



NEWS FROM

Teamsters Local 1205

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OVERWHELMING SUPPORT SHOWN FOR BAUMANN BUS WORKERS

Bus Workers Stand Strong to Achieve Contract, Improve Working Conditions

(Farmingdale, NY) – Over one thousand Long Island union members—and four US congressmen—stood and cheered on Monday in support of the Baumann Bus workers, who are waging their historic fight for a first union contract.

School bus workers employed at the Baumann Bus company's nine Long Island locations participated in the meeting of the Long Island Federation of Labor affiliates. At the event, the congressmen and many other distinguished guests pledged their unwavering commitment to helping the Baumann workers as they fight to achieve their long overdue contract. Present at the IBEW Local 25 hall were elected union officials and rank-and-file union workers from every unionized trade in the area.

On November 20, after more than a year of organizing, an overwhelming majority of Baumann employees beat back their employer's vicious anti-union campaign and voted to be represented by Teamsters Local 1205 in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Headquartered in Farmingdale, Local 1205 represents employees from all over Long Island, including many First Student school bus employees.

Now, nearly 5 months after the stunning election victory, the lawyers for the four Baumann Bus companies (Baumann Bus, Alert Coach, Acme Bus, and Brookset Bus) are deliberately working to delay progress in contract negotiations, in an shameful effort to prevent the employees from gaining any of the economic justice they are fighting for. In fact, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has issued a complaint against Baumann and Acme for their illegal activities, including their threatening of employees.

John Durso, the Federation's President, addressed the thousand member delegation and reiterated to Baumann workers the full support of Long Island's 250,000 union members. "The Baumann Bus contract campaign is important to all of us and we will not let these workers down. We're all in this together, and together we'll win!" said Durso.

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Congressman Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) stated: “I proudly supported you at your great rally in October and I still do! You deserve your union contract and without delay. I’ll do all I can to help you. A strong labor movement is part of what makes this country great.”

Congressman Tim Bishop had called Teamsters Local 1205 President Timothy Lynch earlier in the day during negotiations to offer support in getting a contract. “I fully support you in everything you are trying to achieve and will do everything we can to help you get the contract you deserve,” said Rep. Tim Bishop (D-N.Y.).

All the congressmen agreed to write to Baumann Bus President Ron Baumann, telephone him and urge that he stop the delay tactics.

Teamsters Local 1205 President Timothy Lynch spoke passionately about the courage and conviction of the Baumann workers, and thanked the congressmen and all of Long Island labor for their support. Lynch described the economic exploitation many employees were suffering.

“We have drivers employed for more than 20 years who are making only \$10 and change an hour! We have school bus maintenance employees, repairing vehicles that transport Long Island’s children, making \$9 per hour! Over 75 percent of Baumann/Acme employees can’t afford, and therefore do not buy, the expensive company-sponsored medical insurance,” Lynch said. “I could tell dozens of economic horror stories, from Baumann workers who have no electricity in their homes to one worker who is homeless, living in his car. These outrages shouldn’t go on for another minute. Every human being deserves a living wage, and we, the labor movement on Long Island, must work together to make the tragic reality of that awful phrase ‘the working poor’ a thing of the past.”

Two Baumann employees, Gerry McCrae, a driver from Coram, and Martha Swiatkowski, a driver from Westbury, spoke to the gathering. They described their and their co-workers’ brave fight for justice and requested the congressmen’s continued support. The audience rose to its feet and shouted approval and support. One CWA union shop steward who works for Verizon said afterwards: “I was so moved by the way those Baumann ladies and Timothy Lynch spoke. I will make sure all our local union members hear about this!”

Gary Nazon, a Teamsters Local 1205 Shop Steward working for First Student, said: “This was marvelous—to see so many working people cheering on the Baumann employees in the fight for justice! It brought tears to my eyes. We at First Student know the importance of solidarity among workers and among different unions and politicians, because we fought a similar fight at our bus yards and we won a good contract! With the Baumann workers standing together, including with our elected officials, I have no doubt they too can win!”

On May 1, Baumann workers will be meeting throughout the day on a contract vote and other options.

Founded in 1903, the Teamsters Union represents more than 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.