



Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice
of San Diego County
Changing the future for workers and their families!

ICWJ Pledge to United Taxi Workers of San Diego

Background:

ICWJ joins community advocacy organizations in supporting the United Taxi Workers of San Diego as they actively engage in the upcoming first-ever election of lease taxi drivers to the Metropolitan Transit System's Taxicab Advisory Committee - the industry's voice in their affairs. These drivers are independent contractors and so have none of the employee protections available under state law. Furthermore, they are predominantly East African immigrants who is disadvantaged in their dealings with the complexities of how the local taxi industry is organized and regulated.

These elections, to be held at MTS offices downtown on Nov. 15, 16, and 17 from 9 to 4 are an essential opportunity for lease drivers to find their own voice in their industry. At the same time, without many legal protections they are fearful of retaliation by permit holders who do not welcome this new voice in taxi issues.

Several strategies are being employed to overcome the fears of drivers to lift up their voices to represent themselves and their fellow drivers.

1. Convening a small but public group of "Observers" to help oversee the election process and act as a receiver of any taxi driver complaints of retaliation for their involvement in this election process - to help shine the light of morality on those who would retaliate and, thus, help prevent it. We are asking our "Observers", be present at MTS offices on Monday, November 21st starting at 9:30 AM to be part of the election's validation process.

2. Appointing a "tribunal" to receive any lease driver complaints of retaliation by permit holders due to their participation in the election process as candidates or voters. This would happen after the elections.

ICWJ Pledge

3. Publicizing and sharing with members of the United Taxi Workers of San Diego an ICWJ pledge to support and advocate with drivers should they face retaliation or intimidation by permit holders.

The Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice of San Diego County (ICWJ) is committed to educating and mobilizing the San Diego religious communities and people of faith to support issues and campaigns that will sustain lives with dignity for workers and their families by such means as improving wages, benefits, and working conditions. ICWJ is challenging both an economic system that allows working families to live in poverty and a society that does not invest in its workers. ICWJ is advocating on behalf of the dignity of workers and their families.

We pledge to advocate with employers and the MTS Taxi Advisory Board on behalf of these workers if they face negative consequences or retaliation in their workplace on account of their involvement with the United Taxi Workers of San Diego campaigns for representation and justice in the workplace.