

A message from IBT General President James P. Hoffa

John Kerry for President

The election this November is a critical opportunity to improve the lives of our families. During the preceding four years we have seen and felt the constant erosion of our job market, economy and healthcare system.

These combined downfalls have put an unprecedented amount of pressure on middle-class families in America. And, all of this has happened while the White House has stood idly by, or, waged attacks on working families.

The current White House engineered a prescription drug plan that will cause three million retirees to lose their current prescription drug coverage; supported the outsourcing of one million American jobs; and authored a pension relief bill which will actually hurt those participating in multi-employer pension plans. We must not allow the Bush administration to continue in the White House.

Commitment to families

John Kerry and John Edwards offer a vision for restoring this country's commitment to working Americans and setting straight the economic engine that built the nation. A Kerry-Edwards administration will reverse current policies that promote outsourcing and close tax loopholes that reward companies from locating overseas. They will add provisions to Bush's pre-



scription drug plan in order to lower costs and they will increase our investment in infrastructure. In particular, the increase in funding for infrastructure will affect all of our members, whether they work on the rails or the highways. The Teamsters Union, as North America's largest transportation union, counts on the safety and security of our nations' infrastructure.

We, as union members, must stand up for a man who has served his country and believes that those who work hard have the right to good health care, a safe workplace and a

secure retirement. There is no better candidate to lead our country.

This November, vote for John Kerry and John Edwards. They are labor's choice for the White House because they understand and will fight for the values of the working families of America.

James P. Hoffa
James P. Hoffa
 Teamsters General President

You Decide...



John Kerry



George W. Bush

Supports creating nearly 10 million jobs by rebuilding America's highways and transit systems and opposes privatization of mass transit service, which could cost thousands of jobs. (Congressional Record, 9/12/03; AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Dept. questionnaire, 5/26/04)

Slashed nearly 3 million highway and transportation jobs in his 2003 budget proposal and supports privatization of mass transit service. (H.R. 2088, 6/14/03)

Supports a long-term plan for a strong national Amtrak system to meet the nation's passenger rail needs and maintain Amtrak's 20,000 good jobs. (S. 104, 1/9/03)

Seeks to slash Amtrak service to hundreds of cities and take away thousands of rail workers' jobs. In 2003, Bush tried to privatize, dismantle and break up Amtrak. (Bush administration fiscal year 2005 budget; H.R. 3211, 9/30/03)

Will fully invest in training and technology to improve aviation safety and reduce flight delays and will not privatize the nation's air traffic control system and its 15,000 jobs. (Kerry letter to National Association of Air Traffic Controllers, 3/2/04)

Gutted the budget funding Federal Aviation Administration efforts to reduce flight delays and airport congestion and supports privatizing the nation's air traffic control system. (*The New York Times*, 1/27/04; Bush administration Statement of Administrative Policy, 6/11/03)

Strongly supports training workers to meet rail security threats and helping Amtrak and local transit systems improve safety and security. (Co-sponsor, S. 1530, 1st Session)

Failed to respond to security threats to the nation's railroads and transit systems. (*Boston Globe*, May 6, 2004)

Will fight to keep good jobs in America. He will stop tax breaks to companies that send U.S. jobs overseas and create tax incentives to keep good U.S. jobs at home. Will ensure companies that move offshore do not receive government contracts. (Associated Press, 3/25/04, johnkerry.com)

Supports giving \$60 billion in tax breaks to companies that lay off workers and move overseas. Since taking office, each of Bush's federal budget proposals included tax breaks for companies that export jobs overseas. (H.R. 2896; *The Washington Post*, 10/23/03; Bush fiscal years 2002-2005 budget proposals)

Supports tax breaks for the middle class. He proposes new health care and college tuition tax credits for working families funded by rolling back Bush's tax cuts for the nation's wealthiest 1 percent. (johnkerry.com)

His 2001-2003 tax cuts benefit mostly the wealthiest — over the next 10 years, 50 percent of the tax cuts will go to those making more than \$1 million, the nation's richest 1 percent. (Citizens for Tax Justice, 1/8/03)

Supported collective bargaining and civil service protections for workers in the Homeland Security Department by voting against Bush's proposal to take away their rights. (H.R. 5005, R.C. 226, 9/26/02)

Destroyed the bargaining rights of more than 230,000 federal workers in the Homeland Security Department, Transportation Security Administration, and other federal agencies. (www.govexec.com, 11/12/03; *Washington Post*, 1/20/02)

Focus

Labor backs the Kerry-Edwards

ticket



*Working families'
best hope for
positive change
lies with a change
in the
White House*

In February, the BLET Executive Committee voted unanimously to endorse Senator John Kerry for President of the United States. In making this decision, the Executive Committee weighed many factors, including Senator Kerry's voting records and positions on issues of importance to the lives of BLET members.

The Executive Committee also looked at the impact that the last four years have had on American workers. The Executive Committee saw that millions of American jobs have been lost, that millions of people are still without health

insurance, that protections for workers have been taken away, and they chose to endorse a candidate of change — one of change for the better regarding America's working families.

So strong is this call for change by working families that — in addition to the BLET and the Teamsters — more than 100 local, state, national and international labor organizations have endorsed the Kerry-Edwards ticket, including the national AFL-CIO and some of its biggest unions — the Service Employees International Union, Communications Workers of

America, AFSCME, International Association of Firefighters, and the International Association of Machinists, just to name a few.

In the following pages, you will find a comparison of President Bush and Senator Kerry and where they stand on issues of importance to BLET members. The following pages also contain information about the candidates, and general information about the 2004 elections.

Regardless of which candidate you support, one of the most important things you can do as an American is vote on November 2. •

**GO TO
TeamstersforKerry.org**
For News on the Kerry campaign
Fliers on our support of John Kerry



Q&A with Senator Kerry

Kerry answers TTD questions on Amtrak, collective bargaining, 13(c)

The AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, of which the BLET is a member, unites millions of aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, maritime and longshore workers — and the 35 unions that represent them — into a strong voice for the nation's transportation workers. Founded in 1990, TTD fights to maintain and create good jobs, defends and advances workers' job and bargaining rights, and seeks to improve the safety and security of our nation's transportation system.

There is much at stake in the 2004 elections for transportation workers. These workers understand that what happens in Washington — both in the legislative and regulatory process — matters to them and their families. The following question and answer session asks the candidates to provide their views on a wide array of key issues of importance to millions of workers in the aviation, rail, transit, trucking, highway, longshore and maritime industries. As of press time, however, the TTD had not received a response from the Bush campaign. The following questionnaire will serve as a powerful tool in educating transportation workers between now and Election Day about the views of those seeking public office.

Amtrak

Background: Since its inception more than three decades ago, our national passenger rail carrier, Amtrak, has faced chronic underfunding and neglect. This has led to a backlog in the passenger carrier's critical infrastructure improvements, deferred maintenance, deteriorating service, significant job cuts and unmet safety and security

investments. Further, it has led to new lows in the morale of Amtrak employees who continue to earn as much as 20 percent less than rail workers in the commuter and freight rail industries. Moreover, some want to use Amtrak's annual funding problems to promote ill advised and wildly unpopular schemes to break-up and sell-off parts of Amtrak to the private sector, thereby assuring the destruction of our national Amtrak system as we know it.

TTD: Will you support and fully fund multi-year federal investment in Amtrak — at a level at least equivalent to the Senate-passed authorization this year — that ensures the stability and continuation of Amtrak's national rail passenger operation?

Kerry: *Yes, I will support a multi-year reauthorization with funding levels equal to or greater than what the Senate proposed for this fiscal year.*

TTD: Will you oppose legislative proposals designed to break-up and sell-off Amtrak through contracting out or privatization initiatives?

Kerry: *I will oppose any legislation that would break apart Amtrak or privatize it outright.*

Collective Bargaining and Organizing Rights

Background: The responsible administration and enforcement of U.S. labor laws has been the cornerstone of labor-management relations in this country. Unless the laws are fairly enforced, the bargaining process can be skewed heavily against workers and in favor of management. For example, the use of heavy-handed government

intervention can unfairly affect the outcome of negotiations, often at delicate stages of labor-management talks. Until recently, White House intervention in airline labor-management disputes had almost never occurred in some 40 years. This four decade-long bipartisan policy has produced collectively bargained settlements without strikes or lockouts 97 percent of the time. Similarly, until recently the use of government intervention powers under the National Labor Relations Act had not been used in almost 25 years and had never been used in an employer-imposed lockout, which was exactly the case in the West Coast ports situation in 2002. Workers and their unions in the rail and airline industries have also been held hostage to protracted mediation and bargaining that feeds corporate bottom lines while fueling unfair delays and denying workers any confidence that the process of negotiating new contracts will be fair and just. Some have even promoted reforms to the Railway Labor Act to force workers into a winner-take-all, binding arbitration process. Others such as a recent commission charged with studying Postal Service issues have injected themselves into the collective bargaining affairs of the Postal Service and its workers by offering unnecessary reforms, such as the elimination of tripartite arbitration and intrusive regulatory review of collective bargaining agreements, to a system that has effectively and peacefully managed labor-management relations at the Postal Service for more than three decades. Finally, during the past few years in too many instances employers have been permitted to trample on with impunity the right of workers to organize and form unions.



FOCUS

TTD: As President, will you promote labor-management cooperation and the settlement of bargaining disputes at the bargaining table free from improper interference by the Executive Branch?

Kerry: *Yes, the role of government is to foster productive relations and cooperation between labor and management. Bargaining disputes should be resolved at the bargaining table without unnecessary interference from the executive branch. Federal involvement should be constructive and the intervention powers of the president are a tool of last resort.*

TTD: Will you, through the appointment of Members to the National Mediation Board and the responsible use of your intervention powers, commit to a fair and balanced administration of the Railway Labor Act, relying on labor and management, not intrusive federal government intervention, for the resolution of bargaining disputes? And will you oppose attempts to tamper with the longstanding craft and class system in the railroad and airline industries?

Kerry: *Through appointments to the NMB and enforcement of the RLA, my administration will encourage a fair and balanced resolution of bargaining disputes and will insist that bargaining matters be resolved at the bargaining table by the parties. I also understand the importance of the craft and class system in the railroad and airline industry, and would not support proposals that would fundamentally alter it.*

TTD: Will you oppose any proposal to impose winner-take-all, binding arbitration on workers covered by the Railway Labor Act as was recently proposed by several major airlines?

Kerry: *Yes, I will oppose binding arbitration for workers covered by the RLA, including airline workers.*

TTD: Will you commit to stopping the abuses under the Railway Labor Act that deny workers, often for years at a time, the right to complete the collective bargaining and mediation process once it is clear that the parties are unable to reach an agreement?

Kerry: *Yes, I will enforce the RLA as intended. I will encourage fairness in the collective bargaining process and will commit to making sure that my administration will work to avoid unfair delays and stop abuses in completing the process.*

TTD: Will you make it a priority to ensure that appointees in your Administration uphold the nation's labor laws designed to permit workers in the private and public sector to freely choose union representation without employer intimidation and interference? Will your Administration take formal actions against those employers that fail to honor their obligations to allow workers unfettered choices when it comes to choosing union representation?

Kerry: *As President, I will faithfully uphold the nation's labor laws. The right of workers to organize and collectively bargain is essential, and I will protect and preserve that right. I will also protect the right of employees to choose union representation without inappropriate employer interference.*

Freight Rail Employee Protections

Background: Since the early 20th Century, the federal government has recognized that federal rail policy decisions made during periods of consolidation and realignment among the nation's rail carriers would have serious and often negative consequences for rail workers. That is why mandatory worker protections have been in the law to provide some measure of job security and income protection as railroad companies have engaged in mergers, acquisitions, line sales and

other regulated economic transactions. With the advent of more and larger domestic and possibly international rail mergers and alliances, these worker protections will continue to play an indispensable role in protecting railroad workers from the serious consequences of railroad industry mergers and acquisitions.

TTD: Will you oppose any proposals to repeal or roll-back the longstanding employee protections afforded to freight railroad workers in the federal government's review of proposed economic transactions such as mergers and acquisitions by and between rail carriers? And will you, through appointments to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and in the promulgation of federal rail policy, ensure that the STB and others in your Administration carry out regulatory responsibilities in a manner that fully honors employee protections and rights?

Kerry: *As President, I will ensure that freight railroad employees are afforded full protections in the context of a review of a proposed merger. I will also ensure that the STB and other appointed administration officials carry out their responsibilities in a manner that protects employee rights.*

Mass Transit 13(c) Employee Protections and Privatization.

Background: The nation has benefitted greatly from the massive growth of public mass transportation in this country. Since inception of the federal mass transit program in the early 1960s, public transit workers have received critical collective bargaining protections designed to ensure that federal transit funds are not used to harm the jobs and rights of the employees of mass transit and commuter rail authorities. Without 13(c), tens of thousands of transit workers would lose their collective bargaining rights and a longstanding program that has successfully managed labor-

management issues stemming from structural and operational changes in public transportation would be eliminated. Existing federal transit policy also respects the right of state and local authorities to make determinations about the role of the private sector in delivering public transit services free from federal government intrusion and interference.

TTD: As President, will you insist that the federal mass transit funding program continues to honor the 13(c) bargaining protections of public transit workers and will your Department of Labor administer the program in a manner that upholds longstanding worker rights?

Kerry: *Yes, my administration will honor 13(c) protections for transit workers, and I will ensure that the Department of Labor administers the program in a manner that upholds longstanding worker rights.*

TTD: Will you make it the policy of your Administration that in any reauthorization of the federal transit programs, 13(c) protections shall continue to apply throughout the entire federal mass transit program including "innovative finance" initiatives?

Kerry: *My administration will include 13(c) protections in any reauthorization of federal transit programs, regardless of how it is financed.*

TTD: And will you oppose any proposals designed to force privatization mandates on local transit operators?

Kerry: *I do not believe that privatization should be forced onto local transit operators that receive federal funding.* •

About Kerry...

FOCUS

- 1** The Bush campaign doesn't want you to know that John Kerry will not raise taxes on working families to pay for his health care, education or other plans.
- 2** John Kerry will pay for expanded health care for the nation's citizens, quality education and more by rolling back Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy who make more than \$200,000 a year, some 3.6 percent of all tax payers.
- 3** The Bush campaign doesn't want you to know that as a U.S. Senator, John Kerry voted to cut taxes for working families.
- 4** John Kerry voted to expand the child tax credit and speed up marriage penalty tax relief. He cast his ballot in support of lowering the 10 percent tax bracket for working families and reducing taxes on small business.
- 5** The Bush campaign doesn't want you to know that John Kerry is a strong supporter of your right to own a gun. He is a gun owner and sportsman who supports responsible gun use.

About Bush...

- 1** Since George W. Bush took office, 1.8 million private-sector jobs have been lost and workers' wages have stagnated — rising just 0.3 percent from the first quarter of 2001 when Bush took office through the first quarter of 2004. In the same period, corporate profits leaped by 28.4%.
- 2** Since George W. Bush took office, the number of uninsured Americans rose by nearly 4 million. Nearly 44 million Americans lack health insurance. During some part of 2002 and 2003, nearly 82 million Americans between the ages of 10 and 65 did not have health insurance.
- 3** Since George W. Bush took office, the cost of family health insurance has increased more than \$2,700. Workers' share of family health care premiums has increased by nearly 50 percent from 2001 to 2004.
- 4** Under George W. Bush's tax cuts, millionaires received an average tax break of \$136,398. The middle 20 percent of taxpayers got \$652.
- 5** George W. Bush supported an airline industry scheme to take away transportation workers' bargaining rights and replace them with a forced arbitration. He was the first President in 35 years to use presidential authority to block strikes by airline workers and threatened to use military personnel as strikebreakers when management locked out West Coast dockworkers.

Voting with an absentee ballot

Because of unpredictable work schedules, many locomotive engineers and trainmen could find themselves away from home and unable to vote on Election Day. Voting with an absentee ballot is a way to make sure your vote is counted on November 2. Members are urged to use the following links to make sure you are registered to vote, but also to check for further information on obtaining an absentee ballot in the state you live:

<https://electionimpact.votenet.com/afl/>

<https://electionimpact.votenet.com/afl/electiondates.cfm>

Confessions of a former republican

By Becky Schneider, *GIA 1st Vice-President, Legislative Representative*

I have admitted to a few that, yes, because of my conservative upbringing, for most of my life I voted Republican — not straight ticket, but for the most part, Republican.



My Dad was President of the Texas State Rifle Association, so I grew up with guns, and was a good Presbyterian. The Republican Party I grew up with was a different party than it is now — not the arm-twisting party of “my way or the highway.” Democrats were different then, too. More of them camped out in trees to save a forest, and did other bizarre things that “just weren’t fittin’” by Texas Panhandle standards.

The GOP transformation occurred with the Contract with America platform (nine points of which were never fulfilled). My personal transformation took place when I was lobbying for Railroad Retirement Reform. The changes to the GOP over the last 11 years have been so drastic that even ultra-conservative Dick Armey believes his party of ultra right wing conservatives have gone farther than any Democrat ever did while pushing through their agenda.

It’s not about representing your constituents any more; it’s about achieving power in the Party. If your constituents disagree, get new ones (ala Tom Delay in Texas). My epiphany occurred when a Republican senator, who I consider to be a fair man, met with our group on the Capitol steps following the weekly Republican luncheon. He said, “I have given you my support for your bill, and I will abide by that. But I’ll tell you, they (party leaders) are making it tough on us to hang in there. They have attached the

energy bill, which is near and dear to me, and are trying to force me to choose between them.” Right then and there, on the steps of the United States Senate, I decided I could no longer stomach a party that continually threatens its own members because a few in the leadership are opposed to an issue. We threatened

their house of cards by moving our \$15 billion out of “surplus” funds, and they were not happy. We prevailed because of the tireless efforts of everyone from the grass roots to the professionals.

That’s my story. At that moment when I realized what the GOP had become, I no longer wanted any part of it. Unfortunately, most of our members have not had the opportunity to witness firsthand what I did. They are too busy working for a living.

Too many Americans have become one-issue voters, voting against a party based on some single issue that is important to them. I am not fully aligned with a number of issues in the Democratic Platform, but I am also aware that if I vote for the Republican candidates because of those issues, my lifestyle, freedoms, and financial security will continue its downward spiral.

Here are a few of the things we stand to lose should the GOP prevail in the November elections:

FELA — If the Republicans win, Orrin Hatch is already being pressured to file a bill in February 2005 to abolish FELA. Has anyone checked out how crummy their state’s worker’s compensation is?

Amtrak will cease to exist as we

know it, thereby putting Railroad Retirement in serious jeopardy.

Overtime Pay Takeaway will be engraved in stone. Just like George Bush removed 10 years of work on ergonomics regulations, if elected, the Democrats can rescind the new overtime regulations or call for a House vote (which the House leadership has refused to do). Bypassing the legislative process has eroded 100 years of work by labor. This may not affect railroad employees under the current contract, but it does affect family and friends right now, and has the potential to affect future contract negotiations.

Health and Welfare Benefits will continue to decrease and/or become more expensive if the trend toward supporting insurance companies continues. Additionally, if the trend toward supporting pharmaceutical companies continues, the Medicare Reform disaster will likely get worse.

Jobs — America will continue to bleed jobs as more and more are outsourced to foreign lands, and the term “Made in America” will make its way into the history books.

Call me pessimistic; I don’t think this will be the half of it. With a better balance in the Congress, and not all branches of the government being controlled by one party, more compromise will be required, resulting in better conditions for all of Americans, not just our members.

Lastly, despite the current picture being painted about Democrats, this ticket is not “whacko liberal.” It is further left than the ultra right wing, but it is not far left. It is more middle-of-the-road. Ultra anything has no place in our government, however, common sense and moderate principals do.

Vote for John Kerry and John Edwards. Keep your Democratic Congressmen, especially those targeted by the National GOP, and may God continue to Bless America!

Above all, VOTE! •