Speak Out Now! at AC Transit  Monday 6/10/19

Here We Are

Our contract expires at the end of this month. For those who went to last week’s union meeting or heard the aftermath, it felt like a hammer dropped on us. Some of the details of the District’s first proposal were made public. It was a truly insulting offer. So far we have not had an active voice in the contract process, but we can change that.

The District’s Proposal: What We Know

They are proposing major changes and takeaways from the current contract, and do nothing to address our working conditions. Among them are:

- Increases in health care contributions
- Deleting the “cost of living” language
- Changing the attendance policy
- Revising FMLA and medical leave
- Bringing in part time drivers
- Changing spread and board pay
- No pay increase to cover PEPRA payments (payments into retirement)

Why Should We Sacrifice?

The District just released their proposed 2019-2020 budget, where they are projecting to operate at a $3 million surplus!

But, let’s pretend that AC didn’t have enough money. We don’t have to look very far to see that there is PLENTY of wealth here. In terms of GDP, the Bay Area would rank among the 20 wealthiest countries in the world. The SF Bay Area has the THIRD HIGHEST concentration of billionaires IN THE WORLD! The density of billionaires in San Francisco is the highest in the world! The corporations have massively benefited from having a public transit system that our tax money has invested in to move their workforce around.

Why shouldn’t they pay up?

Our Future Needs Our Voice

If we are going to have a contract that represents our interests we are going to have to step up. A questionnaire was circulated by the bargaining team but how many people actually got one to fill out? And what are the results of those that were turned in? We cannot afford to be on the sidelines any longer.

What do we, the drivers, mechanics, service workers, and other classifications need? What are our main issues? Of course we need a living wage and to protect our benefits. But what about our working conditions? When will they be addressed? From run time to bathrooms, how long will we suffer the daily indignities and disrespect that management puts us through?

What Can WE Do?

When we have problems with management we can look to our union reps to represent us. But, when we all are facing a new contract, it can be easy to forget that we are the union. We have to stand together and represent ourselves.

That means discussing what changes are needed in the contract. We see each other at work. We are connected with each other through social media. We can have meetings at someone’s home, at a cafe, a bar, or in the gilly room. We could invite a shop steward or someone from the bargaining team to tell us what they know.

We can’t be bystanders while the conditions we work and live in are at stake. We need to bring our full force, our full potential to negotiations.

In addition:

- We should come prepared with questions and views we want to express at the Special Meeting, Saturday June 15th, 2pm at the union hall.
- And we aren’t in this alone. We should talk to our riders and let them know what’s going on. A safe and efficient transit system depends on us.