



TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEES UNION

Communications Workers of America, Local 6186 / AFL-CIO

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CWA EXECUTIVE BOARD,

We, the TSEU Executive Board, are deeply concerned by the recent attempts to undermine our local charter and bylaws, decades of precedent, and the CWA Constitution during recent National Board discussions about Derrick Osobase's membership status. The 'questions' surrounding his membership are said to have been spurred by anonymous sources. Not only has the issue of local staff's membership never been a cause of concern brought up with our local, but even now local leadership has not been contacted about 'questions' related to Derrick's status.

Since our founding, leaders of our local recognized the importance of local staff being full-fledged members of our union. These leaders understood that our staff were not simply "guns for hire." Indeed, side by side with unionized state workers, staff participated fully in the daily life, struggle, and vision of our union to build quality state services for all Texans. For decades, TSEU staff - just like local staff throughout CWA - have paid dues and been accepted by both our local and the CWA as members in good standing.

Starting in late March, memos shared with the Executive Board have wrongly sought to invalidate 17 years of CWA membership held by Derrick, just as Mr. Osobase kicked off his campaign for District 6 Vice-President. Invalidating our local bylaws for political expediency is shameful.

What's worse is the disparate treatment Derrick is receiving compared to other local, district and national staff. In response to the initial March 16 memo, Derrick provided examples of other union staff who have campaigned, been elected, and served in CWA positions. Among other creative interpretations, the CWA General Counsel claimed that anyone serving as a local officer is a member of the union, rendering references to their prior membership moot. This rationale clearly ignores Article XV, Section 4 of the CWA Constitution-

(_d) Only members of the Union in good standing shall be eligible to vote or hold elective office. No elected officer of the Union or of a Local shall take office unless the elected officer is eligible under the Constitution and Federal or Provincial Law.

To put it simply, this position supports one door for 'the right kind of staff' to gain membership to the CWA, and a separate unequal door for the 'other' kind of staff. We will not accept that Mr. Osobase's membership, nor the membership of any of our staff, is invalid.

Our local bylaws clearly state: Article V- Membership; Section 1 Eligibility -

A. Any person eligible for membership in CWA, as defined in Article V of its Constitution, shall be __eligible for membership in Local 6186, if performing work within Local 6186's assigned jurisdiction, or if employed on a part-time or full-time basis by the CWA or Local 6186.

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Nowhere in the CWA Constitution are there qualifiers for membership that prohibit Local staff from joining their local, or create a second tier of membership for these members. Selective interpretations of the Constitution that bend in favor of certain members and bend against other members are damaging to our union, and reek of discrimination.

Establishing a barrier to membership is a step down a dangerous path that appears aimed to undermine the standing of public sector organizing locals within CWA. As a public sector local, we have been through the struggle to establish ourselves as full-fledged members of CWA. We are proud of the dynamic organizing that members and locals have engaged in to build worker power in some of the most anti-union, politically regressive parts of the country. This would not have been possible without the support of CWA nationally.

Seeing that leadership of our national union can cast aside the membership of one of our members indicates that all of our members could meet the same fate. We ask that you publicly reject this premise. If there are any legitimate concerns related to our bylaws or membership eligibility in our local, we look forward to having those discussions.

IN SOLIDARITY, TSEU EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Passed Unanimously: April 29, 2023