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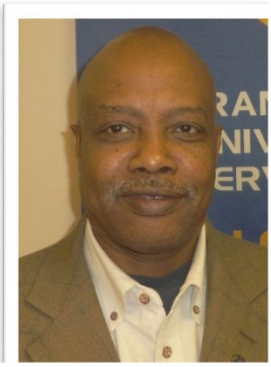
Controversial Split Pay Still Under Negotiations



Although an agreement to pay Metro bus operators 2.5 hours per day at their hourly rate for split runs has not been finalized with our employer, Local 260 President Horace Marves says he sees the split pay as an incentive to better distribute the work among the entire workforce and Local 260 is aggressively pursuing to make this a reality.

Hear how we got to this position. Local 260 started the discussion with management during negotiations to compensate operators for the intervening time based on the distance from their garage; another suggestion the union had was minimum wage for the split time. Although it was turned down management agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Local 260 to have further discussions on intervening pay. The (MOU) is not part of the labor agreement but an addition to it.

When talks resumed management proposed to pay bus operators 2.5 hours per day based on the operators hourly rate for intervening time. This was expected to start in the 2020 fiscal year starting October 2019. As of press time, negotiation on the issue of intervening pay is still going on. Operators have been skeptical about the reality of this proposal becoming a reality, knowing how tight fisted their employer has been in the past.

Local 260 sees this offer as an incentive for the Authority to make pull out, which it has been struggling to meet on a regular basis. The incentive could also even the playing field opening the door for operators with less seniority to bid on better runs with more pay.

Avoiding 3rd. Step in the Grievance Process

President Horace Marves, VP Fidel Minor & Exec. Raul De Leon on their way to 3rd. Step grievance hearing.

Local 260 Executive board member Raul De Leon questions why is it so difficult for operators to pay the weekly $10.50 in union dues and enjoy all of the benefits of being a union member before it is too late. He made the statement after he and both the presient and vice president of Local 260, emerged from representing workers in the 3rd. step process with Metro's management.

Being a union member has many benefits. Union members earn more than non-union members and are more likely to have health insurance than non-union members. They also have more retirement security than other workers and are likely to receive sick leave and paid vacation. Union members also receive protection against abuses in the workplace. All these benefits and more add to a better quality of life for workers and their families.

As a union member you stand shoulder to shoulder with your union brothers and sisters fighting for equality and fairness in the workplace. You get information of current issues pertaining to the transportation industry nationwide as well as issues affecting your job here in Houston. If you are in a work-related accident or incident, your Union Steward will assist you in filing your report. If you are required to meet with your supervisors due to disciplinary action, you have the right to have a Union Representative present, within 72 hours.

A survey of recent employees who were represented by Local 260 at the third step process revealed a disconcerting trend.

- Bus operators never consult senior union stewards for assistance in representation when called into management.
- Non-union operators with no knowledge of their rights go in to management and get slaughtered, only to ask Local 260 to represent them after they have been terminated.
- Operators fail to document incidents, submit police action reports and report to control or Superintendents of issues affecting their working conditions.
- Inexperienced managers neglect to inform workers of their rights, resulting in some employees not filing for claims when injured or assaulted on the job.

These are just a few observations of a pattern of behavior resulting in operators losing their cases in the early stages resulting in them desperately seeking union assistance to save their jobs.

Unity is power, knowledge is power. Only in numbers can we stand together to share our ideas for the betterment of the organization and our careers.
Become a Local 260 member today.

Meet Union Steward Cheryl Murphy

Cheryl Murphy
Rail Union Steward

Cheryl Murphy is a 31-year transportation professional having worked in rail transportation in San Diego and management in Atlanta before coming to Houston.

It was in Houston she first became involved in Unions. "Unfortunately, I had to call the union to assist me in situations I had encountered. After attending a few meetings, they asked why don't I become part of the solution instead of just complaining."

Cheryl was later convinced to become a Union Steward, "I am very proud to be in Local 260, they have given me a great opportunity. It is a very challenging position, but they are there to support you. They are available for questions you may have and also they back you up." Union President Horace Marves is elated that Cheryl has also been able to draw 90 percent of rail operators in the union.

Cheryl laments the fact that many employees are unaware of the rules that govern their jobs. "(Laughing). When they get in trouble, that's when they try to find out what is the procedure. By then, it is too late, and we as stewards are left trying to negotiate a way out for them and get the best deal for them for breaking or violating the rules." Part of her success is also having a good working relationship with management. She says encouragement from her co-workers and support from the Union Executive keeps her motivated to serve as a steward.

Local 260 recognizes some Metro Veterans

Local 260 president Horace Marves seen here meeting with a couple 40 year old Metro veterans. Mr. Marves himself has been with Metro for 44 year. On the left is John Stewart, 45 years with Metro and Gregory Johnson 42 years with Metro.

45 year Metro veteran repairing some generators.

John Stewart followed his father who was a Rapid Transit bus driver to start working as a cleaner. One year later he started training as a C mechanic and has worked his way up to be one of the senior mechanics in the maintenance department.

Mr. Stewart says he started at $4.69 an hour, since then a lot a lot has changed. "Back then we were dependent on revenue from the fare boxes, now with federal subventions we have more capital to run this huge transportation system in Houston.

I have been here a long time and a lot of people that I worked with have already gone, some died and some retired. I kind of feel lonely but I still do enjoy working here.

President's Corner

I am continuing to ask for your support and participation as we move forward. Make plans to get involved by connecting with us, wear your Union patches, and encourage others to become a Local 260 Union Member.

Let's continue to fight together, for fairness, justice in the workplace, and job security. Encourage those that are not Members to sign up.

Your President,

Horace J. Marves

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