

# TDU CONSTITUTION

## *Proposed Amendments \* August 2021*

### **Article One: Name**

This organization shall be known as Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

### **Article Two: Object**

(A) The object of this organization is to strengthen the Teamsters union from within by building a unified movement of rank and file Teamsters that is organized to fight for rank and file rights on the job and in the union, ~~as summarized in the Rank & File Bill of Rights~~. We aim to bring the Teamsters union back to the membership. We do not advocate secession from the Teamsters union, or "dual unionism" in any form whatsoever.

It shall be an object of this organization to promote the quality of working conditions and safety in the trucking industry and of Teamsters generally.

This organization shall seek to unite with all bona fide rank and file Teamster groups. With that purpose in mind, TDU will strive to develop common areas of work, a unified strategy and a coordinated leadership with any other such groups. Where such other groups have a proven strength and individual identity, they shall not be required to give up that identity. Rather, we would seek agreement on strategy and program and a leadership that would strengthen the rank and file movement.

### **Article Three: International Organization**

This movement shall be based on individual members and on local chapters of Teamsters organized under the same name. The highest policy-making body of the movement shall be the annual convention. The movement shall elect an International Steering Committee (ISC) as the body to govern it between TDU Conventions.

### **Article Four: Local Organization**

This organization shall build and be built upon local chapters in cities or individual union jurisdictions with elected steering committees to lead those chapters.

### **Article Five: International Steering Committee Responsibilities**

It shall be required of the ISC that they provide leadership for the organization between conventions. The ISC shall have the power to choose administrative people to help run the organization should finances permit. The ISC is entrusted with the power to make certain that the will of the organization, as decided at the annual convention, is carried out.

The convention shall elect the International Steering Committee and three (3) numbered alternates. In the event one or more committee members are absent from an entire steering committee meeting, the alternate(s), in order, shall fill the temporary vacancy or vacancies. The alternates shall be used to fill any possible permanent vacancies that may occur in the ISC. The size of the ISC shall be set by the convention.

It shall be a particular responsibility of the ISC to:

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- hire a Staff Director and other staff;
- put out a newspaper for the organization as a whole;
- manage the organization's finances;
- keep communications going within the group and between chapters;
- support local chapters in their activities and help build and coordinate regional activities;
- coordinate campaigns as needed;
- plan the convention;
- support the work of the Teamster Rank and File Education and Legal Defense Foundation, and coordinate efforts to defend the rights of Teamster members to a job, pension and a strong and democratic union;
- support efforts against corruption in our union;
- raise funds.

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The International Steering Committee shall be authorized to maintain one or more offices. ~~in addition to the International office and any regional offices which may be established, a registered office in Washington, D.C., staffed by a registered agent. The ISC shall oversee the work of this office, which shall include:~~

- ~~• promoting the safety and quality of working conditions in the trucking industry and among Teamsters generally;~~
- ~~• developing new government measures concerning occupational safety and health and the enforcement of existing measures in this area;~~
- ~~• aiding the fight against corruption in our union;~~
- ~~• conducting the research and aiding the publication of educational publications on health, safety and pension rights of Teamsters.~~

~~The ISC shall be authorized to establish an Editorial Committee for TDU's newspaper. The National Organizer shall be responsible for the content of the publication and answerable to the ISC which shall set editorial policies.~~

#### **Article Six: TDU Officers**

Following the election of the International Steering Committee, the convention shall elect eight seven officers from among the ISC members for the following offices: four Co-chairs, a ~~TDU Organizer~~, and three (3) Trustees. The responsibilities of the officers shall be as follows:

The Co-chairs shall chair ISC meetings. Whenever possible, they shall be the spokespersons for TDU as a whole. They shall, along with the Staff Director ~~TDU Organizer~~, set the agenda



for ISC meetings and make other such decisions between ISC meetings, but shall not be empowered to decide on policies or programs for the group as a whole.

The ~~TDU Organizer~~ Staff Director shall coordinate the day-to-day functions of the organization and act as spokesperson in the absence of the co-chairs.

The ~~Organizer~~ Staff Director shall, along with the Co-chairs, set agendas and make decisions regarding the implementation of the organization's policies, but shall not be empowered to decide on the policies or programs of the group as a whole.

(D) The Trustees shall meet before the ISC meetings to go over the books and financial statements, along with the staff or accountant in charge. They shall have full access to all financial records, books, receipts, and other material needed to verify the books. The Trustees shall also meet as a Financial Subcommittee, along with the Staff Director ~~TDU Organizer~~, to make recommendations to the Steering Committee on finances, staff and fund raising.

#### **Article Seven: Chapter Responsibilities**

Local chapters shall be active in local issues, grievances, contracts, and try to publish local newsletters or newspapers as organs of TDU. Local chapters shall be responsible for their own finances. Local chapters shall follow policies agreed to by the organization at the annual convention.

#### **Article Eight: Individual Member Responsibilities**

All individual members of TDU must pay dues. TDU is an activist organization and as such relies on TDU members to take an active part in TDU and in our union. This includes distribution of TDU literature, recruitment of members and participation in TDU activities and in our union.

Although the TDU international organization does not endorse specific local union candidates, we recognize the importance of participation in local unions and in elections by TDU members and chapters. Members who run for office are encouraged to do so in a principled manner, ~~in support of the TDU Bill of Rights~~. Those who get elected are expected to continue to support and build TDU and to work for reform of our International Union. TDU will promote the highest principles of unionism among Teamster officers, and we will work to defend the rights of all Teamsters to free and fair elections.

#### **Article Nine: Responsibilities of the Convention**

It is recognized that the convention is the highest body and holds ultimate decision making power in TDU. As such, it is required of the convention that a policy and program for the coming year be decided upon for the guidance of the International Steering Committee and members and chapters.

All votes taken within this organization shall be decided by simple majority (50 percent plus 1).

#### **Article Ten: Membership Rights**

All Teamsters and Teamster spouses are eligible to become members of TDU. However, the organization reserves the right to exclude those who are opposed to TDU or its principles. All members have a right to attend the convention. All TDU members who are in attendance have the right to full voting and discussion rights on all matters before the convention. Subject to ISC approval and discretion, individual members have the right to attend and speak in an orderly fashion at ISC meetings.

#### **Article Eleven: Finances**

Every member of TDU shall be required to pay to the TDU office dues as determined by the conventions. Dues amounts and policies shall be changed only by convention vote.

All members shall receive a subscription to the TDU newspaper. Recognizing that such a dues fee would not begin to meet our real expenses, the ISC is empowered to enact voluntary pledge and donation systems for those members who have expressed their ability to pay more than the minimum.

#### **Article Twelve: Political Independence**

TDU shall remain independent of any particular political organization. Further, no member may use the resources of this organization for his or her own political advancement. This clause is in no way intended to restrict individuals from following their own particular political ideology, but is written merely to protect TDU from being characterized as supporting one particular party or organization.

Individual members shall at all times retain their individual right to speak out publicly as an individual in support of their own political beliefs.

#### **Article Thirteen: Amendments**

This Constitution shall be amended only at TDU Conventions. Amendments shall be submitted one month in advance and ~~mailed to local chapters for consideration as soon as possible~~ made available to members in advance of the start of the convention. They can be ~~mailed sent~~ by any member to the TDU office. They shall be made available to the convention, and shall be voted on. Those passed by a majority (50 percent plus 1) shall become effective immediately and be incorporated into this Constitution.

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