

## Rallying for Respect



Saturday, October 17, 2009

### **Major Event for Baumann Bus Workers Draws Crowd**

School bus workers with Baumann Bus in Long Island, New York, rallied for respect Saturday with Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa, Teamster and Long Island labor supporters, as well as prominent community and political leaders, including Sen. Chuck Schumer. About 800 attendees held signs that said, "Respect" and "Dignity", filling the auditorium near Teamsters Local 1205 in Farmingdale to full capacity.

"We have 1,700 people with this company that need justice. Every single one of you deserves to be respected in the workplace, and I'm here to tell you that the Teamsters Union is going to be your partner in this fight," Hoffa said. "We are here to tell the company that it is time to recognize the valuable work their workers do."

Drivers, driver assistants and mechanics who work for the four Baumann transportation companies—Baumann & Sons, Acme Bus, Alert Coach and Brookset Bus—at nine yards throughout Long Island are uniting to become members of Teamsters Local 1205. The workers, who filed for an election with the National Labor Relations Board on October 5, are organizing with the Teamsters to gain respect, fair and equal treatment on the job and affordable health care.

### **Heart of the Company**

"We're here today because we need a change. We have an important job carrying people's children. We are the heart of this company and we don't get respect," said Pamela Mason, a driver at the Bohemia yard, addressing the crowd. "When I see how we're all uniting, and when I see us all here today, I am confident that we will have our Teamsters Union!"

Respect was a major theme of the day's rally, as workers talked about a need for respect from their employer in the form of humane treatment, fair wages, decent health care and fairness in the workplace.

The rally was emceed by Timothy Lynch, President of Teamsters Local 1205. Lynch introduced the numerous speakers and supporters including Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa; Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY); Rep. Steve Israel (D, 2nd); Leg. Bill Lindsay (Suffolk County, 8th Dist.); Leg. Kate Browning (Suffolk County, 3rd Dist.); Leg. David Mejias (Nassau County); Dan Kane, International Union Eastern Region Vice President; Fred Potter, International Union Eastern Region Vice President At Large; and John Durso, President of the Long Island Federation of Labor.

"Your courage is an inspiration to all workers," Lynch said, as he praised the Baumann workers for standing up for justice and dignity in their workplace.

The many speakers Lynch introduced stressed the critical work that bus workers do and committed to supporting their efforts to form a union.

### **Future of America**

Sen. Schumer spoke passionately about the importance of gaining respect in the workplace through unity, and pledged his support for the workers' efforts.

"You are the future of America," Schumer said. "We need to get the Employee Free Choice Act passed in Washington and bring organizing back to what it used to be. I, now and always, will be in labor's corner."

"Today we stand for your rights to get a contract, to get a living wage and respect, and we're not giving up until you get what you deserve," said Rep. Israel to the cheering crowd.

In addition to support from numerous local leaders and Teamsters International Vice Presidents, the Baumann workers also heard from a former school bus driver who is now a political leader.

“You are worth every penny you get. You are worth good health insurance. You drive precious cargo, and you need to tell Baumann you want a union now,” said Leg. Kate Browning, a former school bus driver and union activist.

There was a strong presence at the rally from Teamster locals throughout Joint Council 16, as well as the greater Long Island labor community.

“We’re a union island and we’re with you,” said John Durso, President of the 250,000-member Long Island Federation of Labor.

At the event, Baumann workers had the opportunity to meet with General President Hoffa and voice their concerns on the job. They also reaffirmed their unity and commitment to forming their union with the Teamsters.

“This rally was amazing. It hit the nail right on the head. We want to be treated decently and that’s what it’s all about,” said Linda Rittereiser, a driver at the Coram yard. “Jim Hoffa was inspiring and Chuck Schumer was also unbelievable. It makes us feel like we have worth. And that’s important.”