TEAMSTERS UNION LOCAL NO. 190

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Joe Dwyer
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To: Members and Retirees of Teamsters Local 190

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Shortly after the June Primary Election, Teamsters Local 190 sent out a survey asking members, retirees and their families to share their experiences in voting under Montana's new election laws. ***These new laws require proof of voter identification before a ballot will be counted.*** We are pleased to have received more than 100 surveys back from our mailing, and want to share those results with you. But first, I want to respond to a couple of the comments made by respondents to our survey.

One member felt it was wrong to spend union dues on the survey. **We didn't, and we're not spending union dues on this letter either.** The cost of that survey, this mailing and other outreach efforts is being paid for by a grant Teamsters Local 190 received from the Montana Secretary of State's office. Your union, along with more than 90 other organizations throughout the state, applied for and obtained a federal grant designed to help educate voters on the changes in voting laws passed by the Congress and the states.

Another member asked why this [voter education effort] is a union problem. We're hoping that it isn't a problem at all, but the outcomes of elections, whether on ballot issues or for candidates running for public office, have a tremendous impact on our members' lives. Everything from worker safety laws, taxes, workers' compensation, unemployment compensation, local government funding and regulations, CDL requirements, minimum wages to child labor laws affect our members. And the determination of ballot issues or the election of candidates who will represent us in public office are critical. **The choice of how you vote is yours, but making sure your vote is counted is important to us.**

Now to the survey and what it tells us about how to navigate Montana's new voter identification laws. You can read the full results in the enclosed **RESULTS OF SURVEY**. But I'd like to share with you a bit of what it told us and perhaps a few recommendations for voting in the General Election.

The survey told us that generally the voting system worked just fine in the June Primary Election. Although a few folks reported some delay at the polls and a few had to cast provisional ballots and return proof of identification before their ballots could be counted, no one claimed that their ballot wasn't accepted. That's good news.

The survey also tells us that the majority of voters used a **Drivers License** as proof of identification, some used their **Voter Identification Card**, while others used their **Social Security Number**. Clearly, all of these should be recommended to our members for ID purposes.

The survey also indicates that some of our members may experience delays at the polls on Election Day. Eight percent (8%) of our members indicated that there was some delay at the polls during the Primary Election. And although that may not seem like much (the delays ranged from a few minutes longer than usual to as long as 20 minutes), we don't want anyone to get discouraged and leave the polls before casting their ballots. **There are three ways you can avoid delay at the polls.**

Vote by mail (absentee ballot). This is an easy process. You can request an absentee ballot from your county election office and vote from the convenience of your home.

Vote early at the election office. Again, it's easy to do and relatively line-free. Just go into your County Election Office 8 am. – 5 p.m. and ask to vote absentee.

Show up at the polls during off-peak hours. The busy times are often just when the polls open, during the lunch hour and just after 5 p.m. Voting at off-peak times (if possible) may mean shorter lines.

This probably isn't new news to many of you, but if we reach just 10 – 20% of our members and it makes a difference in whether or not their votes count, we could make a huge difference in our members' lives.

Voting is one way our members can help determine the future of our nation, our state, our local government and our public schools. **Please take the time to vote this November, and please make sure your vote counts. Having an appropriate form of identification with you when you vote can make a difference.** Thank you.

Fraternally yours,

Joe Dwyer,
Secretary-Treasurer