



# TEAMSTERS

March 27, 2009



Teamster organizers from throughout North America have descended upon Washington, D.C. for the sixth annual Teamsters Organizers Conference at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. For organizers who spend most of their year helping workers achieve better working conditions, the conference is aptly themed, “Teamsters: Delivering Hope to America’s Workers.” The three-day conference features a packed schedule of speakers, workshops, lobbying and a demonstration for the more than 350 attendees.

The first day of the conference kicked off with an impressive lineup of speakers, including Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa, Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA).

“You are the reason we organized 43,000 workers last year, and we’re just getting started,” Hoffa told the crowd. Hoffa talked about the many successful campaigns of the union in the past year, including organizing at First Student, UPS Freight, United Airlines and Atlas Air, among many others. He also stressed the urgent need for the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, to allow more workers who want to join unions to do so free of employer intimidation.

“Everyone who has organized has seen the fear that employers can engender in workers. And that’s why we need to get the Employee Free Choice Act passed,” Hoffa said.

Among the many political leaders scheduled to speak at the conference, Senators Boxer and Harkin addressed the Teamster crowd, affirming their support for the Employee Free Choice Act, critical legislation that would make it easier for workers to form a union in the workplace.



“We are going to win this fight because it’s the right thing to do and it’s the American thing to do,” said Sen. Boxer, a co-sponsor of the legislation. “For the good of the country, we must pass the Employee Free Choice Act.”

Sen. Boxer also noted that a recent Gallup Poll found 53 percent of Americans support legislation that would make it easier for workers to organize.



Sen. Harkin, also a co-sponsor, gave a heartfelt and passionate speech about why he supports the Employee Free Choice Act.

“People ask me why I’m so strong for it, and I say, ‘I’m for it if for no other reason than basic fairness.’ People should be able to organize in unions by simply signing a card, saying ‘I want to organize with my fellow employees to form a collective bargaining unit.’ The time is not in the future. The time is right now to pass the Employee Free Choice Act.”

The Organizers Conference will continue through the weekend with an emphasis on political action and strategies for ensuring that hope is delivered to workers in 2009 and beyond.