

Happy St. Patrick's Day from Local 18

In light of the recent UTLA strike here in Los Angeles I would like to share with you an opportunity I had to educate somebody on the importance of unions. During the strike I had a family member post on social media that the teachers need to "stop whining and get back to work". I was in complete disbelief that someone whose Father, Brother, Sister, and Brother-in-Law are all union members would argue this point. It's hard for me to conclude that teachers who are actively fighting for increased salary, smaller class sizes, and additional nurses, librarians, and counselors can be conceived as "whining." The best interest of the students is obviously the main point at hand. I had a conversation with this family member to really try and understand his point of view and found that his only argument was about the salary increase. He was uninformed of the other requests being made by UTLA members as well as the educational requirements and average salaries of teachers. I explained to him how reducing class sizes and adding resources for students will not only benefit our future generations of students but will allow teachers to be more effective. All of that aside I asked him if it were his Father, Brother, or Sister striking for wages and work conditions would he support them or would he tell them to stop "whining". I asked him how his childhood was, did he grow up poor? Did he ever go hungry? Did he always have clothes on his back and a roof over his head? A family of six supported solely by a union father. That finally put things in perspective for him and he agreed that his comments were out of line.

This topic, Brothers and Sisters, is discussed quite often, and most recently in Local 126 with Brother Staab. From police officers, firefighters, teachers, service workers, and building trades workers these are people we interact with on a daily basis who fight for many of the same things we do. We must always do the right thing and stand in solidarity with our fellow unions. If at any time we encounter striking workers, please, call your Business Representatives to ask questions and discuss the situation to better help you determine whether or not you should cross the picket line.

Brothers and Sisters I need to bring up two more points that need discussing. First, is in regards to paystubs. I don't know about you but I always remember to check mine weekly and the main reason is to insure it is correct. It doesn't happen that often but mistakes do happen and we should want these mistakes corrected as soon as possible. I hear often of members who rarely, if ever, verify their paystub and solely rely on the direct deposit total. That's pretty darn trusting if you ask me. Remember, it's **YOUR** money, make sure you are getting paid all of it.

Secondly, I would like to discuss sign-in sheets. Many times I have sat at a safety training class and a supervisor has tried to pass around a sign-in sheet. We need to remember that the supervisor may take roll but that we are not required to sign a sign-in sheet at any company training class. A signed document is a legal document and don't ever think that it won't be used against you.

In Solidarity

-Chris "Puddin'" Crha

local18journal@gmail.com