

Statement of Jeff Ward Thomas Built Bus employee High Point, North Carolina

Due to the enormous decline in union membership since a peak in 1969, the union officials feel it necessary to adopt new questionable strategies. This is not to say that the strategies previously employed were ethical and moral, but the new strategies and how they are being employed should draw great concern from our legislative bodies.

At one time the playing field was tilted toward the employer because of the lack of Federal regulations regarding employee treatment and employee rights. Those days are long since gone and the unions are faced with the deterioration of a system that has lined their pockets for decades. There are a couple of issues that will be paramount in leveling the playing field that is now tilted in the favor of the unions.

The first issue is the Neutrality Agreement. With this agreement between the employer and the union, the employer basically bows down to every whim of the union officials and has to give up any foothold that they may have as a defense against the union onslaught.

In my case, the UAW and my company Freightliner had such an agreement. Through the same Neutrality agreement, Freightliner also agreed to recognize the union through a “card count” instead of the proven democratic ballot vote. This “card count” system is a farce. It is virtually impossible for someone to vote objectively when they are surrounded by groups of fellow employees, some that may have been friends for many years, influencing your decision in a pep rally type atmosphere.

The problems with the “card count” do not end there. I haven’t even mentioned that the card signature verification process is subject to corruption as well. This merely complicates things even more. If corruption and un-ethical actions get us to this point, you can be assured that the verification process by a third party mediator chosen and agreed upon by the union and the employer will surely be questionable.

The verification in my case took place at an undisclosed location in another city some 60 miles away. This is odd because the UAW officials as

well as the Freightliner officials were in one location prior to the card count. Would it not make more sense to bring the mediator to where the other two parties are instead of transporting the other two parties in separate vehicles to meet in some undisclosed location many miles away, that is unless you are trying to hide something.

In closing, I would urge all to at least make the playing field a little less tilted toward the union organizers and give the employees that do not wish to be unionized the opportunity to use a system that is less open to corruption. Just look at some of the UAW sponsored web pages and you will see that there is an unfair advantage given to union organizers. Gary Casteel (region 8 Director of the UAW) states that there must be a neutrality agreement negotiated in every contract. Why would he make this statement if these tactics were not very advantageous for the union??