

May 16, 2016

Richard Trumka, President
AFL-CIO
815 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Trumka:

We write today as proud trade unionists and Building Trades leaders expressing our views on a business matter that is now in the public domain according to several recent published news stories. These public announcements have led to many questions from inside and outside our organizations, as well as with partners that employ thousands of our members every year and we wish to express our concerns about the reported Super PAC being created with the AFL-CIO and activist billionaire Tom Steyer.

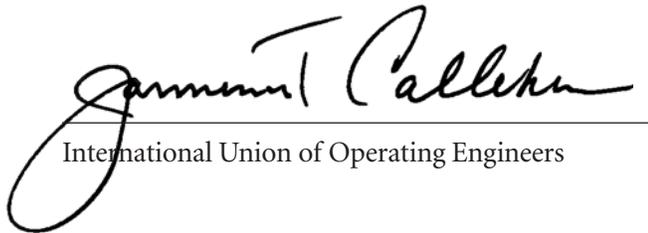
We believe in a strong labor movement and a viable and relevant labor Federation. We have consistently sought to support our brothers and sisters outside of the Building Trades in contract battles and legislative and political threats that have grown in frequency over the last several years. Even while we were in the midst of one of the greatest downturns in the history of the construction industry and our members were faced with historic unemployment levels, we have sought to form strategic alliances with individual unions of the AFL-CIO in order to grow in a strategic and thoughtful manner that will accrue to the benefit of our collective memberships. Unfortunately, a growing trend within the Federation seems to consistently minimize the importance of Building Trades jobs and our members' livelihoods in the pursuit of a coalition strategy with outside organizations that has produced mixed results at best and disastrous results at worst for our members and their employment prospects in many instances throughout the country.

We are not climate science deniers and have merely sought to ensure that the employment prospects of our members are not negatively impacted in any economic and energy transition. And while we have sought to elevate labor standards in the renewable energy space for our members who may be employed in that sector, you are well aware of prior splits within the labor federation at the behest of outside organizations over employment opportunities for union members in the fossil fuel industry that do support family sustaining wages and benefits. Those splits unfortunately appear to not be isolated disagreements and it saddens us that the very labor movement we have fought for and supported for over a century seems to have lost sight of its core mission and has moved away from us and our membership in the interest of headline grabbing political expediency.

The latest disturbing example of this dubious big tent strategy that has, in many instances, been detrimental to the economic well being of our members, is the reported formation of the aforementioned Super PAC that will be dominated by funds from billionaire environmental activist Tom Steyer and run by an operative who once and perhaps still does lead his personal political odyssey. The stated rationale for this fund as published in press reports does nothing to assuage concerns that the AFL-CIO has now officially become infiltrated by financial and political interests that work in direct conflict to many of our members'—and yes, AFL-CIO dues paying members' lives. This is a disturbing development and one that requires a further explanation.

While that explanation is formulated, we write to you today in order to clear up any ambiguity about our involvement and directly inform you that we will not participate with this new Super PAC in any manner. Compromising our core mission as trade unionists sworn to advocate for the economic well being of our membership as a trade off for a perceived short term political gain is utterly disappointing and cannot be supported by the undersigned organizations. Furthermore, we respectfully request that the AFL-CIO cut ties with Mr. Steyer and his political operation as we do not want any of our members' financial support for the Federation to be used against them and their economic well being in pursuit of this endeavor. We wish to make it clear that we speak only for the Building Trades Unions in the AFL-CIO that are signed below, and we understand that others may communicate their thoughts privately and we respect their position.

We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and are hopeful of a day when the Building Trades and its members are afforded greater labor family consideration for their economic well being before we attempt to repackage ourselves for newfound activist billionaire friends who have an agenda which is far different than ours.

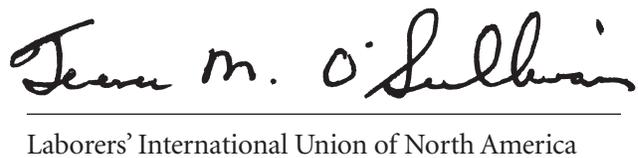

International Union of Operating Engineers


International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers

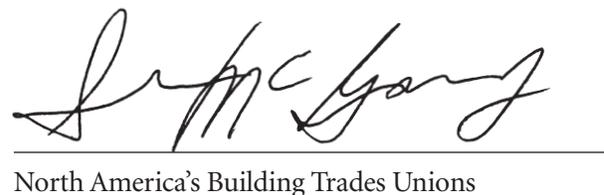

United Association Union of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders, and Service Technicians


Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association


International Union of Elevator Constructors


Laborers' International Union of North America


United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers, & Allied Workers


North America's Building Trades Unions