



May 29, 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We write to you today to provide both an explanation and an update on the election procedure taking place within Local 1944. As you are aware, Local 1944 conducted its election of Local Union Officers by remote electronic voting on April 19, 2018. Approximately 1,900 members participated by voting. They exercised their right to have a say in one of the most cherished traditions of democracy. Thank you to all those who ran for office and to all those who voted.

The United Steelworkers is very proud of the fact that it is one of the few Unions in North America that conducts the elections of its leadership by referendum vote. Every single member has a right to participate in the process and have a say. You can submit nominations for office. You have the right to run for office. You can vote on the candidates running for office. You can file a protest if you feel a violation of the election procedures has occurred.

Because the referendum vote process is new to the Local and not at all similar to the delegate process formerly used by TWU, there has been a very steep learning curve for everyone involved. The rules for conducting the election of the leadership of your Local are covered in our Constitution, in our Local Union Elections Manual (LUEM) and in the Local's By-Laws, as it is for every Steelworkers Local.

Formerly in the TWU, when the leadership was elected by the delegates in attendance at the Local Union Delegated Meeting, campaigning by the candidates was for a brief period of time and aimed at soliciting support from among the delegates. Simply speaking, once the election was held and the results announced, the winners were declared and installed into office. Under the Steelworkers election process, that model no longer applies.

Because the Steelworkers use the referendum process, candidates engage in campaigns for a much longer period of time in an effort to solicit support from as many individual members as possible. During the campaign period leading up to the day of the election, our Union has a number of rules that have been in place for many years to help ensure that no member is intimidated into voting a certain way or is unduly influenced to vote a certain way. Every member has a right to support or oppose any candidate without the fear of being intimidated, coerced and harassed, or being discriminated against. Our elections must not only be fair, they must be as open and transparent as is possible.

Because candidates are able to campaign for an extended period of time, on occasion, it is possible for one or more candidates to break one or more of the established rules. As was mentioned earlier in this letter, one of the rights members have in our referendum process is the right to protest actions taken during the conduct of the election that are considered or perceived to be a violation of the rules. **For the recent election at LU 1944, over 70 protests were filed by members and candidates about actions taken during the election by candidates and**

others. That is by far the most protests filed about one election, at any time in any other Local Union within the United Steelworkers history.

To be clear, the protests have been filed by numerous different members and candidates against numerous different candidates and members. Contrary to what seems to be a popular but inaccurate belief, the protests have not all come from one slate of candidates against the other slate of candidates.

We have heard from some members that the ability to file a protest is simply a means to delay the inevitable and it allows for the filing of frivolous or vexatious protests. While that is certainly possible, it is not our Union's general experience that members wantonly file such protests. We believe that the ability to file a protest is an important and a crucial aspect of our democratic election process. It holds members and candidates accountable for their actions and deeds throughout the election process.

During the election, an Election Committee (Tellers) must be established. Normally speaking, this Committee is either elected by the membership in attendance at a regular membership meeting, or recommended for appointment by the President with the subsequent support of the membership in attendance at a regular membership meeting.

The Committee cannot consist of anyone who is currently an Officer of the Local, or anyone who is a candidate for office, even if acclaimed. Because it is not practical for Local 1944 to hold regular membership meetings, it falls upon the Local's Executive Board to put in place an Election Committee, which we understand it did.

Briefly speaking, the role of the Election Committee is to determine the eligibility of the nominees to run as candidates, set up and oversee the logistics of running an election, supervise the voting procedure and report the results of the election.

In recognition of the unique structure of Local 1944 (being a Local consisting of members from all across Canada that is not practically able to hold regular membership meetings), the Election Committee took on an additional role for this election – receive all protests that had been filed and to the extent possible, conduct investigations to gather the facts and background information for each one. This information would be reported to the Local's Executive Board to assist it in expediting its deliberations of the filed protests.

Contrary to the belief of some, the Election Committee does not have the authority to uphold or reject any of the protests it investigated. That authority rests with the Local's Executive Board.

Some members have expressed a concern about the independence and legitimacy of the Election Committee. It is our understanding that the Election Committee was put in place with the Local Union Executive Board's approval. During the campaign phase of the election, one member resigned. In accordance with our Union's election rules, there must be a minimum of three members on the Election Committee. It is our understanding that in order to meet that requirement as quickly as possible, the Local Union President appointed a replacement.

John Perquin, Assistant to the International Secretary-Treasurer, has been working closely with the members of the Election Committee throughout the entire election period to give them advice and guidance when requested or needed. John assures us that the Election Committee members conducted their work with an impressive level of conscientiousness and independence.

When protests are filed, they must be dealt with in accordance with the process set out in the Local Union Elections Manual and the Local Union's By-Laws. In essence, the Election Committee is to submit a Report of its activities, decisions, and the election results to the Local Union Executive Board at the Board's next regular meeting following the election.

All protests that have been filed with the Local Union must be read, debated and voted on by the Executive Board members present at the meeting. After all protests have been fully acted upon, the Executive Board members must then consider and act upon the Election Committee's Report.

The decision of the Local Union Executive Board regarding any protest or regarding the Election Committee's Report may be appealed by interested members of the Local Union within ten (10) days of Local Union Executive Board's action. Such appeals are to be sent to the International Secretary-Treasurer for consideration by the International Executive Board.

We have received many requests to intervene and put an end to what some perceive are illegitimate attempts to reverse the outcome of the election. It has been said that the members have spoken and the results of the vote count speak for themselves, those that have been reelected and those that have been newly elected should be sworn in immediately and placed into office. In fairness to the membership and to those who filed a protest or had a protest filed against them, the protest and appeals process cannot be short-circuited or circumvented by any of us.

It is not our place to prematurely intervene and determine that all of the more than 70 protests that have been filed have no merit. The Local Union's Executive Board must be given every reasonable opportunity to make its own determinations.

While it would be inappropriate for the International Union to intervene by stopping the process, we have taken steps to assign John Perquin to work very closely with the Local Union's Executive Board as they deal with the over 70 filed protests as well as the Election Committee's Report. John has participated at each of the Local's Executive Board Meeting sessions providing technical assistance and guidance with respect to the process. John will continue to work with the Local's Executive Board to make sure that the election in its entirety is conducted fairly and all the rules followed until the process is completed.

Due to the enormous volume of protests that were filed, the Local's Executive Board has not yet been able to complete its deliberations on the protests. Two sessions were held on May 14 and 15 at the Local's Burnaby office with the Local's Executive Board members attending in person and one attending by videoconference. When it was clear that more time would be needed, a third session was scheduled to be held by videoconference on May 18.

While progress was made at the third session, deliberations were not completed and the session was interrupted when it was discovered that the secure video link that had been set up was breached. Concerns were expressed by members on the Local's Executive Board about the potential for interference by those outside the Union and it was determined that enhanced security measures would have to be applied to ensure that further deliberations would not be compromised.

The balance of the session was spent discussing how to proceed and on what dates the deliberations could resume. Numerous dates were proposed and the Board Members were canvassed for their availability. On virtually every date that was proposed, one or more members of the Local's Executive Board indicated their inability to attend for a variety of reasons. Only a handful of members were available for any given proposed date.

After much debate, it was determined that the Local's Executive Board would next meet on June 18-20 (two of these dates had already been previously scheduled for the Local's Executive Board to meet to conduct its regular business) in order to continue deliberations on the protests and the Election Committee's Report.

We recognize that this is a somewhat lengthy delay and we understand that members are anxious to see an end to this process. We are engaged in ongoing efforts to find earlier dates to bring the Local's Executive Board together again to complete the deliberations. The International is available to assist the Local's Executive Board at all times.

In closing we wish to address comments we have been made aware of that infer the International is condoning racism and discrimination as well as comments that have been expressed publicly about the International removing the retirees' right to vote.

It is offensive to each and every one of us as members of our great Union, that some would suggest that because we are upholding our democratic election process that somehow translates into condoning racism and discrimination.

Our Union has a proud and long history of defending against racism and discrimination. We were the first to implement a policy against racism and discrimination. To be clear, ours is not just a policy on paper. We back that up with concrete actions.

We have in place civil and human rights departments in both countries staffed by experts who enforce our policy through education and investigation. The Departments are ably assisted by Civil and Human Rights coordinators in each District across our Union. Furthermore, we have language in our Constitution to handle those who abuse these policies. We as a Union have absolutely no tolerance for racism and discrimination.

At the same time we have a strong belief in upholding democracy. If anyone has evidence of racism or discrimination, bring it forward and we will investigate and take action when and where appropriate. On the other hand, innuendo serves only those who wish to divide us and tear us apart.

In accordance with the provisions of our Union's Constitution, in order to be a member of the United Steelworkers with the right to vote, one must be employed in an enterprise, public or private that is represented by the United Steelworkers.

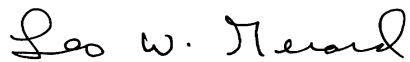
One must have seniority rights in a bargaining unit which are recognized by the employer or which are asserted by the Union. When someone retires, that person is longer is employed and no longer has seniority rights. Consequently, in accordance with the terms of our Constitution, retirees cannot be members with a right to vote.

The United Steelworkers Constitution does not permit the formation of a Unit of retirees within a Local. To address retiree issues, the United Steelworkers established the group known as SOAR (Steelworkers Organization for Active Retirees) and we encourage all retirees to join and get active with SOAR.

As for the Pension Plan, the Merger Agreement states, "The USW agrees that this is an internal TWU National Local Union issue and they will not take a position on these matters." To address this issue, language was included in the Local's By-Laws which makes it clear that the Local can make its own determinations about how to address the concerns and issues of retirees as it deems appropriate.

Sisters and Brothers, we hope that after you have read this letter, you will have a better understanding of how Steelworkers elections are conducted. While we all wish for immediate results, in a truly democratic system that is not always possible. We will continue to endeavor to move the process along for you as quickly as we can.

In solidarity,



Leo Gerard, International President



Ken Neumann, Canadian National Director



Steve Hunt, District 3 Director



Alain Croteau, District 5 Director



Marty Warren, District 6 Director