



# CONNECTIONS

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*This victory strengthens our ability to organize more construction-related companies*

## Reliable Trucking drivers vote to join Local 853

**R**eliable Trucking was everything but reliable for the nearly 120 drivers working for them. By voting to be represented by Local 853 on August 31, these drivers have taken the first step to increasing the reliability of their work life.

The drivers' primary concern is that they are often forced to drive for more hours than the law allows. The drivers are also seeking consistent payments for their work, as the company routinely changes the pay structure. And, they are hopeful that the union can negotiate better health coverage for their families and stronger protections against favoritism and discrimination.

One of the last construction-related companies that utilize more "employee" drivers than owner-operators, Reliable Trucking delivers cement power, rock, aggregate, and construction related products all over Northern California. The drivers are dispatched out of Pleasanton, but may be located in as many as eight geographic areas in Northern California.

Local 853 began the organizing drive by talking with the drivers. Business Agent Stu Helfer and Organizer Jesse Casquero quickly assessed that most of the drivers recognized the benefits of union representation but were unaware of, or afraid to exercise their rights. However, it didn't take long for more than 70% of the drivers to sign authorization cards to request representation by the Local.

Once the official election period began in early August, Local 853 recruited our



*After the vote, these Reliable drivers in Stockton are proud to stand up for their new union.*

members from the Ready Mix industry to talk with Reliable drivers wherever they saw one about the advantages of union representation. The Local also tapped members of other unions who come into daily contact with the Reliable drivers to offer support and make sure that they understood that by voting for the union, they were helping themselves and their families.

Special thanks to RMC shop steward Doug Radonich and Kent Kerns from the *S.F. Chronicle*, both of whom spent numerous hours helping convince the drivers that they were doing the right thing. Teamsters Local 137 also lent significant help to the campaign.

The Local also produced and distributed to every Reliable voter a DVD that features

Teamster members, some of whom formerly worked for Reliable. This turned out to be an invaluable tool that we will continue to use in future organizing drives.

The company hired an army of anti-union consultants who specialize in breaking every NLRB statute. On one hand, they threatened the drivers with the loss of their jobs; on the other, they promised wage increases if the drivers voted against union representation.

When the votes were counted, a solid majority voted "Union Yes." A number of unfair labor charges, objections, and challenges still need to be resolved before Local 853 can begin bargaining on behalf of the Reliable drivers.

"In the face of the intense anti-union campaign that the company waged, the Reliable drivers showed real guts and persistence," says Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise.

"We strongly believe that companies can benefit from the consistency and productivity of having their own drivers, and they can still maintain a high level of productivity. This victory will strengthen our ability to organize more construction-related companies," Aloise added.

*"In the face of the intense anti-union campaign that the company waged, the Reliable drivers showed real guts and persistence..."*



*Local 853 Secretary-Treasurer Rome Aloise addresses a picnic/meeting in Stockton attended by Reliable drivers and their families, held in August.*



## The fight for our rights never stops

By ROME ALOISE

As union members, we are on what seems to be a never-ending cycle to defend ourselves from corporate and right-wing wolves. Leading the pack is our esteemed governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

This time we have to fight for our rights in a November election that wasn't supposed to happen. The governor decided he couldn't wait for the regularly scheduled election in 2006 to put his anti-union, anti-work propositions on the ballot.

You may have already experienced Governor Schwarzenegger's "reforms" that slashed and cut your workers' compensation benefits. The governor tried to take away the pensions earned by public employees, cut death benefits for police and firefighter families, and he continues to undermine the rights and protections that cover workers throughout the state of California. He unsuccessfully tried to take away your guaranteed lunches and breaks, but rumor has it that he'll try again!

You may have voted for Schwarzenegger because he campaigned against "special interests" and for "reform." It turns out that the only special interests in his mind are the unions that oppose his anti-worker agenda. In fact, Schwarzenegger has taken more money from every major corporation and employer organization than any governor in the history of California. Talk about a hypocrite!

The only protection we have against these anti-worker interests is our support of the politicians who support us—mostly through our DRIVE program—and our votes on Election Day.

I can't urge you more strongly to vote for your rights as a union member in November. Voter turnout will be key in winning this off-year "special election." Every vote counts—especially yours. Please consider your union's endorsements that appear on the next page and be sure to vote on November 8.

### Helping our sisters and brothers on the Gulf Coast

Local 853 again is leading the way in helping our sisters and brothers across the nation, by adopting a family in the Katrina-devastated area.

We have asked the International Union's Human Rights Director Cheryl Johnson to assist us in identifying a Teamster family from the Gulf Coast to help. Shortly, we will let you know how you can assist this family in overcoming their plight.

### Organizing wins

Our organizing program has shown solid results in the past few months. Our organizing victory at Reliable Trucking is an important key to organizing in the construction industry. We plan to show this company and the industry that using employee drivers rather than owner-operators can work to everyone's benefit.

Our new members at the Aramark warehouse in the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum just ratified their first contract. By joining the union, these members got significant wage increases and improvements in job protections.

Our construction division recently

signed a number of sweeper companies to contract. Also, KRS has signed their first contract, and our new members there received significant wage increases, improved health and welfare and protective contract language.

We have a number of organizing targets that we are pursuing, including some of the smaller ready mix companies, some warehouses and manufacturing. As a Teamster, you can help by explaining the benefits of having union representation and calling us with any leads that you hear about.

### Contract settlements

We negotiated, and our members ratified, a number of contracts this summer. The list includes Globe Plumbing Supply, Pennzoil, Safeway Dairy, Instant Whip, Challenge Dairy, Bay Meadows, Alta/Westside, Truitt and White, Larsen Bros, Osborne, White Bros, Economy, Piedmont, BK Mill, and Macy's.

In all of these negotiations, the continuing increases in health and welfare costs have been the big issue. Cost increases this year are coming in at about 10%—still high, but an improvement over the last few years.

### Membership Appreciation

Our local's annual Membership Appreciation Meeting is scheduled for November 5. With growing participation each year, we always say we may need to move to a larger hall. Join with your fellow union members in November to set the record and send us to a new hall in 2006!

## Teamsters Local 853

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**Members:** Send address changes and comments to the above address or e-mail us: [connections@teamsters853.org](mailto:connections@teamsters853.org)

*Debra Chaplan, Editor*

## Benefits & Announcements

### WCT Pension Plan Q&A

On the second Wednesday of every month, a representative from the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Administrator comes to Local 853's San Leandro office to answer your pension questions. Call 510-895-8853 or 800-400-1250 for an appointment.

### SIP 401(k) Enrollment

Most Local 853 members are eligible for the SIP 401(k) Plan. If you are not yet enrolled, or wish to increase your pre-tax

deferred amounts—check with your business agent, your company's HR department, or call 1-800-4-PRETAX [1-800-477-3829].

### Monthly Meetings

Local 853's membership meetings are the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the West Bay and East Bay:

- 1700 Marina Blvd., San Leandro, or
  - Laborers' Union Hall, 300-7th Avenue San Mateo
- Call 510-895-8853 to confirm location.

# The governor's proposed anti-working family initiatives

Governor Schwarzenegger calls 2005 the "year of reform," but his main reforms are merely an attack on unions and union members. It's hard to tell what the problem is if these propositions are the solution! Props 74-77 are sponsored by or endorsed by the governor. We also provide a brief overview of some of the other measures on the November 8 ballot.

## 74 Attacks on teachers & schools

This initiative reduces job security and contract protections for teachers. It requires teachers to teach for five years instead of two years before gaining permanent status and contract protections. This initiative does nothing to improve our schools and will make it harder to attract and keep good teachers.

## 76 Budget power grab

Prop 76 allows the Governor to make devastating midyear budget cuts if revenues fall below expenditures. It guts Proposition 98, the law voters approved to guarantee minimum funding to our schools. It eliminates the requirement that the state must restore any money owed to schools when education funding falls below the minimum guarantee.

## 77 Redrawing district lines

Borrowing a page from the Texas handbook, Gov. Schwarzenegger wants to require a three-member panel of retired judges to immediately redraw congressional and state legislative district lines. The Governor has stated that the purpose of this maneuver is to elect more moderates to the Legislature and congress. The real goal is to boot the pro-worker majority out of legislative power in Sacramento.

## 78 Phony prescription drug bill

Brought to the ballot by big drug companies, Prop 78 is designed to confuse voters so they will vote NO on Prop 79. Prop 78 relies on drug manufacturers to voluntarily lower their prices, covers fewer people and does not allow the state of California to enforce the program.

## 75 Paycheck deception

This initiative would prohibit a union that represents any public employees from using union dues or fees for political contributions unless each member provides written consent on a form mandated by the initiative. That may sound appealing to some, but union members already have that right.

What Prop 75 really does is allow outsiders to decide how you should run your union. It will tie up unions in so much bureaucratic paperwork that they'll have a hard time speaking out for the rights of their members.

Prop 75 is intended to silence the voice of union members in politics and prevent us from fighting back against big business. Union political contributions would be restricted but corporations would be untouched by the initiative. Corporations already outspend labor 24 to 1 in national politics and Prop 75 would make this imbalance even worse.

Defeating Prop 75 is a top priority for all California unions.

## 79 Cheaper Rx drugs

Prop 79 establishes a real discount drug program for up to ten million eligible low and middle-income Californians. Discounts are obtained by requiring drug manufacturers who sell to Medi-Cal to offer comparable discounts to the new program.

Prop 79 would allow the State to negotiate directly with the pharmaceutical companies for lower drugs prices for millions of citizens, just as the state of Maine does. Californians in need will get cheaper prescription drugs, and the state's taxpayers will save hundreds of millions of dollars.

## 80 Repeal energy deregulation, prevent blackouts

Seniors, consumers and small businesses need reliable electric service at reasonable prices. Prop 80 ensures that all electricity providers are subject to the regulation of the Public Utilities Commission, and that those providers have the certainty they need to make sure we have adequate supplies of electricity in the future.

### November 8 Special Election Recommendations

Proposition . . . . .	Recommendation
73 . . . . .	No recommendation
74 . . . . .	<b>NO!</b>
<b>NO on PROP 75</b>	
76 . . . . .	<b>NO!</b>
77 . . . . .	<b>NO!</b>
78 . . . . .	<b>NO!</b>
79 . . . . .	<b>YES!</b>
80 . . . . .	<b>YES!</b>

**Register to Vote** — Deadline: October 24  
*Apply for an absentee ballot*  
**Vote** — for your rights as a union member



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*Local 853 – organizing and building a stronger union*

## Warehouse-Dispatch Web-link is up and running!

Seeing union warehouse job opportunities is just a click away. Go to Local 853's new web link from our home page: [www.teamsters853.org](http://www.teamsters853.org). You can find the link—**Warehouse Dispatch**—on the far right column. Just look for the spinning wheel.

This link will provide the members of Local 853 and Companies the opportunity to "click and see" who is taking applications and hiring.

Updated every Monday morning, this web link will also provide you with useful information including Dispatch Procedures, tips for resume writing and job listings.

Members may also download the dispatch form from this link. Then just fill it out and mail it in.

[www.teamsters853.org](http://www.teamsters853.org)  
Warehouse Dispatch



It all comes down to voter turnout!  
Support your union.  
Vote in the November 8 Special Election.

# NO on PROP 75

If they come after public employees this year, they'll come after YOU next year!