

## POLITICAL AND LABOR NEWS

# Sean O'Brien and General Executive Board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Begin Five-Year Term

Sean O'Brien became the 11th General President at a swearing-in ceremony held on March 22nd, 2022 at the Washington DC headquarters of the IBT. General Secretary-Treasurer **Fred Zuckerman** and the newly elected General Executive Board, including Local 237's own President, **Gregory Floyd** (first row, 3rd from left), who was elected as International Vice President At-Large, also took the oath of office. Following the swearing-in, O'Brien and his team went straight to work, holding their first board meeting to discuss the priorities of the new administration. ■



## For Ourselves, Our Colleagues and Our Planet...

By **Saul Fishman**  
CSBA President

As we move our clocks forward and "Spring ahead" (actually, most of our digital devices do this automatically), now is the perfect time to think about our work-life balance. Yes, we work hard, no matter the season. Whenever possible, we adhere to deadlines, despite the very full workloads burdening the vast majority of us. This often requires working overtime, sometimes paid in cash, sometimes via compensatory ("comp") time, and sometimes (hopefully on rare occasion), not reported or compensated at all. If the later scenario is happening with any frequency, we definitely want to know about it and help address the situation.

No matter why we find ourselves spending more time working than we bargained for (and our titles are supposedly 35 hours per week), we're human, and need time for ourselves. Time to decompress, to literally and figuratively smell the roses. Time with our families and friends, engaging in the activities which make each of us unique and fulfilled.

Is this an impossibility? Asking too much? No, it is not. What we need is the intelligent use of our time, and an employer who recognizes that employees who achieve a healthy work-life balance are happier, more productive and easier to retain.

One important way that our employer can help us achieve this much needed work-life balance is to allow us to telework two or three days per week, also known as a "hybrid schedule", based on the needs of the agency and unit that you are in. Depending upon your commute, working from home even two days per week can save you four to five or more hours of stressful, totally unproductive time, which can be better spent literally hundreds of ways. [And of course, it is the environmentally responsible thing to do for our planet, combatting global warming by reducing our carbon footprint.]

CSBA members, the Agency Attorneys, Attorney Internes and related titles in almost every city agency and authority, performed this work seamlessly and capably for eighteen months. We know how to appear on Zoom, Teams, Go-ToMeeting and similar platforms, and to dress and act professionally. Mayor Adams doesn't need to worry about us showing up to an online meeting or hearing in pajamas! That's not who we are or how we act.

We hope to work with this administration to amicably achieve this goal, and are ready, willing and able to commence collective bargaining on this crucial issue, as well as on several other longstanding demands. However, we are determined to achieve this essential ability whether through bargaining or via state or local legislation. Already our members have sent hundreds of emails to their State Assemblymembers and State Senators via our website, [www.csbanyc.org](http://www.csbanyc.org), and more members and more unions are utilizing this new feature on our website each day. And many of us are determined to not spend any money on lunch or at other stores near the office until we obtain the right and the respect to telework part-time. Keep using those CSBA insulated lunch bags, folks!

Please join us and work with us, and together let's collectively do the right thing for ourselves, our colleagues and our planet. Let the new season serve as a reminder that change is inevitable and can bring renewed hope for a better and more balanced professional and personal life. ■



## Teamsters Take on Amazon

By **Thomas Gesualdi**  
President of Teamsters Joint Council 16

The growth of Amazon is a threat to Teamster members across our industries. The company has become the largest player in delivery and logistics by undercutting the wages and working standards that Teamsters members have established over generations. It has built new facilities at a breathtaking pace, often siphoning off subsidies from local governments that would otherwise go to schools, roads, and other public services. And Amazon's ever growing monopoly on e-commerce has smothered the local small businesses that give our city character.

At the International Brotherhood of Teamsters 2021 Convention, the delegates of our union voted overwhelmingly to make building worker power and supporting union organizing at Amazon a nationwide priority. It is a multi-front campaign that includes training member organizers, moving legislation, and opposing Amazon's expansion in our communities.

In Albany, we are working to pass the 21st Century Antitrust Act. The legislation would update and strengthen our state's anti-monopoly laws to deal with the rising threat of megacorporations like Amazon.

Amazon's dominance mirrors the trusts of the Gilded Age that we remember from high school history. Our original antitrust laws were written to break up and restrain the titans of industry who reaped massive profits by building monopolies in railroads, steel, and oil. Amazon has a similar stranglehold on online shopping. About half of all online sales happen on Amazon.com, leaving small businesses with little choice but to sell there, despite Amazon's unfair rules and high fees. Count the number of shuttered storefronts on any block of New York to see the result.

For Teamster members in the package delivery industry, Amazon is both the biggest customer as it ships millions of packages every week, and a low-wage competitor that has built its own massive network of subcontracted drivers. Amazon is driving down average wages in the industry, while demanding its drivers and Teamsters alike deliver more packages and work weekends.

The 21st Century Antitrust Act will give workers, businesses, and Attorney General Leticia James the power to take abusive corporations to court when they engage in anti-competitive practices. The AG would also be able to review corporate mergers and evaluate whether they will negatively affect workers.

I know what you are thinking. We are taking on the Goliath of American capitalism. How are we going to win? Well, we have some unexpected allies.

Small businesses and labor are often on opposite sides of many issues in the state capitol. But not here. Workers and small business owners alike have experienced the abusive practices of Amazon and similar corporations. We have united in the New Yorkers for a Fair Economy coalition to build support in the state legislature among pro-labor and pro-business elected officials alike. The legislation, sponsored by Senate Deputy Majority Leader Michael Gianaris and Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz, passed the Senate last year and we look forward to a vote in the Assembly this term.

There are 26 local unions across Joint Council 16, largest among them Local 237. We will be counting on each and every member to stand together and send a message to our state legislators in Albany that this is the year to outlaw corporate abuses in New York. ■