

USW Local 8751 - District 4

Boston School Bus Drivers' Union

25 Colgate Rd. • Roslindale, MA 02131
Telephone (617) 524-7073 Fax (617) 524-1691
www.BostonSchoolBusUnion.org

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Union Court Victory for Pastor Remy Shines Spotlight on Protocol for Out of Service Bus.

First Student – *Rescind Our Brother's
Unjust Termination, Now!*

On the afternoon of Sept. 11, 2008, Jean H. Remy came to work at the Freeport yard, and found his bus out of service. He got another bus from dispatch, which as it turned out, its regular driver was refusing to drive until a problem with the transmission gear shifter was fixed. She had written it up several days running. Somehow, it never appeared on the downed bus log; never had the problem fixed; never was tagged out; never had its board or windshield marked "out of service". And the DVCR was missing. Not knowing, Mr. Remy got another DVCR, did a circle check, and while attempting to stop on his way to school, the
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Struggle For Jobs Is #1 Priority – from Boston to Pittsburgh to D.C.

In midst of Worst Crisis in Capitalism's History, Local 8751 Stops Layoffs at Home, Joins National Fight for Jobs Program

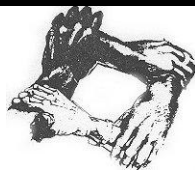
Local 8751's determined struggles for jobs over the last 6 months have proven that by uniting with the communities we serve, an action plan can stop even the most concerted efforts of our employers and government agencies to eliminate our livelihoods and cut budgets on the backs of students, parents, and workers.

The mobilization launched last fall by the Coalition for Equal, Quality Education - the Black Educators Alliance of MA, Work4Quality / Fight4Equity, Councilors Turner, Yancey, & Yoon, bus drivers, teachers, and school communities - brought thousands of people into the streets and School Committee hearings to stop
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Local 8751's staff travelled to Pittsburgh, PA, on September 20th to join the Steelworkers, United Electrical Workers, Bail Out the People Movement, and thousands more who set up a Tent City and mobilized a **March for Jobs** to confront the wealthiest 20 countries of the world, meeting there as the G20. Here, one of the events' main organizers and speakers, **USW Vice President Fred Redmond [center]**, and USW staff rep Dewitt Walton, meet with Local 8751's contingent at Pittsburgh's historic **Freedom Corner**, gathering place for decades for Pittsburgh's Civil Rights Movement.

Unity! Unidada!



Unité! Unidade!

(**Restore Remy!**, continued)

transmission roared into full throttle. (Court testimony from the monitor witness on board had him "repeatedly mashing on the brakes".) He did everything he could to successfully prevent an accident at an intersection where his light had long turned red, and managed to stop the runaway bus without hitting anyone else, though the one-vehicle accident caused extensive damage to the bus. First Student brought in an "expert" from the company that manufactured the bus, whose investigation declared the bus in perfect working order. Despite document requests from the Union and subpoena's from John Pavlos, the Union's defense attorney, the DVCR is still "missing". First Student fired our brother. The police charged him with reckless operation. The Registry declared him an "imminent threat", and took away his license.

After 2 days of trial in West Roxbury District Court, a jury of Pastor Remy's peers unequivocally found him not guilty on all frame-up charges. Should be case closed, right? Except First Student refuses to rescind its unjust termination.

Fact is it was an out of service bus that should never have been dispatched that malfunctioned on our 27 year veteran driver with 0 accidents.

President Mendes has written a letter to First Student Region VP Bob Timilty demanding an immediate meeting of the Safety Policy Committee to enforce the contract's Protocol for Identifying a Bus with a Safety Defect. (See "Guidelines for an Out of Service Bus" and the "Protocol" inserted in this bulletin. **Make sure** your bus has a permanent copy of these agreements, and a laminated, red "Defect Reported" sign, and, most importantly, that **you stand up for your right and responsibility to refuse to drive a bus whose defects are not completely verified as fixed.**)

Rescind Pastor Remy's termination, Now!



(**Jobs**, continued)

the Mayor's 5-zone plan for resegregating Boston Public Schools. When busloads of Coaliton members flooded the June 3rd School Committee meeting, they were forced to call off the vote.

When the bus company and School Department planned dozens of layoffs in August, and again in October, Local 8751's membership - determined to shut down the bids - not only secured jobs for all our union's families; we also won back all the Athletic Charters, adding an average 60-80 charters per day for our membership. And we demand all of our rightful work, illegally subcontracted over the years, back, now!

These attacks on our very ability to survive have been fueled by not only the desires of the racist establishment in Boston and their corporate funders, but also by the momentum of the economic catastrophe that capitalist overproduction and depression is causing for all the workers in Boston, across the country, and throughout the world. While banks, insurance companies, and corporations have forced governments to bail them out to the tune of literally trillions of dollars, the ranks of the unemployed continue to swell monthly to unprecedented numbers, with tens of millions of families just in the U.S. facing record unemployment, foreclosures, poverty, and hunger. Clearly, we can not hope to face this crisis alone.

That's why in September, the Local's leadership travelled to Pittsburg, PA, to march in solidarity with the Steelworkers, the Electrical workers, the Bail Out the People Movement, and thousands of organized, unorganized, unemployed, immigrant and young people, who were there demanding Jobs or a Living Wage from the wealthiest G20 nations gathered in luxury hotels there. We helped set up a tent city for the unemployed in Pittsburg's African-American community, on land belonging to the Monumental Baptist Church, in the spirit of Martin Luther King's Poor People's March for Justice.

And that's why our Nov. 19th membership meeting voted to endorse the April 10, 2010, March for Jobs on Washington, D.C., and to send forces to what promises to be a historic event.

April 10th is the anniversary of the beginning of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during

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(Jobs, continued)

the Great Depression of the 1930's, a mega-program won in the streets by the millions of unemployed people then who forced the government to spend its vast wealth employing tens of millions of people building bridges, parks, roadways, hospitals, and housing - infrastructure for human needs that largely still exist today, but is in urgent need of repair and rebuilding.

By uniting in action with workers and communities from coast to coast, our generation, too, along with the movement which elected the first Black president, can turn around the government's priorities - from bailing out the banks and the corporations making billions in profit from wars abroad, to bailing out people who have been the victims of Wall Street's theft and greed.

Boston's majority Communities of Color Make Historic Gains in City Council Elections.

School Bus Drivers Campaign & Work Polls for **Ayanna, Charles, Chuck, and Felix.**



The leadership and activists of Local 8751 joined in solidarity with the community in this recent election. The results represent a great move forward for the rights of workers and our communities and an important citywide vote against racism. Our dear friend and staunchest Union brother, Chuck Turner, won an historic landslide victory in the face of a continued racist, politically motivated frame-up, thus proving his and our assertion that he would be vindicated in the court of public opinion. Local 8751 joined with the Turner movement in sound trucks, standouts, rallies, debates and in internet cyberspace. This victory dramatically demonstrates the power of Labor / Community alliance.

Our great friend Charles Yancey won yet another term. Ayanna Pressley made history by becoming the first African American women to win citywide. We congratulate her on a great achievement. Felix G. Arroyo's strong finish represents a victory for the Latin Community, the Unions, and the people's movement as a whole. We have known brother Arroyo since his days as Chuck Turner's constituent director, and later as a leader of SEIU and an activist for justice everywhere.

Washington St. Stewards Council Forces Company to Improve Facilities.

Respect, Dignity and Safety Are Our Rights!

When over 20 stewards and Union activists met for the Washington Street Stewards Council, chaired by Chief Steward Garry Murchison, on Wednesday, October 15th, many urgent matters were discussed – but none more important to all the human beings who must live 12+ hours a day than the indignity imposed on us by the awful and intolerable state of the decaying and unsanitary restrooms and other major facilities violations.

Lead by the strong women stewards – with total solidarity from the men – the council decided that the time for meetings and grievances was over, and that direct action needed to be taken. Within days, an inspector from the city's Inspectional Services Dept. showed up, and, guided by the women stewards, was reportedly very concerned about numerous code violations. The inspector made several orders to First Student and the building's slumlord. (A copy of the inspector's report and findings will be posted at the yard as soon as the Union receives it.)

The inspector gave a deadline of 21 days to those responsible for the facilities to fix the violations. Work underway is supposed to include gutting, ventilating and restoring the men's room; fixing violations, properly ventilating, and rehabbing the women's room; cutting out the moldy floor around the water cooler and replacing it with proper tiling; fixing and improving the lighting, ventilation and general conditions in the inside bus parking garage; and cleaning and bringing the entire building's ventilation system and ducts up to code.

The Washington St. Stewards Council has sent a message to our employer and its contractors that our members and co-workers deserve, and will win, the respect, dignity and safety that is our birthright as human beings, and right under the law.

The women stewards at Washington St. have provided a valuable lesson to all of us:

Direct Action and Solidarity are the Key to winning justice, and bettering all of our lives.

We believe that the elections were a barometer of the consciousness of the voters – Black, Latin, Haitian, Cape Verdean, Asian and white - who said no to racism, and voted for progressive change. We look forward to working with our friends to fight to defend Equal Quality education, and to work for Justice.

Right on to the spirit of "Team Unity"

**Stop First Student's
Cruel Corporate Greed, Now!**

**Give Justice to our sick, injured and
disabled sisters and brothers**

Through years of determined struggle and our historic achievements of the last contract, our drivers have won strong benefit protections. We have 13 weeks of Sickness and Accident (S&A) coverage, and first in the city, full company paid Long Term Disability (LTD) Insurance. However, First Student, in the most cynical and heartless manner, has been denying many of our drivers these benefits to which they are entitled. The company stalls, passes the responsibility buck to their Insurance carrier – Hartford - and generally has not been giving our welfare the attention deserved. We say, "No more excuses! Give our people their benefits now!"

Our contract is between the Union and the company. The company is legally liable to pay. It is First Student's responsibility to secure insurance carrier(s) who comply with the contract. We don't need harassment, pestering, bureaucratic make work or painful procrastination. For our leadership, staff and activists, the safety, health and well being of our members is priority one! We have worked hard on this issue and have recently made significant gains – getting individual drivers their money and benefits; fighting for up to date information on members on leave and their status; and establishing a mechanism to redress problems for our members.

President Mendes and the staff have established a committee to monitor the system, assist our members, and carefully track benefit progress. We want to give recognition to the Chief Stewards, Garry Murchison the Committee Chair, and members Hiliare Boaz and Angelo Barros for their hard work. More volunteers are needed and wanted to assist in this effort. If you would like to help, call the Union today. Also, if you know of any member who is out without benefits, let us know. While we have gotten the company to supply us with weekly lists, we have already discovered mistakes.

Together let's fight to defend our benefits!

Local 8751 Holiday Party

**ENJOY AN EVENING OF
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT,
BUFFET, DANCING,
& FINE SOCIALIZING**

**SATURDAY
DECEMBER 19TH
8:00 PM – 1:00 AM
MOSELEY'S ON THE CHARLES**



Come early this year!

Buffet Dinner 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm

DJ Bruno & Dancing 8:00 pm – 1:00 am

Cash Bar (*over 21 only*) Door Prizes

Drivers, Monitors, Mechanics (+ One Guest only)

**Next Stewards Council Meetings
in the yards, starting at 10:30 AM**

Freeport St. – Monday, Nov. 30th

Washington St. – Thurs., Dec. 3rd

Charlestown – Monday, Dec. 7th

Readville – Thurs., Dec. 10th

Get active in your Union!

Defend your Rights!

Strengthen your Contract!

Stand Up for your Sisters & Brothers!

Learn about and Join the

Stewards Council in your Yard!

All Union Activists Encouraged to Attend