looking for Lead Building Maintenance Mechanic at its Bus Maintenance Department in San Rafael. Job Number: PS101859. For info on how to apply, go to www.goldengate.org/district/careers



IN THE NEWS

Deportation threats impact farmworkers and growers

Bakersfield has seen a massive drop-off in field workers as ICE agents in unmarked Suburbans have rounded up and detained immigrants in recent weeks. Bakersfield is in the southern part of the Central Valley, which produces about a quarter of the nation’s food and runs on the labor of undocumented laborers. It’s estimated that more than half of Kern County’s farmworkers are undocumented.

One grower reported having only five workers instead of the 30 anticipated. With the citrus harvesting season at its peak, the shortage of workers means vast acres of orange groves remain unpicked. “You’re looking at a recession-level event if this becomes the new long-term standard,” said Richard Gearhart, an economics professor at Cal State-Bakersfield, arguing that President Trump’s immigration policies will lead to higher food prices. —Sergio Olmos, *CalMatters*

New study highlights benefits of paying striking workers unemployment insurance

Lawmakers across the country are increasingly recognizing that making striking workers eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) is good for workers and good for the economy, posits a new study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

Striking workers in most states are disqualified from receiving UI, which opens the door for employers to undermine union negotiations by engaging in bad-faith tactics.

Only two states—New Jersey and New York—currently extend UI to striking workers. Lawmakers in 13 additional states have previously introduced or are actively considering such policies. California will pay UI to locked-out workers, but Gov. Newsom vetoed a law passed by the leg-

islature in 2024 that would pay UI to workers on strike after a 14-day waiting period.

EPI estimates that the cost of extending employment insurance to strikers would represent between 0.04% to 0.96% of a given state’s total UI expenditures—an almost negligible share.

The study shows that these policies impact striking workers and help stabilize the economy by keeping dollars flowing to communities where a strike is taking place.

While opponents have raised concerns that such policies will encourage more strikes, providing UI protections to striking workers may reduce the number of strikes. Most importantly, paying UI to striking workers would help maintain workers’ right to organize and collectively bargain amid ongoing legal and political attacks on labor standards.

MOVING?
Or need to report a member recently deceased...

Send the mailing label on this newspaper to your local union office. Please note: Even if you send your notice to the Pension Fund or the Health & Welfare Trust, that won't change your address as the union has it. Be sure to contact your local union!

See calendar on Page 8 for your local's address.

Note about union meetings

Most union meetings are now being held in person, but since the heat of the pandemic, others are now hybrid, meaning you may also attend on Zoom or on other video-conferencing programs. If you wish to attend online, check with your local to ensure you have the web address and are properly registered.

**4th Annual
Car, Motorcycle & Truck Show**
George Washington High School
600 32nd Avenue, San Francisco
Saturday April 12, 2025
10 a.m. — 3 p.m.

All proceeds benefit the George Washington Auto Shop — the ONLY High School Auto Shop in San Francisco



Use this QR Code to register



\$40/vehicle - Early Registration
\$45/vehicle - Day of show registration
Lunch included for vehicle entries
NO REFUNDS

Everything you need to know is at the QR Code. If you still have additional questions: 650-703-6237

This car show is sponsored by SFUSD, IAM Local 1414, and 106.1 KMEL Radio



UNION MEETINGS

DISTRICT LODGE 190
10260 MacArthur Ave.
Oakland, CA 94605
510-632-3661

Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month
February 25 • March 25 • April 22
Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.
General Delegates' Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

LOCAL 1484
1261 Avalon Blvd.
Wilmington, CA 90744
310-835-6688

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month
February 20 • March 20 • April 17
General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month
February 4 • March 4 • April 1
Retirees' Club: 12:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month:
February 19 • March 19 • April 16

LOCAL 653
5726 E. Shields Avenue
Fresno, CA 93727
559-264-2815

Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month
February 19 • March 19 • April 16
Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m.
Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Local Lodge Meetings will be held both in person and on zoom. If you plan to attend in person, please RSVP so staff can ensure there's enough food. If you want to attend on zoom, you must send a personal email to iamaw653@comcast.net. Be sure to provide your first and last name and the shop you work at in the email. Once you do, you will receive an invite to the zoom meeting.

LOCAL 1528
713 16th Street
Modesto, CA 95354
209-529-9210
machinists2182@gmail.com

Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month
November 6 • December 4
Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.
General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Shop Steward Meeting: 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of each month
February 15 • March 15 • April 19
Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday

LOCAL 801
10260 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94605

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month
February 20 • March 20 • April 17
Membership Meeting: 4:00 p.m.
Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

LOCAL 1546
10260 MacArthur Blvd.,
Oakland, CA 94605
510-638-6705

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month
February 4 • March 4 • April 1
General Membership Meeting & E Board Meetings: 5:30 p.m.

*Meetings are hybrid - you can join in person or on zoom.
Email zr1zo6r@sbcglobal.net to learn how to join in on zoom.*

LOCAL 1101
2102 Almaden Rd., #105
San Jose, CA 95125
408-440-8716

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month
February 11 • March 11 • April 8
Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m.
General Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

*Meetings will be held on the Bluejeans App for the foreseeable future.
Email: aab1101@att.net to learn how to join in.*

LOCAL 1584
10260 MacArthur Blvd.,
Oakland, CA 94605
510-638-6705

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month
February 20 • March 20 • April 17
Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

*Meetings will be hybrid (in person and on zoom) for the foreseeable future.
Email Tom.Swanger@atlaspace.com to learn how to join in on zoom.*

LOCAL 1173
1900 Bates Ave., # H
Concord, CA 94520
925-687-6421
LL1173@sbcglobal.net

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month
February 13 • March 13 • April 10
Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month
February 13 • March 13 • April 10

Meetings will be held on zoom and in person at the Concord office. Contact Cindy at 925-687-6421 for zoom address and passcode.

LOCAL 1414
150 South Boulevard
San Mateo, CA 94402
650-341-2689

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month
February 13 • March 13 • April 10
General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month via Zoom. Please contact the office for the meeting link.
February 20 • March 20 • April 17
Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of March, June, Sept., Dec. All are welcome!
March 5 • June 4 • September 3 • December 3

LOCAL 2182
967 Venture Court
Sacramento, CA 95825
916-929-1040/800-655-2182

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month
February 11 • March 11 • April 8
Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.
General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

For dues questions, call Andrea Cruz at 510-638-6705 x11 or email machinists2182@gmail.com