



Local 584 Members Challenging Forced Merger

Bookmark/Search this post with

UPDATE, August 6, 2014: Local 584 is being forcibly merged into another New York Teamster local to prevent members from voting in new leadership this fall. Support Local 584 members who are demanding their constitutional right to vote on the merger.

[Click here to demand that President Hoffa respect members' Right to Vote on any local union merger.](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-hoffa-we-say-no-to-the-forced-merger-of-local-584) (<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-hoffa-we-say-no-to-the-forced-merger-of-local-584>)

Local 584 members have been gearing up to defeat their incompetent union officials in a local union election this fall.

But today, without any consultation with the members, they began receiving notices inviting all "former members of Local 584" to a membership meeting this Sunday. The notice was issued on Local 553 letterhead.

Local 553 is led by Demos Demopoulos, a Hoffa ally who is also Secretary-Treasurer of New York City Joint Council 16.

This is not the first time that Demopoulos has merged a local union to stop members from voting in reform leaders. He pulled a similar stunt last year to stop reformers from mounting an election challenge in Local 854, where members had voted against Hoffa in the last International Union election.

Local 553 has been losing money and members for years. Before absorbing dues and members from Locals 854 and 550 last year, between 2001 to 2013, Local 553 lost more than \$366,659 and almost 500 members.

Under the Teamster Constitution, members are guaranteed a vote on any proposed merger, except "if a Local Union is not capable of performing its representational functions, due to its financial conditions or where an emergency situation exists."

Hoffa and the Joint Council are exploiting that loophole to try to force through the Local 584 merger. But Demos' real concern is to grab more dues for Local 553 officials and to prevent reformers from turning around another local union in New York City.

It's true that Local 584 officials have done a miserable job of defending members against firings and cutbacks in the dairy industry. But the Local still had over \$200,000, as had been reported at membership meetings for months.

The real "emergency" for Hoffa and Demos is that Local 584 Members First, a reform group aligned with TDU, had won the support of the majority of stewards and was poised to win the Local 584 election this fall.

Local 584 members are demanding that Hoffa respect their constitutional right to vote on any local union merger.

[Click here to show your support by signing their online petition.](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-hoffa-we-say-no-to-the-forced-merger-of-local-584)

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/tell-hoffa-we-say-no-to-the-forced-merger-of-local-584>

July 25, 2014: Less than 90 days from their election, Hoffa is threatening to trustee and merge a New York City local to try to stop members from voting incompetent officials out of office.

The International Union is threatening to merge or trustee New York Local 584, to try to prevent an election that a reform team, Local 584 Members First, is poised to win.

Local 584 represents “milk men”— drivers and production workers who deliver milk to supermarkets, corner stores and public schools—as well as other food and beverage Teamsters.

For years, being a dairy Teamster has been a route to the middle class with members making \$25 to \$30 an hour with union pensions. Now, the largest employer in the industry is trying to make that a thing of the past.

Elmhurst Dairy has gobbled up competitors, kicked long-timer Teamsters to the curb and replaced them with low-wage workers who start at under \$10 an hour with no pension.

Two hundred fifty good dairy Teamster jobs have been destroyed.

Local 584 members turned to the International Union for help—including blowing the whistle on side deals and financial improprieties by Local 584 officials. But the local is run by Hoffa loyalists and the IBT turned a deaf ear.

So Local 584 members started to organize. They opposed the layoffs of senior members and the destruction of good middle class jobs. This summer they formed Local 584 Members First and formed a reform team to run for local union office this fall.

Support for Members First has grown quickly. Dairy Teamsters united with other food and beverage Teamsters in the local at Tropicana, Norris Foods, and Staten Island College. The majority of the local’s shop stewards have gotten behind the movement. So has Willie Whelan, the retired long-time leader of the local.

Now the International Union has stepped in—not to help members defend their jobs but to try to stop members from taking back their union.

Hoffa has appointed a personal representative to be his point man on this operation. Thom Conelius, an International Rep on Hoffa’s payroll, is no stranger to the dirty work of fighting union reformers. Last year, he teamed up with another Hoffa International Rep Kevin Currie to try to defeat reform leader Sandy Pope in the Local 805 election. They failed.

In Local 584, Hoffa and company don’t want to risk another election. Officials have talked openly about preventing “another TDU local in New York City” by merging Local 584 out of existence.

It’s been done before. Another New York City local with a growing reform movement, Local 854, was secretly merged into Local 553 before its local election last year.

Local 854 members voted against Hoffa in the last International Union election and the Joint Council leaders feared a TDU slate in the local union race. So they pushed through a quickie merger during the summer when many of the local’s membership of school bus workers are out of work.

Hoffa and Joint Council 16’s message is clear: “destroy Local 584 in order to save it.”

Local 584 members are saying not so fast. They’ve organizing to defend their right to vote, to run for office and to win.

Issues:

News	Teamster Issues	TDU in Action	Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rail Workers Revolt against Driving Solo• OSHA Awards Damages and Reinstatement for Truck Driver• The Trucking Industry Needs More Drivers. Maybe It Needs to Pay More.• YRC Worldwide Reports 2014 Second Quarter Results• ABF Reports 14 Percent Revenue Increase• Counting on Members' Frustration, Rivers Opposes Local 237's Floyd• More News	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pension and Benefits• Hoffa Watch• UPS• Freight• Carhaul• Rail• More Teamster Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2013 \$150,000 Club• Make UPS Deliver• Rebuilding Teamster Power in Freight• Local Union Reform• TDU Black Caucus• Meetings & Structure• TDU History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops• Books• Educational Articles• Steward's Toolbox• Pension Information• UPS: Contract & Supps• UPS Delivery Methods• Freight: NMFA & Supps• UPS Freight Contract• Carhaul Contract & Supps• More Resources