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International Brotherhood of Teamsters 25 Louisiana Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20001 Good morning, Chairman Senator Sanders, Ranking Member Dr. Cassidy, distinguished members of the committee. My name is Sean O'Brien. I serve as the General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

When I was last here, we discussed corporate America's longstanding, systematic, and often illegal attacks on working people who organize to form unions. Today, with the Teamsters having ratified the largest and most comprehensive private-sector collective bargaining agreement in North America at United Parcel Service (UPS), I am here to talk about how organized worker power and a union contract are the antidote to corporate greed.

In August, rank-and-file members voted by an overwhelming 86.3 percent to ratify the most lucrative contract in the history of the Teamsters at UPS. The agreement passed by the highest vote ever for a Teamsters contract at UPS. There is no larger union contract with a single employer than the UPS Teamsters National Master Agreement. This five-year contract protects and rewards more than 340,000 UPS Teamsters in the United States and Puerto Rico, raising wages for full- and part-time workers, creating more full-time jobs, and securing important workplace protections, including—for the first time—air conditioning in new package cars and heat shields and ventilation ducts in existing vehicles, which will protect the safety and health of our members.

When I was last here, there was some confusion about pay rates for UPS feeder drivers. To be crystal clear, *prior* to passage of this new five-year contract, UPS feeder drivers, who are paid hourly, made \$41.59 per hour, with most making time-and-a-half paid at over eight hours per day. At 2,080 hours (typical 40-hour work week x 52 weeks) that's \$86,507 per year. When you add 10 hours of overtime per week (which is on the very low end) that puts the average Feeder Driver at around \$119,000 per year. However, most Feeder Drivers work something closer to 18 to 20 hours of overtime per week, putting them at around \$145,000 per year. Mileage Drivers and Sleeper Teams make

even more. On their own website, UPS asserted, pre-contract ratification that Feeder Drivers made an average of \$162,000 per year. Now, they make more.

Highlights of the 2023-2028 UPS Teamsters National Master Agreement include:

- Historic wage increases. Existing full- and part-time UPS Teamsters received no less than \$2.75 more per hour in 2023. Over the length of the contract, wage increases will total at least \$7.50 per hour.
- Existing part-timers were raised up to no less than \$21 per hour immediately, and part-time seniority workers earning more under a market rate adjustment still received all new general wage increases.
- General wage increases for part-time workers are double the amount obtained in the previous UPS Teamsters contract — and existing part-time workers will receive a 48 percent average total wage increase over the next five years.
- Wage increases for full-timers will keep UPS Teamsters the highest paid delivery drivers in the nation, improving their average top rate to \$49 per hour.
- Current UPS Teamsters working part-time will receive longevity wage increases of up to \$1.50 per hour on top of new hourly raises, compounding their earnings.
- New part-time hires at UPS start at \$21 per hour and will advance to \$23 per hour.
- All UPS Teamster drivers classified as 22.4s were reclassified immediately to Regular Package Car Drivers and placed into seniority, ending the unfair two-tier wage system at UPS.
- Safety and health protections, including vehicle air conditioning and cargo ventilation. UPS will equip in-cab A/C in all larger delivery vehicles, sprinter vans, and package cars purchased after Jan. 1, 2024. All cars get two fans and air induction vents in the cargo compartments.
- All UPS Teamsters now receive Martin Luther King Day as a full holiday for the first time.

¹ https://see Article 53 and note addition of \$1.15/hr COLA increase https://teamster.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ups18atlanticareasupp.pdf

- No more forced overtime on Teamster drivers' days off. Drivers will keep one of two workweek schedules and cannot be forced into overtime on scheduled offdays.
- UPS Teamster part-timers will have priority to perform all seasonal support work
 using their own vehicles with a locked-in eight-hour guarantee. For the first time,
 seasonal work will be contained to five weeks only from November-December.
- The creation of 7,500 new full-time Teamster jobs at UPS and the fulfillment of 22,500 open positions, establishing more opportunities through the life of the agreement for part-timers to transition to full-time work.
- More than 60 total changes and improvements to the National Master Agreement
 more than any other time in Teamsters history and zero concessions from the rank-and-file.

Teamsters at UPS fought for these gains. The presence of a union contract levels the playing field and legally requires an employer to bargain, but it does not mean that the employer will be fair. Union or nonunion, there's no such thing as a benevolent employer.

Throughout the bargaining process, corporate interest groups and their representatives used all the expected fear tactics to try to convince the public and government officials at all levels that paying UPS Teamsters their fair share would harm the economy, consumers, and small businesses. As usual, some in Congress took the bait, but none of that fearmongering was accurate.

The truth is that rank-and-file UPS Teamsters sacrificed everything to get this country through a pandemic and enabled UPS to reap record-setting profits.² Teamsters at UPS demanded their fair share of those profits, which they earned through their hard work. The more we told the story of UPS Teamsters, the stronger our fight got against this giant corporation. Every poll showed the public was on the side of our members because

² https://www.ajc.com/news/business/ups-profit-soared-above-10b-in-21-sees-revenue-topping-100b-in-22/2H5Q5CCQ5RBFLKRDLGYLTTZNCM/

the American people will always appreciate and respect hard work.³ The Teamsters achieved this historic contract by engaging our members, running a fierce practice picket campaign nationwide, and by fighting harder than ever before at the bargaining table. Our members posed a credible strike threat and UPS knew we were serious about getting the best contract possible. We got UPS to put \$30 billion in new money on the table, winning big wage increases and protections, all without our members having to go on strike.

The Teamsters continue the fight at other employers. Right now, 5,000 Teamsters nationwide are negotiating a contract with Anheuser-Busch. More than 1,100 Teamsters are standing up to DHL to bargain a first contract at the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky airport. In just a few months, more than 7,000 Teamsters in Hollywood will join IATSE in taking on the big movie and TV studios.

The fight on behalf of American workers never ends. Corporate America and its C-suite leadership will never willingly relinquish their power or wealth. As I outlined in detail before this Committee in March, our broken labor law, tax law, antitrust law, and corporate bankruptcy law work to the favor of corporations and the wealthy. Weak laws with gaping loopholes only favor the consolidation of corporate wealth, not the interests of American workers.

In 2019, families in the top 10 percent held 72 percent of total wealth, and families in the top 1 percent held more than one-third; families in the bottom half held only 2 percent of total wealth.⁴ In October 2022, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) published a report on the productivity pay gap. The report showed that, unlike prior decades, from 1979 to 2020, net productivity rose 61.8 percent, while the hourly pay of typical workers increased only 17.5 percent over four decades. The wealth generated by increased

³ https://aflcio.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/GBAO%20AFL-CIO%20Labor%20Day%20Poll%20Memo.pdf

⁴https://www.cbo.gov/publication/57598#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20families%20in%20the,2%20percen t%20of%20total%20wealth.

productivity isn't going to workers. Additional research by EPI concludes that compensation of top CEOs increased 1,460.2 percent from 1978 to 2021. Top CEO compensation grew roughly 37 percent faster than stock market growth during this period and far eclipsed growth in a typical worker's annual compensation. Increased wealth also went into higher profits like returns to shareholders.⁵

The extreme consolidation of wealth and power in this country is a crisis that deserves Congress' immediate and full attention, but working Americans are not waiting to be saved by their elected officials. Workers are taking action to improve their standard of living, stay safe, and have a voice at work by organizing and building worker power.

Union support is at an all-time high. A Gallup survey in August 2022 found 71 percent of Americans approve of unions.⁶ During the first nine months of Fiscal Year 2022, union representation petitions filed at the NLRB increased 58 percent.⁷

A recent analysis of the effects of union membership on wealth shows that being part of a union is associated with greater wealth for working-class families and especially working-class families of color.⁸ Because of this effect, unions are a crucial means for building wealth among the working class and reducing racial wealth gaps for workers without four-year college degrees. The key findings of this report include:

 Working-class union households hold nearly four times as much median wealth (\$201,240) as the typical working-class nonunion household (\$52,221), suggesting that membership vastly increases wealth for working-class families.⁹

⁵ https://www.epi.org/productivity-pay-gap/; https://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-pay-in-2021/

⁶ https://news.gallup.com/poll/398303/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx

⁷ https://www.nlrb.gov/news-outreach/news-story/correction-first-three-quarters-union-election-petitions-up-58-

exceeding#:~:text=During%20the%20first%20nine%20months,filed%20in%20all%20of%20FY2021.

⁸ https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/democrats/2022/6/jec-ed-and-labor-release-new-report-on-economic-benefits-of-unions

⁹ https://www.americanprogress.org/article/unions-build-wealth-for-the-american-working-class/

 Union membership helps close the wealth gap between working-class and college-educated households. While the median wealth of working-class nonunion households is just 17 percent that of college-educated nonunion households, the median wealth of working-class union households is 67 percent that of college-educated nonunion households.¹⁰

An August 2023 report from the U.S. Department of the Treasury found that the positive effects of unions are not limited to union workers. The report concluded that nonunionized firms in competition with unionized workplaces may choose to raise wages, change hiring practices, or improve their workplace environment to attract workers. Unions can also affect workplace norms by lobbying for workplace safety improvements or advocating for changes in minimum wage laws. The empirical evidence finds that these positive spillovers exist. Each one percentage point increase in private-sector union membership rates translates to about a 0.3 percent increase in nonunion wages. These estimates are larger for workers without a college degree, the majority of America's workforce.¹¹

Unions may also produce benefits for communities that extend beyond individual workers and employers by enhancing social capital and civic engagement. Union members vote 12 percentage points more often than nonunion workers, and nonunion workers in union households vote 3 percentage points more often than individuals in nonunion households. In addition, union members are more likely to donate to charity, attend community meetings, participate in a neighborhood project, and volunteer for an organization.¹²

¹⁰ https://www.americanprogress.org/article/unions-build-wealth-for-the-american-working-class/

¹¹ https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/labor-unions-and-the-us-economy

¹² https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/labor-unions-and-the-us-economy

As Chair Sanders wrote *in The Nation*, for much of the 20th century there was a shared understanding of the role unions needed to play, not just in improving the circumstances of workers but in providing a counterbalance to powerful business interests. The corporate world understands that strong unions can put a check on the kinds of greed, exploitation, and unilateral decision-making that exist in nonunion companies.¹³

It's simple. As a country, we can choose to collectively encourage the growth of good union jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and allow those good jobs to set the standard for competition within an industry or we can continue to allow companies like Amazon to dominate and drive a race to the bottom for working people.

Teamsters changed the game at UPS, battling it out day and night to make sure our members won an agreement that pays strong wages, rewards their labor, and doesn't require a single concession. This new contract sets a new standard in the labor movement and raises the bar for *all* workers.

Prior to ratification of the Teamsters' new contract, UPS drivers averaged \$39 per hour in wages and \$36 per hour in benefits compared to Amazon drivers who averaged \$21 per hour in wages and \$9 per hour in benefits. Part-time workers at UPS averaged \$22 per hour in wages and \$24 per hour in benefits compared to Amazon part-time warehouse workers who averaged \$18 per hour in wages and \$7 per hour in benefits.

When you go to work at UPS as a Teamster, you get the highest wages in the industry, you get a pension, you get real protections on the job, and you get a fully paid health care plan that's better than the one I have as General President of the Teamsters. These wages and benefits apply to all full- and part-time workers. Where else are you seeing that across the U.S. economy? Virtually nowhere. This is why there were so many stories about online job searches for UPS careers skyrocketing after news of our contract. It is

¹³ https://www.thenation.com/article/society/bernie-sanders-angry-about-capitalism/

why Amazon gave warehouse workers a raise while the Teamsters were in the middle of winning our contract fight at UPS and again for delivery drivers shortly after contract ratification.¹⁴

Amazon knows what the union difference means for workers in the delivery and logistics industries. That's why the company does all that it can to obstruct worker power, beginning with union busting and intimidation tactics. Moreover, if Congress and state legislatures do not act to protect the rights of workers to unionize and to regulate the unchecked march toward automation, companies like Amazon will ultimately automate away human employees, turning these industries into jobless industrial landscapes.

According to filings with the Department of Labor (DOL), in a single year Amazon spent \$4.3 million on consultants to prevent its employees from unionizing. Amazon's entire business model depends on worker exploitation and fosters worker turnover. The company uses anticompetitive business practices to increase its dominance and drive down labor standards within its core industries. To do this, the company relies on weak and outdated labor, occupational safety, and antitrust law, underfunded and understaffed enforcement agencies, and holes in regulatory jurisdiction.

Last June, leaked documents showed that Amazon had a 150 percent turnover rate. The documents warned, "If we continue business as usual, Amazon will deplete the available labor supply in the US network by 2024."¹⁷ According to a report by the Strategic Organizing Center (SOC), Amazon's punishing pace-of-work results in worker injury rates that are nearly twice as high as that of all other non-Amazon warehouse facilities.¹⁸

¹⁴ https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2023/aug/08/everyone-wants-to-work-at-ups-after-union-scores-1/; https://www.reuters.com/business/amazon-raises-wages-warehouse-workers-insider-2022-09-28/; https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/transportation/amazon-invests-over-840-million-in-dsp-rates-and-new-driver-programs

¹⁵ https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/business/amazon-union-christian-smalls.html

¹⁶ https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2023/09/ftc-sues-amazon-illegally-maintaining-monopoly-power

¹⁷ https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/jun/22/amazon-workers-shortage-leaked-memowarehouse

¹⁸https://thesoc.org/news/report-shows-amazon-workers-injured-more-than-twice-industry-average/; https://thesoc.org/what-we-do/the-injury-machine-how-amazons-production-system-hurts-workers/

Amazon's Delivery Service Partner (DSP) program is a textbook example of how Amazon utilizes weaknesses in labor, unfair competition, and antitrust law to maintain its dominance, obstruct worker power, and drive down labor standards. Amazon has set up more than 2,000 nominally independent DSPs in the U.S. to deliver its packages, employing an estimated 115,000 drivers. Amazon dictates the order of deliveries, the route, the progress, and speed of each delivery. DSP employees and their trucks or vans are branded with the Amazon logo. Amazon monitors DSP drivers though an app called Mentor that is installed on navigation devices that DSP drivers must use. Amazon dictates prices for each delivery and limits the size of DSPs by capping the number of routes it assigns to each. Amazon terminates DSPs who attempt to reduce their drivers' grueling workload or increase their pay.

DSPs and their workers cannot fight back. When they do, Amazon can simply terminate their contracts and shift the work to other DSPs. Keeping each DSP thinly capitalized and under tight control allows Amazon to prevent DSPs from challenging Amazon's power over them. For example, Amazon has used several adaptations of its DSP contract to impose an exclusive dealings arrangement on DSPs. One of the most recent versions required DSPs to accept delivery request "Monday through Sunday, 365 days a year, at times and days designated by Amazon." By preventing DSPs from working with competitors and growing their "so-called" independent operations, Amazon ensures it remains the only source of income for DSPs, and that they never build the power necessary to confront Amazon on their own. 19

Despite this extensive control and branding by Amazon, Amazon asserts that DSPs are independent businesses and disclaims corporate responsibility for the DSPs and employment responsibility for DSP drivers. Yet, in numerous instances, federal wage

¹⁹ https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/22/tech/amazon-dsp-portland/index.html; https://www.vice.com/en/article/wxdbnw/i-had-nothing-to-my-name-amazon-delivery-companies-are-being-crushed-by-debt

and hour lawsuits filed by drivers against DSPs name Amazon as a co-defendant. In fact, Amazon has settled multiple cases in which it was a named defendant, accepting no liability under the terms of the settlement agreements. Thus, the company has avoided lengthy litigation that could ultimately determine Amazon to be a joint employer. By avoiding this classification, it enjoys all the control associated with having its own inhouse fleet without concern for unionization efforts.

With its dominance, Amazon uses the DSP arrangement to eradicate labor market competition by dictating standards to its supposed competitors, while also making them rely on Amazon for their business. Amazon is also replicating the DSP model in the tractor-trailer middle-mile segment with its Amazon Freight Partners. Amazon's freight operations serve both inter-facility movement of Amazon products and third-party shippers. These small trucking operations are often poorly vetted, and a recent Wall Street Journal investigation showed that Amazon routinely hired companies with poor safety track records.²⁰

Unjust barriers to union representation and collective bargaining rights permeate federal labor law. For decades, FedEx has exploited what is sometimes referred to as the "express carrier loophole," placing tens of thousands of unequivocally non-airline employees, including truck drivers and package handlers, under the Railway Labor Act (RLA), instead of the NLRA.²¹ Because the RLA requires an "all or nothing" approach to craft bargaining, this means that upwards of 100,000 employees would have to be organized simultaneously into a single unit, as opposed to the NLRA, which allows location by location organizing, as would be found at any FedEx competitor. This special carveout status, which FedEx has spent millions of dollars lobbying to preserve, is not rooted in well-reasoned labor law, but in a desire to obstruct worker organizing.

²⁰ Christopher Weaver, "Amazon Routinely Hired Dangerous Trucking Companies, With Deadly Consequences," Wall Street Journal, Sept. 22, 2022.; https://thesoc.org/what-we-do/the-worst-mile-production-pressure-and-the-injury-crisis-in-amazons-delivery-system/

²¹ https://www.politico.com/story/2010/06/ups-fedex-worlds-apart-on-labor-law-039079

There is a misconception that unions stifle economic growth and entrepreneurship. There is a fear in these halls about speaking ill of anyone deemed a "job creator." When our elected leaders fail to outlaw abusive business models, they're not protecting entrepreneurship — they're enabling corporate greed and encouraging the ultimate creation of a workplace where human beings are no longer relevant. That's why the Teamsters have been publicly critical of California Gov. Gavin Newsom for recently vetoing legislation that would have mandated human operators inside heavy autonomous vehicles. ²²

American workers want unions. They have a right to join or form a union. But as we witness every day, employers will try everything they can to deny that right to working people. When corporate executives have friends on Capitol Hill who help them get away with it, the potential for workers to get ahead in this country further disappears. If we want to make America a better country, we have to stop letting corporations destroy the middle class through their abuse and exploitation of workers. We have to advocate for workers. We have to really fight for them. And it can't just be the Teamsters doing the heavy lifting. We need your help. We need our elected officials to do more, and to do what's right.

We have got to put more money into workers' pockets. That's what the Teamsters just did at UPS. It's what unions are doing all over the country. And American workers are paying attention.

There is much that Congress can do right now to support worker power and union growth as the antidote to corporate greed. Here are a few of the Teamsters Union's federal priorities:

Stand with Workers Fighting for Their Fair Share of Corporate Wealth: Yes, quite literally stand with them on the picket line, but also figuratively through your public

²² https://teamster.org/2023/09/teamsters-labor-allies-demand-gov-newsom-sign-ab-316/

statements. In July, 173 bipartisan members in the House and 29 Senators, many on this Committee, signed a letter stating support for UPS Teamsters' statutory and constitutional rights to withhold their labor and initiate and participate in a strike. While we deeply appreciate that support, that letter should not have been as newsworthy and notable as it was. Members of Congress must be actively and publicly engaged in confronting corporate greed in your home states and districts.

End Exploitative Fissured Business Models that Encourage a Competitive Race to the Bottom on Labor Standards: Specifically, enforce joint employment laws and strengthen antitrust laws to end practices like Amazon's DSP program. Amazon is avoiding liability for and responsibility to its employees under its program, while still retaining control over nearly every aspect of their work. Amazon's DSP program is a textbook example of how the corporate giant utilizes weaknesses in both labor and antitrust law to maintain its dominance, obstruct worker power, and drive down labor standards. By preventing DSPs from working with competitors and growing their "so-called" independent operations, Amazon ensures it remains the only source of income for DSPs, and that these workers never build the power necessary to confront Amazon on their own.²³ The Teamsters Union strongly supports the recent NLRA joint employer rule and opposes all efforts to weaken or overturn that rule.

Rein in Excessive Executive Compensation and Tax Corporations Fairly: From 1978 to 2022, top CEO compensation shot up 1,209.2 percent compared with a 15.3 percent increase in a typical worker's compensation. In 2022, CEOs were paid 344 times as much as a typical worker, in contrast to 1965 when they were paid 21 times as much as a typical worker.²⁴ The federal tax code is rife with inequity and loopholes that favor corporations and the ultra-wealthy. For example, an existing tax loophole allows

²³ https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/22/tech/amazon-dsp-portland/index.html; https://www.vice.com/en/article/wxdbnw/i-had-nothing-to-my-name-amazon-delivery-companies-are-

being-crushed-by-debt

²⁴ https://www.epi.org/publication/ceo-pay-in-2022/#full-report

corporations to deduct from their taxable income any amount paid to CEOs and their executives, as long as the pay is "performance based." This means that the more they pay their executives, the less they pay in federal taxes. Closing the CEO pay loophole would save taxpayers \$50 billion over 10 years, according to the non-partisan Joint Committee on Taxation. We should pass legislation like S.3155/H.R. 324 *The Stop Subsidizing Multimillion Dollar Corporate Bonuses Act*.

Address Inequity in Corporate Bankruptcy Statute: Corporations and Wall Street have a long history of using bankruptcy to deprive employees and retirees of their hard-fought earnings and retirement benefits. In corporate bankruptcies, worker claims for compensation and benefits are often denied while executives' claims are given preferential treatment. We need to reform corporate bankruptcy laws that favor the wealthy and well connected over working people. The Teamsters Union urges Congress to pass the *Prioritizing Employees and Retirees in Bankruptcy Act*, or similar legislation that dramatically improves recoveries for active employees and retirees.

Deny Federal Contracts to Union Busting Companies: Full Stop.

Pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. The PRO Act would address weaknesses and close loopholes in federal labor law that make it easier for corporations to obstruct worker power. The bill would impose meaningful penalties on employers who violate the NLRA; ban captive audience meetings; expedite first contract negotiations; and protect the right to strike.

Fully Fund the NLRB and OSHA. The recent surge in collective worker action means more work for the NLRB and OSHA. Both agencies have been starved for resources for too long. We can pass model legislation, but it means little without meaningful enforcement. To further combat Amazon's exploitative business model, we should pass legislation at the federal level like the state level *Warehouse Worker Protection Act*. This

bill addresses grueling and arbitrary productivity quotas which directly contribute to worker injury and turnover in Amazon warehouses.²⁵

Modernize Antitrust Laws and Address the Impact of Excessive Concentration and Anti-competitive Action on Labor Markets: The Teamsters will continue to support robust antitrust enforcement and reform. Our agenda is defined by three objectives: 1) curtailing concentrations of corporate power that harm workers; 2) attacking unfair and abusive business models and practices that threaten workers; and 3) empowering working people to engage in collective action against corporate criminals who seek to deny their fundamental right to organize. Congress can take a first step in advancing this agenda by passing Senator Klobuchar and Grassley's American Innovation and Choice Online Act. This legislation is the tip of the spear of a broader pro-worker antitrust agenda and would stop predatory Big Tech platforms like Amazon from placing their own products and services at an unfair advantage over high-road employers in the warehousing and logistics sector. In addition to supporting greater oversight of the labor market impacts of companies like Amazon, we support enforcement and regulation efforts to treat pernicious practices such as use of vertical restraints and misclassification schemes as unfair methods of competition. The labor dispute exemption to antitrust law must also be respected, and if necessary, Congress should clarify for the courts what our labor and antitrust laws already state clearly: worker organizing efforts to improve labor conditions are exempt from antitrust scrutiny, in acknowledgement of workers' fundamental right to organize.

End Special Tax Treatment for Union Busting Activity: The No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act would end the taxpayer subsidization of anti-union activity by corporations. The bill would classify business' interference in worker organization campaigns as political speech under the tax code and therefore not tax deductible.

²⁵ https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/03/new-york-passes-bill-targeting-amazon-warehouse-productivity-quotas.html

Enforce the DOL Rule on ESG Investment: Ensure that union workers can put their own pension money to work in their best interest.

Close the Express Carrier Loophole: Pass the *Package Delivery Parity Act* and ensure that tens of thousands of misclassified non-airline workers are appropriately covered by the NLRA.