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*Unity • Justice • Democracy*

The LWC thanks all of our ILA sisters and brothers who campaigned and educated for a better contract.

We led the fight for an end to the wage and royalty tiers, improved benefits, protection against technology, and national health and safety rules.

The ILA is stronger because of the rank-and-file who had the courage to swim against the tide and who helped create a national debate inside our union. Through our newsletter, our website, text messages, and face-to-face meetings we forced our leadership into a real discussion about the issues that affect all members.

That said we cannot approve of the ILA's efforts to scare members into voting yes. We can expect employer threats during contract negotiations, but we should also be able to expect a union that empowers members and builds on our collective strengths to fight for a stronger agreement. The LWC is more committed than ever to building a strong union that mobilizes members and responds to members concerns.

We are also concerned about allegations of voting irregularities in several locals. The LWC has requested a local-by-local vote count from the ILA.

The LWC has correctly predicted the impact of past contracts on ILA members. Here is what we believe will be the impact of this extension:

- Most members will go more than two years without a wage increase. Before this extension expires and our promised raise to top pay goes into effect, management will ask for givebacks and economic relief either from wages or benefits.
- Many local union pension plans will be underfunded, jeopardizing our future retirements.
- Many local union welfare and benefit funds, such as those in Norfolk, Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina, will not have enough money to maintain benefits.
- ILA members will lose jobs as newly automated terminals begin to open.
- The large employers and carriers will begin to profit and expand as they prepare for increases in cargo from the Panama Canal expansion.

- Many of the International Officers who said “trust me, everything will be fine in 2012,” will retire when our dues from the container royalty fund land in the ILA treasury. They will take “Executive Retirement” money from the International’s Treasury and they will leave members holding the bag.

We are confident the LWC will continue to grow thanks to the courage and intelligence of the ILA rank-and-file who believe in a brighter future for the ILA and for longshore workers. As a result of our activity around the contract, the LWC has extended its reach into more ports and more locals than ever.

Join us in looking towards the future. Many ILA locals have elections in 2010 and the ILA Convention in 2011 will elect new International Officers.

Through the LWC’s vote no campaign we forced International Officers to travel up and down the coast to persuade the ILA’s membership to vote for this extension. We proved that we can push for more democracy in the ILA and we expect nothing less for the District and International Officer elections.

Together we will capitalize on our member’s energy and knowledge to build a stronger and more democratic ILA.