

**International Brotherhood of Teamsters
General Secretary-Treasurer Candidates Forum**

Moderator:

Stephen Franklin

**Author, writer and academic at the
School of Labor at University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana**

Candidates:

Ron Herrera

**IBT General Secretary-Treasurer candidate on the
Vairma/Herrera Teamster Power Slate**

Fred Zuckerman

**IBT General Secretary-Treasurer candidate on the
O'Brien-Zuckerman Teamsters United Slate**

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CastingWords*

IBT General Secretary-Treasurer Candidates Forum September 29, 2021

Stephen Franklin: Tonight from Chicago, Illinois, a debate between the two candidates vying for a five-year term as General Secretary-Treasurer of the Teamsters Union.

I'm Steve Franklin. And many of you know me as a long-time labor writer for the Chicago Tribune or these days as an academic School of Labor at University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, author, and writer for publications like "In These Times" and "The American Prospect" on labor issues.

I'm serving as the moderator for tonight's debate. This debate was organized by the Independent Office of the Election Supervisor for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. The Office of the Election Supervisor oversees the Union's election process. Richard Mark is the Election Supervisor and he's here with us this evening.

Next week, ballots will be mailed to 1.4 million Teamster members in the United States and Canada, and the vote count to determine who will hold the Union's top offices for the next five years will begin on November the 15th. Let me now introduce the two candidates for Teamsters General Secretary, and my colleagues on the panel of journalists will be asking questions.

Representing the Teamsters Power Slate is Ron Herrera. Mr. Herrera, a 46-year member of the Teamsters, is a principal officer of Local Union 396 in Covina, California, and also serves as a Teamsters International Vice-President for the West Region. Welcome, Mr. Herrera.

Representing the Teamsters United Slate is Fred Zuckerman. Mr. Zuckerman, a 42-year member of the Teamsters is President of Local Union 89 in Louisville, Kentucky, and President of the Joint Council 94, which represents members in three states. Welcome, Mr. Zuckerman.

Fred Zuckerman: Thank you.

Mr. Franklin: To my left is Joel Bleifuss, the editor and publisher of "In These Times," which is based here in Chicago and is a leading source of labor reporting, including an article I just wrote for them. Joel has worked for the news organization since 1986.

On my right is Sam Sanders, a journalist with "More Perfect Union," an Internet-based news site where she covers issues related to working families. Before joining "More Perfect Union," Sam worked on policy issues for the Economic Policy Institute in Washington on topics related to the future of work at the US Department of Labor.

We have a live audience here in Chicago, the majority of whom are Teamster Union members. Everyone in the room has shown proof of having been vaccinated for COVID-19, and the audience will be wearing masks through the debate, hopefully. This debate is being streamed on the Web on YouTube and Teamster Facebook channels.

We also have a number of credentialed journalists present with us. Welcome to all of you. In addition to the questions from our panelists, those in the room can submit questions in writing by filling out cards that have been supplied and passed out to them by Jamie Horwitz, who'll be standing in the front row. I urge you to take part in that effort.

Tonight's debate, the last of three International Officer candidate debates and the only one featuring the candidates for General Secretary-Treasurer is an opportunity for thousands of Teamster members as well as the news media and general public to hear from candidates representing these two rival slates. Whoever wins this election this fall will introduce a new era for this powerful union.

Candidates, you know the rules. Each candidate will have two minutes for an opening statement. The order of the opening statements has been determined by a coin flip a short time ago. Mr. Herrera will make the first opening statement and also the first closing statement. Mr. Zuckerman will receive the first question.

When we begin the question and answer period, as moderator, I will direct the flow of all questions and recognize each panelist, alternating between candidates. The candidate to whom the question is addressed will have 90 seconds to respond. The other candidate is given 45 seconds for a rebuttal or a comment.

The candidate first questioned will then have 30 seconds for a rebuttal. And if I think an answer needs further clarification or a follow-up, I may allow an extension or discussion or direct one of the other panelists to continue the line of questioning for an additional 45 seconds.

Following the question and answer period, each candidate will have two minutes for closing statements. We have a time-keeper in the room, and the candidates and panelists can clearly see the time displayed right in front of us. When time is up, if a candidate is still speaking, I will stop the answer to keep the debate moving. I may let a candidate complete a sentence, if possible, when time is up but not start a fresh thought.

Finally, let me remind everyone in the audience here in Chicago not to engage in any outbursts or action that may take away from the speaking time of the candidates. This can lead to sanctions from the Election Supervisor for the audience member, the candidate, and the slate.

And, quite importantly, if you haven't silenced your cell phones yet, this is the time to turn them off and to get offline for an hour. And with that, let's begin with the opening statements. Mr. Herrera, we begin with you, please.

Ron Herrera: Thank you. Bonne soir et bienvenue Canada. Merci, François. Bienvenidos Puerto Rico y mi familia latina, ese es su tiempo. Welcome, brothers and sisters. I am excited and privileged to be here in front of you today running for the position of General Secretary-Treasurer. I think it's important to pay respects both to Canada and Puerto Rico because we're an international union.

Pride, loyalty, and respect. That's what the Teamsters are all about. And our mission is to build a labor movement inclusive and led by the Teamsters in this country. We're running campaigns in

Southern California and the West Coast and on Amazon. We just passed a historic bill in the state of California that was signed by our governor, Gavin Newsom. And it's on production standards.

We're fighting misclassification. We're fighting the gig economy. We're fighting the transformation of green energy. We're building political power to protect our members, like through policies like Don't Waste LA in Los Angeles and Transform Don't Trash in New York City. We're protecting our pensions.

And I want to thank all the members, the officers, and especially the retirees who helped pass the Butch Lewis Act. We're fighting for social justice. We're not afraid to say the words systemic racism. We're fighting for immigration reform, even if it takes civil disobedience. And, we're fighting for a pathway to citizenship for our members. We're fighting to organize, continue organizing in the public sector.

Fred is running on a campaign focused on the past, meant to divide our members and tear down our union. He's even traveled to my local union where he's called the police on my members.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Herrera...

Mr. Herrera: We need a leadership...

Mr. Franklin: ...can you sum up, please.

Mr. Herrera: We need a leadership that extends into the future and not keep grabbing onto the past. Thank you very much.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Mr. Zuckerman, your opening statement, please.

Mr. Zuckerman: Thank you very much. As everybody knows, I've been an outspoken critic of the Hoffa administration for a very long time. The reason why I'm outspoken is because they have not gone to work for many, many years.

To today's date, we have lost over 300,000 members since they have taken office. To further talk about that issue, we have lost 178 local unions in 23 years. Now, how does that happen? That happens because nobody is working. That happens as a result of people not doing their jobs, organizing, and having no international support to the local unions to make us better.

Now, my opponent here is running for General Secretary-Treasurer. He's got four jobs, three of them he's not doing right now. He's the chairman of the Article 43 Committee on the UPS contract and a member of the UPS National Committee. He had an opportunity in 2018 to stand with Sean and I to oppose the contract, particularly with regard to subcontracting.

Now, in Southern California, he goes down there and whines like a little girl, telling everybody that, you know, the feeders are being taken over by subcontractors, and there's nothing we can do about it. He was the chairman of that committee. He was on the national negotiating committee. Could have done something about it, but didn't.

My time's running out, but I need to make one further point. He's got four jobs. One of them is with the state Fed. He's the chairman of the state Fed in Los Angeles County. He has given up his loyalty to the Teamsters to give it to somebody else, is the reason why he's not going to work and taking care of Teamster jobs.

Now he wants to come to Washington DC and be...

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Zuckerman.

Mr. Zuckerman: My time's up.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. All right, let's turn to our panel. Joel, can you start our discussion?

Joel Bleifuss: This is for Mr. Herrera. During the last convention in 2016, the Teamsters voted overwhelmingly to organize Amazon, specifically its drivers. But there are a minimum of 1,000 contractors that provide drivers for Amazon across the country. When was the last time the Teamsters accomplished such an organizing project on this scale?

Mr. Herrera: You know, I think that Amazon is unique. And, we have to look at Amazon as an organizing drive. It's very, very broad. But we have to work together with it. I mean, I'm being criticized for running the LA Federation of Labor, but it builds political power for the Teamsters, political power that we need to attack this giant. Political power that places the Deputy Labor Secretary Julie Su into office.

And I don't appreciate him attacking my joint council. That was a strategy by my President and the executive board of my joint council to put me in place to build political power in the Teamsters.

And it's interesting that two of the candidates on his slate sit on my board for the LA Federation of Labor, both my brother, Chris Griswold and my sister, Lindsay Dougherty, and have unanimously voted for everything that I've put forth in Los Angeles. It is the second-largest labor federation in the country. And I'm proud to run it, and I'm proud to say that a Teamsters running it.

We're also running Las Vegas. We're also running Montana. We've also running Monterrey, California. And if we get lucky, we're going to run Memphis, Tennessee as well. And I encourage all my brothers and sisters if they can do the same, please, do it. Because that's the way you build political power. We run the state and I'm very, very proud of that. Thank you.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Our next question will be for Mr. Zuckerman. Sam?

Mr. Zuckerman: I think I respond to that. Don't I have 45 seconds?

Mr. Franklin: I'm sorry. Go ahead. I apologize. Please, go ahead. Respond.

Mr. Zuckerman: So, with regard to the LA Fed, the point that I was trying to make, and I got cut off was he's not doing the work that he's supposed to be doing today. And we have

campaigned at Local 396. Your members tell us all the time that they never see you. They see us more than they see you out there. Now, our folks that are on it go to work every day.

As chairman, he's got a bigger responsibility. But he's negated his responsibility to the Teamsters, which you just can't do. You know, he wants to take this job in Washington DC, but he's got other things that he's got to do.

The job in Washington DC is a full-time job. If you're not willing to take a huge salary cut, move to Washington DC, and spend your time full-time there, then you're not qualified for the job. You're unfit for the job.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Do you want to respond to his point that members on your slate are also on the Federation in Los Angeles?

Mr. Zuckerman: I thought I did. They are on the Federation, but they go to work every day and they're servicing their members where Mr. Herrera is not. And that's what his members say.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Herrera, do you have a response to that?

Mr. Herrera: Certainly. He had three jobs before. He was the car haul director. He ran his local union. He had the joint council also. That's the hypocrisy that you're going to hear today. It's all going to be personal attacks. But it's OK. He doesn't know my members.

All he has to do is go on Facebook and see where the heck I'm at. It's real simple. My members are 396 members. Certainly, he's not the principal officer of my local union. He wouldn't know anything about the ethnicity, the culture, and...

Mr. Zuckerman: I get 30 seconds to respond, right?

Mr. Franklin: Yes, you do.

Mr. Zuckerman: I do know his members. I know them very well. In fact, I won his local union in the last election. I know them very well. And those members are very aggravated that you are off doing other things and you gave up your loyalty to the Teamsters to have them somewhere else.

Mr. Franklin: Okay. Thank you. Next question, Sam, is for Mr. Zuckerman.

Sam Sanders: Thanks. I'd like to direct this question to Mr. Zuckerman. Picking up on the thread about broader support from the International for strikes and other strategic activity. In recent years, the Union has, of course, announced some expansion of the strike benefits and indicated interest in shoring up that resource. However, the last national strike was in 1997.

As the Union prepares to take on a multinational corporate giant like Amazon, could you speak to what changes you think need to be made in how the Union approaches support for strikes to make that viable?

Mr. Zuckerman: Sure. We are already discussing those changes as part of the O'Brien-Zuckerman Slate. Big changes need to be made. In 2002, we had a special convention in Las Vegas. And in that special convention, we had allocated money for the strike and defense fund and for . . . strike and defense fund. So, that money was being used to take on organizing in a way that wasn't successful.

Like I said in my opening statement, we've lost 300,000 members. We have to figure out how to do that better. By doing it better, we need to engage the local unions, which we haven't done in the past.

You know, it's less expensive for us to engage the local unions, get everybody on board, and fight those fights from the inside, not from the top down. It just doesn't work like that. It's been demonstrated like that time and time again.

Mr. Franklin: Respond, Mr. Herrera.

Mr. Herrera: He does a lot of talking with his slate. But he doesn't have anything going on in his local union to his own. He put out a statement that Amazon was too big, and that there was too much turnover, and they had to walk away, and it would take a multi-union approach to, you know, get that done. I agree with that point. But you do that through the CLCs and the Federations because you have to create partnerships.

But how do you get them? Comprehensive leverage campaigns. You need politics. You educate your members. You create volunteer programs. And you build multi-union alliances, coalitions, collaboratives, that's what does it. You just don't come up here and not have a plan and say, "We're talking about it with the slate." You actually do things.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Zuckerman?

Mr. Zuckerman: So, I never said that, never said it was too big to take on. I've taken on Amazon in my backyard and have had two-year-long campaigns. I've got two of my full-time organizers here tonight that have taken those campaigns on. As far as organizing, their slate, their guys, at least half of them, are failures.

They can't even organize in their own local unions, never mind organize at the international level or be advocates on the General Executive Board to organize, because they just don't know how to do it. In my local union, we're organizing.

Amazon is the big gorilla out there. Everybody recognized that. We have to have a comprehensive plan to attack Amazon. And it has to be done. We cannot sit back and not do it.

Mr. Franklin: I have a question I want to follow up with Mr. Herrera. Is taking on Amazon with a strike possible? If you want to have a criticism of the effort in Alabama it was that they only went after one local. Don't you have to have a national effort against the Amazon?

Mr. Herrera: Most definitely. You have to run a national campaign without a doubt. And you have to have national leaders. Julie Su and Marty Walsh are those leaders put a perfect place for

us, to do things like this. But we have to fight misclassification as well because their logistical side is misclassified. They're owner-operators. And it's something that's very important that we do do that.

Striking them, I think that that's going to be difficult unless we have a plan. We have a plan in place through the International through a director, my brother Randy Korgan. We just followed that plan, all of us, not get out there. He says he's organizing, but our success is going to be if we're all in it together and we follow the International and Brother Korgan's plan.

Mr. Franklin: OK. I think I have the next question for, I think it's Mr. Herrera's turn. What's your evaluation of the Union under Hoffa? And what would you do differently? Also, the Union has been divided for many of the last years by two sides. Can the differences be forgiven? Can enemies, political enemies, within the Union learn to work together? Can alliances be formed between different groups?

Mr. Herrera: I think they can. I definitely think they can. I'm not going to stand up here and preach unification and not practice it. Is it going to be difficult? Yes, but we have to stop using politics, whether it's in a contract negotiation, whether it's a vote-no, whether it's I didn't get to get picked to become vice president like him because we picked Vice President Buhl.

We just have to put all that aside. We have to put personalities aside. We have to put, you know, the politics aside and move forward as a union. Pride, loyalty, respect, that's what this is about.

As far as the Hoffa administration, obviously there's always going to be critics to it. You know, a lot of good things have happened. The Teamsters Union never ever talked about immigration reform. Mr. Hoffa brought that to front and center. We lobbied Capitol Hill on it, right? I was arrested for it a couple of times protesting it. So, there's a lot of good that has come out. Our finances are solid.

It's interesting because 15 of the members of the other slate are on the Hoffa payroll. So I don't know if he's referring to his people or not. And three more people of those 15, 18 in total, received stipends from the International.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Zuckerman, your reply.

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah, so obviously, that they were very dissatisfied with the Hoffa administration because we were able to unite them under the leadership with Sean O'Brien. And that's the main focus of our campaign is to unite this Union with everybody that wants to be united and create a stronger International Union.

It's very important that we do that. Although that there's some people that just won't do it, they want to go around and create division by telling stories about pensions and God knows whatever. It doesn't really matter. But that's exactly what we're trying to do is to unite the Union because we are stronger by doing it.

One other point that I have to make that's important is that we need to clean up our own house first. If we're going to organize...

[crosstalk]

Mr. Zuckerman: We have to have something to offer.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you.

Mr. Zuckerman: The people that we're trying to organize with results like we've had over the last 23 years.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you.

Mr. Zuckerman: Sorry.

Mr. Franklin: Please, yes. Joel?

Mr. Bleifuss: This is a question from the audience. For the last 30 years -- and this is for Mr. Zuckerman -- the IBT has been subject to federal oversight. Hoffa petitioned and the federal government agreed to end the oversight. If elected, you would assist in one of the first conventions post federal oversight. What if anything would you change in the constitution at that convention?

Mr. Zuckerman: I would have done it long time ago. In fact, in my last campaign, we talked about this. We need to clean up our own house and show people that we can do it by ourselves. We failed to do that. You know, we just had a General Executive Board not long ago, where their mentor, Rome Aloise, was being charged again after he had served a two-year suspension for violating the order of the judge.

Now, it was a 12 to 11 vote, to just impose a 30-day suspension, where he had already served a two-year suspension and admitted that he violated the judge's order. Now, had my opponent did the right thing and came over to our side, we could have corrected our own problem at that time. Or, their candidate for General President could have voted.

It would have been 12 to 11 the other way, and we would have fixed our own corruption problem with regard to Rome Aloise. But we failed to do that. That's got to stop. We need to police ourselves. We need to show the outside world that we can run our own business, absent of the federal government before anybody is going to release us to do anything.

Mr. Franklin: Okay, thank you. Mr. Herrera, can you also answer his claim or his point that you voted not to take action against Mr. Aloise?

Mr. Herrera: Hypocrisy at its finest, OK. My mentors, first, were Larry Dias and Bob Morales, and I'm proud of that out of Local 70 and Local 350.

But, I want to read something that Mr. Zuckerman said. Any officer who commits a crime against them, the membership needs to be thrown out of the Union. When I am elected General President, I will see to it.

Now, you got another guy that's a little bit corrupt up here in Boston, Massachusetts, and there's a lot of them. But you got Sean O'Brien up there.

Didn't do anything, just talks a lot, right? His own slate, all you guys that are running on his slate, careful man, you can't trust this guy because this is what he said about my brother Sean.

So, as far as the Rome Aloise thing goes, he's running against me. And he's clouded the water with Rome Aloise and all these, you know, hypotheticals on charges and stuff, but he comes out and actually says something about the person that he's running with. And I defended him at the time he said it. So I think that we got to look at the real, the truth, or what's really going on here because I got more than what he said about him.

Mr. Franklin: Do you want to answer that, Mr. Zuckerman? His response that you had criticized...

Mr. Zuckerman: I would like to answer that and be allotted the extra time that he took to because it will take a little bit of time to answer it accurately.

Mr. Franklin: Let's work it through, but let's be precise.

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah. How many have seen that video? Raise your hands up. In the crowd, how many have seen that video, where these things were said? Not a lot of people in the room have seen the video. I've seen it many times. I've analyzed the video.

Here's what it says. Sean O'Brien is a very loyal and passionate person. He was at a campaign rally for his friend, Joe Barros, who's running for local union election. He had made some comments during his statements, and the comments that are relevant were, "They are not our friends. They need to be punished. They need to be punished." And that is a quote, okay?

So, now, you have to figure out what "they need to be punished" means. If it had meant that I am going to use my authority as a principal officer or Joint Council officer or Vice President to punish this guy, he deserved to get kicked out of the Union, but that's not what it said.

And let me tell you something about his opponent. His opponent actually won the election. His name is Matt Taibbi. Does a great job up there in Providence, Rhode Island. He won the election, and Sean embraced that.

He put them on as an advisory trustee to the Joint Council, and put him on our slate because of the work that he's doing up there in Rhode Island. So, if he meant that he was going to punish him, it sure didn't look like that

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. We're running tight. I think that's fine. Sam, it's your turn.

Ms. Sanders: This question is for Mr. Herrera. I'd like to zoom out a little bit to the national political level and return to what you raised earlier about building political power with the Union.

The Teamsters and, of course, other allies in organized labor have pushed the Biden administration and other members of Congress on a number of major labor priorities, including, of course, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, other labor reform legislation, pro-labor and labor centric trade deal reform, and more, as well as broad support for other major Democratic priorities.

However, we're seeing the results this week going on in Congress. Of course, many of these major priorities that were early commitments in President Biden's agenda being stalled out. Could you speak to your views on whether and how the Union should do more to hold elected officials accountable when they fail to ultimately support the passage of major labor priorities?

Mr. Herrera: Well, you shouldn't have to lobby, someone that you endorse first. And you have to maintain a relationship with them. You just can't hit them elected and let them go. That's what we do. You have to continually conversate with them. You have to continually check in with them.

Our congressional folks in my area, you know, we have coffee. US Senator Alex Padilla and I have breakfast together, you know, about every six months. If you asked him, he would tell you.

That's what you got to do. You have to maintain relationships. And, and you have to always let them know what your positions are on different legislation. You have to let them know what you're thinking. You have to let them know, you know, that the Union is the one that got them there. But that you have to build voting density within the Labor Movement.

I mean, I'm being criticized for being the President of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. It's the most powerful federation in the country. And I got this guy criticizing me for it. And my whole work is around unions. How do you do those jobs? You put everything in one bucket, and it's called the Labor Movement. And politics and maintenance of politics is in that bucket.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you very much. Response.

Mr. Zuckerman: I'm not criticizing my opponent for the job that he does at the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. I'm criticizing my opponent for not doing his job for the Teamsters. That's what's important.

Sean and I have talked about this extensively. And we both agree that we need to ramp up our political outlook on things because that's probably one of the most important things that we need to do. We need to get politicians on our side. And we are going to work very hard to make sure that that happens.

It doesn't matter if you're Democrat or Republican, independent. It doesn't matter. If you're going to support the causes, the causes that are important to us, we're going to hold you accountable to that support. And we're going to make sure that we get that support when we need it to take care of the business that we need to take care of.

Mr. Franklin: My next question's for Mr. Herrera, correct?

Ms. Sanders Mr. Zuckerman.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Zuckerman. I apologize. The Teamsters Union is known as a truckers and warehouse union. But the number of union truckers has dropped from 48 percent in 1979 to 8.8 percent in 2019. What would you do differently to build the core industries of the Union, the core areas?

And also, what would you do to deal with the question of the Union has organized a large number of workers outside of these core industries? Is that a mistake? Is it a mistake to reach out to jobs and industries that don't have anything to do with the Union's legacy?

Mr. Zuckerman: I spoke on this when I ran for General President five years ago, and I still believe that it's true.

We have lost density in our core industries such as freight, such as warehousing, such as construction, every other industry that's very, very vital and important. When those standards drop, our members get harmed. And the standards drop because we're always competing against non-unions. We're not out there organizing.

So, our priority is to organize in the core industries, particularly in industries like construction, trucking, warehouse. I mean, that's where we built everything. To go outside of those core industries, that's fine. Anybody wants to be organized should be organized.

But we have to focus on rebuilding the Teamsters Union first. And like I said before, so we have something that we can offer people when we go out and organize outside of our core industries. We can tell them that we're doing a very good job.

We can tell them that we're organizing people, negotiating good contracts, negotiating good benefits for their retirement security, good benefits for their healthcare, and those things. So, organizing is a priority for me in our core industries.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you, very much. Mr. Herrera, how would you respond? Also, if I'm correct, Steve Vairma has been the head of the warehouse division. So, we have a history to look at, correct?

Mr. Herrera: Yes. I'm a trade unionist. I want to organize everybody. I'm not going to, you know, discriminate against any worker that wants to join the Teamsters Union. I love the Teamsters Union. I'm a loyal Teamster. I came up in a union family. If there's undocumented workers that want to join the Teamsters, man, I'm going to be the first one in line to organize them.

Our core industries, of course. Right? Misclassification, though, is the key. We have to fight misclassification, which we're doing right now in California. Governor Newsom just signed a bill to help organize misclassified workers and push them into employee status. But, we're organizing in the core. He doesn't organize in the core. He was the warehouse director and didn't organize one car hauler.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you.

Mr. Herrera: You're welcome.

Mr. Bleifuss: This is a question for Mr. Herrera.

Mr. Zuckerman: Do I get to respond to that?

Mr. Bleifuss: Sorry.

Mr. Franklin: Yes. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah, I don't understand me being a warehouse director. I've never been the warehouse director.

Mr. Herrera: Car haul. You know what I meant.

Mr. Zuckerman: We have organized. You said, warehouse director.

Mr. Herrera: OK. I meant car haul.

Mr. Zuckerman: That's exactly what you said. I know what you said. But we have organized in car haul. In Local 89, car haul is very important to my local. We have the biggest car haul local union in the country. We are very strong in car haul. We got three assembly plants, two Ford plants, one General Motors Corvette plant, and two large railheads.

And there's not one non-union truck, or mechanic, or yard worker, or office person that comes into Local 89's jurisdiction without being organized. Now, that's different in Southern California because there are no organized car haulers under the national contract anywhere in Southern California, because the Western Region Vice-President has ignored our core industries, ignored car haul in Southern California.

And let me tell you why it's important to me. My people from Bowling Green, Kentucky haul Corvettes out to Southern California. And when we get out there, we can't get loads coming back because everything's non-union out there. You need to start taking care of your business in the Western Region before you start criticizing everybody else of being a warehouse director and not organizing any car haul.

Mr. Herrera: You need to stop insulting Local 63 either. You better stop insulting Local 63.

Mr. Zuckerman: I didn't insult Local 63.

Mr. Herrera: You did so.

Mr. Zuckerman: I said the Western Region Vice-President. Western Region Vice-President is in charge of that area.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you, gentlemen. Let's move on.

Mr. Bleifuss: This is for Mr. Herrera. UPS executives require that all employees at corporate headquarters be vaccinated. But they don't require the same protections for front-line workers, what they call the people who work in warehouses and who interact with the public.

What do you think the Teamsters' role should be in protecting the health of its members? If you were elected as a Teamsters official, would you advocate that the company protect all employees, not just those in executive suites, by requiring everyone on the front lines to be vaccinated?

Mr. Herrera: I think that == well, to be honest, both our slates understand that vaccinations are important. Look. I'm vaccinated I want every single member, I want every single worker to be vaccinated. But, It's a choice that's going to happen. Legislation will determine it.

But, both of us agree. I don't want to put words in his mouth. I heard Brother Sean and Brother Steve talk about it that we both agree that there has to be mandatory subject of bargaining for our members.

Mr. Franklin: Okay, thank you. The response?

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah, I agree. I'm vaccinated three times, as a matter of fact. Got my third one on August the 18th, which is very important to me. And I certainly want to protect our members.

But I also understand that our members have rights on the collective bargaining agreements, which means that the company can't come in there and fire you for not being vaccinated, that it is a mandatory subject of bargaining and they have to bargain through it.

Every situation's going to be a little bit different. That's why it's important to sit down with the companies and bargain over it.

Because they want to accomplish the same things we want to accomplish, and there could be middle ground in there where we can come to a resolution on the problem, rather than a company just jumping up and saying, "If you don't do it, and if you don't do it my way, we're just going to terminate you."

Mr. Franklin: Thank you very much. OK.

Ms. Sanders This question is for Mr. Zuckerman first, again. To pick up on another topic on which there seems to be broad agreement between the two slates. In the presidential forums, we heard pretty conclusively from your running mates that you view the advancement of autonomous vehicle technology as a major threat and challenge for the Teamsters in the future, as well as a safety hazard, of course, for consumers and the general public.

There seemed to be broad agreement on that, but could you speak a little more to what you think is the first thing that should be done, or the highest priority to actually make sure that Teamsters' jobs are protected or that the appropriate regulations are enforced in this industry?

Mr. Zuckerman: Yes. So it creates problems for everybody, particularly our members, the motoring public, everybody else. You've seen these crashes with Tesla cars. They just get out of control and nobody can tell anybody right now whether or not they are going to have failures like that, which are going to go out and run over a school bus or whatever, right?

So, you know, we are way too early in this thing to say that we can even consider these things without knowing the safety hazards and everything else. And, of course, they're taking our jobs away, and we're going to do everything we can to protect our jobs.

Mr. Franklin: You want to follow that up?

Mr. Herrera: I have been educating my members on autonomous vehicles and platooning for the last five years. I called in the Health and Safety Department of the IBT to do a seminar for my members to let them understand what could happen.

But again: you have to have a state plan first. You have to monitor what state laws are being allowed to run these vehicles. And then you have to take it in the federal side of things. Again, politics to protect your members. But, autonomous vehicles are amongst us and a big threat right now.

Mr. Franklin: Okay. This question is for Mr. Herrera. And, again, I want to follow up on the issue of organizing. The Union has faced two distinct battles dealing with companies opposed to unions. It has struggled for years to organize workers at XPO and only recently won contracts for two sites while other unions have decertified the union.

It has also sought for some time to organize port drivers, which you know much about, in Southern California with no significant success. How will the campaign to Amazon differ, and won't these failures taint the effort in the eyes of workers as far as the potential for the Union to organize them?

Mr. Herrera: I heard that my little brother from Boston had started an Amazon campaign around 18 months ago and was criticizing the International for not starting it 10 years ago. But in our joint council, we don't wait for anyone. Joint Council 42 has been on this for the last four or five years. We have, in my local union, we've been doing it for the last three years.

But I don't think that it does because the program it sets in place is one of educating our members and tearing down contracts that we have in the Teamsters. We don't need union busters. We have people like Fred here to do it for us.

But we have to continue to educate our members. That's the big giant. That's the company that – it has to be organized without a doubt. So, education of members, creating volunteer programs, and other things that you can do to find out what's going on inside that company.

Mr. Franklin: I wonder if you could answer my question about the port drivers, one of the largest...

Mr. Herrera: The port drivers, I just came into the ports about two years, changed the whole dynamic so the way the port works, and I'm more worker-oriented. It's predominantly Hispanic. It's predominantly minority. And we're doing a lot of communications through what we call La Cafecito and Teamster outreach. We're talking to them.

I think that, you know, port drivers must through misclassification get organized. Let me tell you why.

Mr. Franklin: You have a few seconds.

Mr. Herrera: 86 percent of Amazon product comes in through the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Maquiladoras at the border, we have American companies doing business in Mexico with independent contractors coming through. We cannot let the organizing efforts of the ports go because of Amazon. Because the ports is Amazon.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Mr. Zuckerman, what's your response?

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah, so, what the numbers reflect the 300,000 members, that we've lost 178 local unions that we've lost during this term demonstrate that we're doing something wrong.

You mentioned the XPO contract or the XPO organizing drive. That demonstrates that we've done something wrong. The port campaign, we've been on that for many, many, many years. Spent a ton of money on it. We have gotten nowhere with it.

You know, Amazon just built an air hub in Cincinnati, Ohio at the Cincinnati airport. That's just now opening up. It's got 107 plane locations, and it's going to be about the size of Worldport in Louisville, Kentucky.

Right. Now, in 2002, we agree...

Mr. Franklin: Finish the point.

Mr. Zuckerman: In 2002, we agree to raise the members' dues money and to fund these projects, and we're not funding any projects. If we are funding the project, we're not demonstrating that we're getting anywhere with it because we keep coming up here and saying, "You know, we started on that 4 years ago, but we're not done yet. We started on this 2 years ago. We're not done yet. We started on this 10 years ago. We're still working on it," but there are no results. There's no excuses in this business. In this business, there's no excuses, and you got to get the job done and we're going to get it done.

Mr. Franklin: Next question. Joel?

Mr. Bleifuss: This is for Mr. Zuckerman. The 2018 UPS contract has been a major point of contention between the Teamsters United and Teamsters Power slates.

But the last time that a Teamster battle at UPS inspired the labor movement and made real gains for the part-time workers was the 1997 UPS strike led by Ron Carey. What is the legacy of that

strike and Ron Carey's leadership for you? And does it provide a model about how to fight UPS in the next contract battle?

Mr. Zuckerman: Well, what's important is that we should not be intimidated by taking on a big company like UPS. Actually, last battle was in 2013 when three supplements were rejected, and the International Union imposed them on us.

What we have done in 2013, 2018 is we have shown these big companies, we're not willing to take on a fight. We've got to change that. We have got to show them that we are willing to take on a fight every day.

One of the things that Sean and I got accomplished at the Convention is to eliminate the two-thirds rule, so you can't do that anymore. We'll either go back to negotiations, or we're going to strike it. One or the other.

We cut back the strike benefits to the first day, rather than day eight because we have got to support the people that are willing to take on a fight to better their lives. We got to be out there with them, and we got to support them.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Mr. Herrera, what's your response?

Mr. Herrera: You forgot negotiating committees to with rank and file on it, but I already do that.

Look, the 1997 strike, I'm a 24-year rank and filer. I walked that picket line with a two-year-old granddaughter. I know what it's like. That was about worker empowerment. That was all that was is uniting the workforce.

But Ken hall – let's get the record straight. Ken Hall negotiated that contract in 1997. We just have to stop this fighting, stop the bashing of our contract, and start internal organizing our workers. We are family. We are brothers and sisters.

That's why we call each other brother. That's why we call each other sister, and that's very, very important. Because I can tell you from experience; I walked that line. The crux of our victory was the membership, and that we stayed united amongst the belief that we could prevail as a unit, a ground unit.

Mr. Franklin: Okay. Your response?

Mr. Zuckerman: Well, I walked that picket line too. I was there in 1997. I wasn't a UPS-er. I was a business agent at the time. We have a very large air hub. But I can tell you this, we will continue to oppose contracts that are selling out the members. We will continue to call out cowards that want to impose the contract and not stand up for the members. That's what we stand for.

We're going to stand side by side with the members. And if it's a subcontracting problem that takes place, we are going to stand there until it gets fixed. If it's a 22.4 problem and they'll be

gone the next contract, they're going to get fixed too. We're going to be there and we're going to be very militant.

You know, one of their candidates, Josh Zivalich, has got a business agent on social media says we don't need a militant union. Yes, we do. That's exactly what we want.

They want the business-model union where they can just get along with the company. That's not us. We're going to fight for the members every day. It doesn't mean that we're going to be nuts about it. Right? We're going to make sure that the employers recognize that we're in the room, and we're there to get a good contract, and we're not walking away until we get it.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. I want to follow with a question. Mr. Herrera, when you talk about, we have to stop criticism, that sounds to me, if what I'm hearing correctly, you don't want any dissidents or any discussions within the Union. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Herrera: I'm a dissident. I get arrested for workplace actions. Right? I stick up for Latina cooks at LAX. I get arrested for temporary permanent status. That's militancy. I'll go to jail for my workers and my blood for what I believe in. I'm not saying that. But you have distinct – he's confusing things, because you have distinct regions of the world where my members in the West Coast ratified the contract above 60 percent.

Why? Because we do have an eight-hour guarantee. He doesn't. We do have a five-day consecutive workday. He doesn't. Right? We have \$50 million in our pension fund. We don't have a straight amount of money. And he's going to blame Ken Hall for taking the Central States out of the pension. I've heard the whole thing.

But the important thing to know is that, you know our members have unlimited healthcare when they retire, right? For \$300 a month for their family. So, there's a lot of differences in, you know, our contracts. But, you know, I'm a good brother. If they happen to win – but the Vairma-Herrera ticket, the Teamster Power Slate, is going to win – I'll more than talk, you know, to my brothers in the West Coast and come over to Louisville and negotiate his contract for him.

[laughter]

Mr. Franklin: Sam, you have a question.

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah, so he's not a good brother when he stands up here and he lies about stuff. We do have an eight-hour guarantee. We do have a five-day workweek. We have all of those things. His problem is he didn't stand up for his UPS-ers when he should have.

He should have stood up for them in 2018 when Sean O'Brien and I stood up, rejected the contract to get the subcontracting problem, instead of going back to Southern California and whining about it.

Mr. Herrera: That was all politics. All politics.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Sam, you have a question.

Ms. Sanders This question is for Mr. Herrera first. Returning to the conversation about membership and organizing generally. Some of the biggest gains in union membership in recent years have been among younger workers under 40. While there is still an overall decline in union density for this age group nationally, there's clearly a lot of energy there in particular.

Could you speak a bit to the case that you would make or what changes need to be made for how the Union approaches younger workers and makes the case to workers under 40 that they need the Union and that they need the Teamsters, especially, given that younger workers are more likely to be adversely impacted by tiered systems in contracts and have to wait longer, of course, to realize many of the benefits that the Teamsters push for?

Mr. Herrera: It goes back to internal organizing. But we do that already in my local union. We still have membership oath meetings where we call our members in. Unfortunately, COVID, you know, has affected that. We had one about a month and a half ago. And it's very, very important. We talk about their benefits. We talk about their contract. We give them a contract. We introduce them to their business agent.

So, it's a fundamental union practice that I want to share with my brothers and sisters throughout the country that's been successful here. My business agents are young, right? A good portion of them. We know that we have to relate to them.

In the federation, it's one of the programs that we have is to reach out to young workers. Because we know that, like undocumented workers and immigrant workers that we can organize, we also can organize young workers. But we're telling them all the values of being part of a union. But it's very important.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Zuckerman, what's your reply?

Mr. Zuckerman: So I agree that we need to train the younger workers. Sometimes it takes younger workers to do that. We are doing that.

On our slate, we have a great group of young, elected leaders such as Lindsay Dougherty, and Peter Finn, and Mark Davison, Juan Campos right here from 705, a young guy that's doing tremendous work. Tom Erickson up at 120, and Matt Taibbi up in Rhode Island, as importantly, Sean O'Brien.

And one of the things that Sean does in his local union, he's got what's called the Futures Program. And the the Futures Program is to gather these folks less than 40 years old. And they meet regularly. They shadow business agents. They help on organizing drives. And they do all those things to communicate to the younger people. And that's one of the programs that's going to be carried over in our administration when we take over.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. I have a follow-up. I'm assuming creating leadership among young workers is one way you'll overcome the tremendous disinterest of members in voting in the last election. Is that what you're talking about?

Mr. Zuckerman: That's exactly right. We got to engage the younger workers to get them engaged. And they talk better to the other younger workers. It gets them engaged. It snowballs on down. It's very effective.

Mr. Franklin: This is for Mr. Zuckerman. My question is, the Teamsters are one of the leaders of the movement to split the AFL-CIO, to leave the AFL-CIO and join the new Change to Win organization.

But since then, that organization has lost a tremendous amount of membership and unions. Will you rejoin the AFL-CIO? And can labor succeed – that's the ultimate question here – can labor succeed in these terribly difficult times with two competing organizations?

Mr. Zuckerman: So, Change to Win has been an absolute disaster. It was to organize people. Of course, I told you the numbers. We're down 300,000, right?. It didn't work. The AFL-CIO, leaving the AFL-CIO, on a personal note, I think that it was a mistake because we need to work with all labor unions to achieve what we need to do in the labor community.

I will tell you this. To rejoin the AFL-CIO will be a decision that is made by the General Executive Board, not just me. I would be a proponent of it. But it's going to be the decision of the General President and the General Executive Board.

Mr. Franklin: Okay, thank you. Mr. Herrera, what's your response?

Mr. Herrera: I'm definitely a proponent to joining the AFL. Of course, we have to vote it through our Executive Board. That's just process. But, you know we need all the help we can get. We need to stop Mitch McConnell and help and Fred here, help him stop destroying pensions and worker rights.

So it's very, very important that we pool our resources together so we can fight together. It's very, very important. Especially Amazon. Amazon has to be taken on. And the only way that we're going to do it, and I think he and I agree, is a multi-union approach.

Mr. Franklin: Okay. Any response, Mr. Zuckerman?

Mr. Zuckerman: Yeah, I certainly reject his comment about me destroying pensions. It's actually his candidate for general president that's been destroying pensions. In his local union...

[crosstalk]

Mr. Herrera: I didn't say you I said Mitch McConnell.

Mr. Zuckerman: In his local union – you mixed your words up.

Mr. Herrera: OK, I mix.

Mr. Zuckerman: In his local union, he has taken six companies out of pension plans and put them into the 401ks. Now, retirement security for Teamsters is extremely important. And we need to be in pension funds.

He also took Kroger out of Central States and assisted Kroger to sue the trustees of the central state's plan because they wouldn't give them back the withdrawal liability. That's their candidate, not ours.

The difference between the two plans right now, between the Kroger plan and the Central States Plan, is 50 percent. The accrual rate for the Kroger plan is \$85. The accrual rate for the Central States Plan is \$163.

Mr. Franklin: Do you want to answer that point that he made specifically that you had taken in some workers out of the pension plan and put them in a 401k?

Mr. Herrera: That is not true at all.

Mr. Zuckerman: I was talking about

Mr. Herrera: What we should talk about is him not being a supporter of the Butch Lewis Act. It just saved our pensions. And signed on to the UPS plan because that called for 20 percent cuts for our retirees. But there was another proviso in there, and that was to our local unions.

There was a two-dollar-per-member sanction, so a 10,000-member local would have had to pay the government \$20,000 a month. In my local union, that means I have to lay business agents off. So that's the real issue here.

Mr. Zuckerman: I'd like to take my time to respond to that...

Mr. Franklin: Sure, quickly.

Mr. Zuckerman: ...if I could because that is an outright lie. I don't know where you got that. But when the Teamsters first held the rally in Washington DC, I brought busloads of people up there.

I was the one that testified against the Butch Lewis Act. I was the one that hired professionals to write a paper to MPRA or MRPA to reject the cuts in Central States. I was the one that financially supported the pension-rights system.

The proposal from the UPS plan wasn't a plan. It was just something that was being talked about. It was cuts up to 20 percent. They were trying to figure out how to solve the problem because at the time we had a Republican president and Republican congress, and they were not interested in Butch Lewis. It was something that we were willing to consider, and 99 percent of the officers, including Rome Aloise who sat right across from me, approved that plan to go forward where Hoffa wouldn't approve it.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you very much. Joel.

Mr. Bleifuss: This is a question from the audience for Mr. Herrera. Your slate thinks the UPS 22.4 language is good language. Why do you feel 22.4 UPS drivers deserve six dollars an hour less than the top rate?

Mr. Herrera: That's not a true statement, so there must be someone from the audience at his supporter. We never said that we supported 22.4, and I don't really want to bash the authors of it up here because they're on his slate and they happen to be friends of mine.

But let me tell you a story. I have a father in my local union who has three sons that are 22.4. And he can't believe that his sons are full-time. One of those sons is going to get promoted. We, in my local union, promote into 22.4 in one year. One year seniority gets you into a full-time position. I wasn't a supporter of it, but I also think that we have to amend that or get it out.

But we also have to compete in Saturday-Sunday deliveries. We can't forget that.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you.

Mr. Zuckerman: Well he's just wrong about that. His candidate for general president said up here on the stage that they thought it was a great contract.

Mr. Herrera: No, he didn't. No, he didn't.

Mr. Zuckerman: His candidate in the eastern region, in Local 331, stated publicly that the 22.4s were a good thing and they need to stay. We reject that. The 22.4s should have been regular-package car drivers because that's the work that they're doing now.

The only difference between a regular-package car driver today and a 22.4 is that they get paid less and they don't have any protections under the contract. The work still needs to be done. They still had to hire package car drivers. We rejected, Sean and I, started the Vote No movement because that was a mistake. Everybody realized it was a mistake.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Sam.

Ms. Sanders: This is for Mr. Zuckerman?

Mr. Franklin: Yeah.

Ms. Sanders: A question for Mr. Zuckerman, returning again to the question of national political accountability.

How would you balance talking about the successes of the Biden administration and the current Congress in terms of the multi-employer pension plan, in terms of strengthened OSHA enforcement and other provisions that may be able to pass and balance that with what might be differing political opinions among the broad membership of the Teamsters?

Mr. Zuckerman: Well, the Biden administration has done a lot of good things. One of them is to appoint Secretary of Labor from Boston, Marty Walsh, who was just in Louisville a couple of weeks ago visiting one of our UPS hubs and talked to our UPS members which is very important. They're engaged in labor in supporting the issues that – we need to expand on that. We need to go further than that.

And when we take office , we're going to use whatever friends we have up there to continue to build those relationships up there, just continue to move in that direction, because that's very important to this.

Mr. Franklin: What's your response to there?

Mr. Herrera: I guess they're going to be calling me because, the last three weeks, I was on stage speaking with the Vice-President and the President. But, as far as – this is about freedom of choice. You can't take freedom of choice away from your members. We can, both sides can preach the good of the Biden administration.

Kamala Harris happens to be a personal friend of mine, okay. But we still have to respect our members, and we have to respect their freedom of choice. We don't want to alienate them. Thus affecting our union.

Mr. Franklin: This for Mr. Herrera. My question is: there seem to be many areas where the Teamsters can grow, FedEx, for example. Also, Amazon's new use of last-minute delivery. Amazon's developing a whole fleet of drivers through contractors where it's offloading the responsibility.

And lastly, I guess my question is, here, we talk about the White Paper contracts. Why doesn't the Teamsters bargain nationally, yet leave it up locally to make the local issues? So, again, these are three areas where I would see there be growth. But I wonder what's happening.

Mr. Herrera: On the Amazon issue, we have a national strategy. In fact, in my local union, not his, and in Local 25, I'll give my little brother from Boston credit. They have a serious campaign going on like me, but it's being directed out of Southern California. My brother, Randy Korgan, and our Joint Council who created the foundation for it.

But I think that on the FedEx, they're in the Railway Act and you know what it's like to have to deal with the Railway Act. But the third-party transportation companies that deliver Amazon product, we have to go after them, but not yet. We have to have a comprehensive plan to do all this. Would you still wanted attack one unit and then try to get a contract? It's not going to happen.

So, the app-based logistics that they use for a national orbit is miss class. Even if –if I may, I'll tighten it right up. Even if critics of the ports -- and I haven't been there that long -- but even critics of the ports, that ports division has to stay in because of the fight against miss class, and the usage of miss-classified drivers, and app-based by Amazon.

Mr. Franklin: So if I hear correctly, you're saying because FedEx is controlled by the Railway Labor Act, they can't be organized?

Mr. Herrera: I didn't say that I said they can but it's going to be a lot more difficult.

Mr. Franklin: And why haven't the Teamsters gone after without the control of the major shipping companies, you lose strength?

Mr. Herrera: There has been some local unions that have gone after them.

Mr. Franklin: Your response?

Mr. Zuckerman: Under the National Railway Labor Act, you have to get the entire group nationwide. So it's a nationwide effort to do that. You know, I have already cited the failures of the International Union in organizing, but that's only because it's our failure. We need to do things better.

We have not supported the local unions like we're supposed to do. You know, there's a lot of local unions out there that have a lot of targets, a lot of real good organizing places, where they can go and get things organized.

And we're not helping them, and we need to do that. We've got the money to do that. We've got the experience to do that. All we need to do is go to work and make sure that we support these local unions to get the organizing done. In trucking, in warehouse, in any industry, in construction, they're all out there. It's just that we haven't been doing it, and we need to do it.

Mr. Franklin: You have a reaction to that?

Mr. Herrera: Yeah. FedEx is, that's a very tough company to look at definitely. But we need to go after them without a doubt, but Amazon is the key.

Mr. Bleifuss: There's been a lot of talk recently about how the Republican Party is sort of waging a war on factual-based knowledge and democracy. And you've talked about the importance of educating members.

What do you think the labor movement's role is in the wider political discussion about the sort of attacks on democratic institutions that appear to be an organized strategy of the Republican Party, realizing, of course, that your members, you know, some of them, voted for the GOP? So how do you work with that tension, and what do you do?

Mr. Zuckerman: Sure. It's very difficult to get that message across, but it's all about education. It's about education, bringing the members in, talking to them, having a good communications department, explaining why it's important for us to support the people that's going to support us and not tear us down. All right?

The Republican Party right now is all over the place. They can't get along with themselves most of the time. And certainly, they're against labor. I brought that point up a while ago. We could have never gotten anything passed with a Republican President, Republican Congress.

Because those two senators in Georgia got elected, and God bless them, right? We were able to save the pensions of all of the people that were in under-funded pension plans. So that is the kind of message that people need to be educated on is that we need to take care of the people, engage the people, and educate our people on why that's important.

Mr. Franklin: Do you have a reply?

Mr. Herrera: Oh, I certainly do. My local union is the highest contributor to our federal PAC. My people in Local 396 and my neighboring local, Local 63, are the highest local unions in the country. My local is about a quarter of a million dollars a year contributions into our PAC.

And politics, again, are very important. It's about a union vote. It's about a union vote, creating a union vote, creating coalitions, creating collaboratives.

In Los Angeles, we have a ports collaborative. We have a LAX collaborative. We have an entertainment collaborative. We have an education collaborative. Atlanta, a great example. HERE has its own PAC and was on the ground with their members that were laid off from hospitality, soliciting votes for those two legislators.

Mr. Franklin: Sam.

Ms. Sanders Question for Mr. Herrera. We, of course, have seen recent success in shoring up the security of pension plans. Could you speak to what you think is the next target, or goal, or obstacle, or threat to retirement security for members?

Mr. Herrera: Organizing. Organizing new members into those pension plans. I think we probably both agree to that. It's very, very important to educate, right, and organize into those, get people into those pension plans. The only way that a pension plan is going to flourish is through participation and people belonging to a pension, you know, putting into it. So it's very important that organizing happen to help our pension.

And, plus possibly creating a department of pensions in the IBT where we monitor the pensions that are out there that cover, umbrella our members, very, very important.

I know my brother, Steve Vairma, has brought that up as one of the things that we want to do is to create a pension department to help and oversee pensions in our members because our members are the one that are going to suffer if, you know, there's a collapse in the pension plan.

Mr. Franklin: Response, Mr. Zuckerman.

Mr. Zuckerman: I agree with that. I agree that we need to organize and put people into pension funds rather than taking them out like their slate does. Retirement security is of the utmost important to us.

Now, let me tell you something about this new Butch Lewis Act. You know, it only goes for 30 years. Now, most of us won't be here 30 years from now. We'll be retired, and enjoying our grandkids, and doing those kind of things.

But if we can't demonstrate that we can fix our own problems in that 30-year time span, I don't think anybody's going to give us another crack at it. We have got to get to work and shore those pension plans up to make sure that they are viable going past 30 years to however long anybody wants to stay.

Mr. Franklin: Let me just follow up on the question. Under the Hoffa years, the Teamster Pension became one of the worst in terms of funding. How can you assure members this won't

continue to happen? Why wasn't there as much attention? Yes, the industry has been collapsing, but why did this take place?

Mr. Herrera: There is autonomy in those pension plans. Trustees both on the Union side and the company side run those. It's not a function of the International and Mr. Hoffa to oversee a pension plan. It's the trustees on those plans. It's their fiduciary responsibility to take care of their members.

So I think that if we can oversee it, just check-ins, very, very important to do that moving forward. Because we don't want this to happen again.

Fred's right about the 30 years, but we got to continually keep working on it. We got 30 years to make it better. We got 30 years to pass better legislation. We got 30 years to build political power within our country to get more pension reform to where our members are secured in their pension.

You guys go to work every day, and you want to make sure when you do retire you have monies in the bank to, you know, help you through your retirement years.

Mr. Franklin: I have a question and...

Mr. Zuckerman: Can I answer that...?

Mr. Franklin: Sure, please.

Mr. Zuckerman: Thank you. So, I disagree with my opponent about the roles of the trustees and the General President. The role of the trustees is to manage the fund. The General President negotiates the contract which controls the money that goes into the fund.

In 2006, the General President took UPS, the part-timers and the full-timers, out of the Central States Pension Fund, paid off the withdrawal liability. They invested it, lost it in a down-market. And that's one of the things, other than deregulation, that collapsed that fund. That's why they were in so much trouble, but they continue to do that.

Steve Vairma took Kroger out of the Central States Fund, and the more participants you take out of that fund, as those retirees increase, you have a gap between that that's unrecoverable. You have to continue to put people into the fund, not take people out of the fund.

Right here in Chicago, they took Republic Services out of the Central States Fund. You can't do that and continue to have a pension fund survive. We have got to put people back into the pension funds instead of what they do, take people out of pension funds.

Mr. Franklin: Do you have a quick response?

Mr. Herrera: Certainly. That wasn't the General President, it was our Chairman of the negotiating committee. But I was in the room but didn't get a vote, but Mr. Zuckerman had a vote. I think that he voted to withdraw from the Central States.

He also seconded a motion to support the UPS plan in a Central Region meeting. So I don't know if I'm the only one with the memory here, but he seems to not be saying what has been going on here.

We always vote as a committee. No one ever does things on their own.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Let me just...

Mr. Zuckerman: By virtue of the constitution, the General President is the chairman of all committees, so it was the General President that took UPS out of the fund.

Mr. Franklin: I have a question for you, Mr. Zuckerman. In 2016, in one of the videos I saw, you severely criticized your running colleague, saying that if you were president of the Teamsters at that time, you would have fired him for his actions against a TDU member.

Now, he has changed in the years since. If I'm a voting Teamster member, do I have faith that he really is a dissident, that he really is a person looking at change, or did he make a change for convenience?

Mr. Zuckerman: I thought I explained that a minute ago, but I'll go through it again. Okay? We are talking about Sean O'Brien?

Mr. Franklin: Yes, that's correct.

Mr. Zuckerman: Sean O'Brien, like I said before, is a very passionate and loyal person. At that meeting where the video came out, right? He was supporting an incumbent at Local 251 who was running for office again. And he was in a very impassioned speech where he said some words, and the words are, "They are not our friends. They need to be punished. They need to be punished." Okay? Based on that, he had served a suspension. Okay?

But if you look what happened, he didn't say as principal officer of Joint Council 10, I'm going to do something bad to the guy. And he didn't say we're going to do, I'm going to do this on them. "They need to be punished," sort of like they need to be punished at the ballot box.

So if you look at it further, right? Nothing ever happened to Matt Taibbi. He brought Matt Taibbi in. He recognized that Matt Taibbi did a good job. He put him on as an advisory trustee to the joint council. He put him on our slate. He's running for Eastern Region Vice-President on the O'Brien-Zuckerman slate because he's doing a tremendous job in Providence, Rhode Island.

So if you believe that Sean meant that he was going to punish him some other way, that just didn't happen, alright? Unlike what they did with Rome Aloise.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Herrera, what's your response to that?

Mr. Herrera: "Any officer who commits a crime against the membership needs to be thrown out." I didn't say that. He did. I'm not here to bash my little brother from Boston. I am not here to do that. But he will side with anybody if there's political advantage to it.

And you mentioned the word TDU. He used to run around on his Harley with his license plate that said TDU sucks. But that didn't work, so now he has a new license plate that says OZ. That might not work this time because we're going to win, right? And he might have one that says heaven knows what. Who wants to run with him next time? Certainly, I don't.

Mr. Franklin: I guess my question – let me ask a follow-up. You focused on and you seem to feel that that incident was not a critical one. However, he was a high-ranking official in the Hoffa team for a number of years when TDU members suffered significantly, when decisions were made that you challenged. So I guess my question is, are we really convinced this is a change of conscience or a change of convenience.

Mr. Zuckerman: It's not a change of conscience or convenience. It was a period of time where I got to look at all the facts.

He said, "They need to be punished." But if you took the time that it took to look at the case, nothing ever happened. He didn't mean those words. It didn't happen. He never, ever, ever, ever retaliated against Matt Taibbi. He brought him in. He united with Matt Taibbi. He didn't retaliate or do anything bad do him. Didn't happen.

Mr. Franklin: Mr. Herrera, quick response.

Mr. Herrera: I guess you can say anything you want to anybody in the room and then say I'm sorry and I might get elected General Secretary-Treasurer, so, you know, forget about the violation of the constitution. How about O'Brien is such a tough guy? He didn't punish UPS. He punished the membership. He's inept, and he imposed contract. Same guy here. Right? Same guy here. Political advantage. Political opportunist.

Mr. Zuckerman: That's what you do.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you.

Mr. Zuckerman: You imposed the contract.

Mr. Herrera: I said that.

Mr. Zuckerman: You imposed two of them. He didn't impose the 2018 contract.

Mr. Herrera: I didn't share the supplemental panel.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. This has been an encouraging, inspiring debate. And this completes the question and answer portion of the debate. Each of candidate will now. . . You'll have two minutes for closing remarks. Let's make our points strong and clear. Mr. Herrera.

Mr. Herrera: It's about pride loyalty and respect. It's about the Teamsters Union. It's about electing leadership that doesn't flip flop like Mr. Flip Flop Fred here.

[laughter]

Mr. Herrera: It's about progressional transition. It's about seeing the future. It's about Teamsters preparing for that future and not grabbing on to the past and insulting our General President or our General Secretary-Treasurer or even the same people that are running with him on the slate calling them cowards.

I told you 15 people are on the Hoffa payroll, and three more family members are 18. So he's insulting his own slate. I'm standing on this stage as a little Latino kid that came from the UPS ranks, right? Walked the strike in 1997, and I want to be your next General Secretary-Treasurer, because I'm going to put pride back into the Teamsters Union.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you. Mr. Zuckerman, please?

Mr. Zuckerman: Well Ron, you represent everything that's wrong with the Teamsters Union. You supported every wrong thing in the past that I've fought about for the last 12 years.

You know, I noticed that you didn't make any comments about us losing 300,000 members, which is a disaster. I noticed you didn't mention anything about losing 178 local unions, which is a disaster. Because you supported that. I know that you supported the implementation of the 2018 contract. And we had serious issues in subcontracting, that you go to Southern California and whine to all those guys down there, that it's wrong, that we couldn't fix the subcontracting problem...

Mr. Herrera: I don't really know that.

Mr. Zuckerman: ...where you could have stood up and did the right thing and supported Sean and I to reject that contract, go back to the table and fix that subcontracting problem, which you didn't want to do.

There is only one clear choice here. There's a choice of whether you're going to stand with the membership, or you're going to stand with the companies. Over here, that's what they do. They stand with the companies. It's a busy business, friendly union, get along, go along. Whatever the company wants, we'll go sell it, that's fine.

Over here, you're going to get a fight. That's what you're going to get. You want business friendly? Go to that side because that's not what the Teamsters Union want.

We are going to win this election. Sean O'Brien is going to be our next General President. I am proud to support him because he's taken on the fight that I have taken on for the last 12 years, and I appreciate that. Just like he says this is a full contact sport. You better put your helmet on and buckle your chin straps up because OZ is going to win this election. Thank you very much.

Mr. Franklin: Thank you.

[applause]

Mr. Franklin: Thank you, gentleman. This is the third and last of the 2021 International Brotherhood of Teamsters candidate debates. Can we give a round of applause for the gentlemen who have been talking to us and what we've heard tonight?

[applause]

Mr. Franklin: I want to thank you in the audience here for abiding by the rules, which I described at the beginning. IAnd also want to thank those who have been watching us on live stream. I very much want to thank my colleagues on the panel here. And finally, I'd like to thank Richard Mark, the Election Supervisor, for organizing debate.

You can watch a recording of this debate of the two previous debates between the candidates at General President at www.ibtvote.org. I'll say it again www.ibtvote.org, and I strongly urge you to do so. I've learned from those.

Teamster members in United States and Canada, next week, ballots will be mailed to you, each one of you. And the vote will begin on November 15th. Look for your International Union officer election ballot to arrive by mail in early October. And please be sure to fill out your ballot and return it by the mail, so that your vote and your voice can be counted.

Thanks again, and thank you for telling us so much. Good night.

[applause]