

UTWSD Wins by a Landslide!

400 Drivers vote for their own TAC Representatives

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As this year comes to an end, United Taxi Workers of San Diego would like to extend the very best wishes to you for a happy holiday season.

UTWSD's mission is to improve the taxi industry and the livelihood and working conditions for taxi drivers and their families. Fulfilling this mission proved to be quite challenging this past year. Yet, UTWSD has led the charge in effectuating real changes for taxi drivers here in San Diego.

Thanks to the help from all of our active members, our Board of Directors, our volunteers, friends, and allies, we have been able to achieve some amazing things in 2011! For all of your hard work, all year long, I want to thank you!

We have much to be proud of, and our accomplishments and hard work this year have been recognized by the leading labor advocacy organizations in San Diego.



Ben Lemma (left) and Hussein Nuur will represent San Diego's 1,500 lease drivers.

The Taxi Advisory Committee (TAC) deliberates and recommends all policy and enforcement considerations for the entire taxicab industry to the city's Metropolitan Transit Systems (MTS) Board, which includes several City Council members. Now two lease drivers who are UTWSD members and who received UTWSD endorsement will join the TAC in 2012 to put drivers' needs front and center on the table.

With only three weeks notice on the election date, UTWSD was able to mobilize a rapid outreach campaign and attract about one fourth of the estimated 1,500 lease drivers to the poll. A fair election was ensured by support and impartial observation provided by a range of organizations, including The San Diego Labor Council, Center on Policy Initiatives, Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice, Council on American-Islamic Relations, ACLU of San Diego, the Sheetmetal Workers Local 206, and the

Employee Rights Center.

MTS staff responded to UTWSD requests and facilitated the supportive organizations, and we greatly appreciate their efforts. We would also like to thank the volunteer election observers, former councilmember Donna Frye, Kevin Keenan from the ACLU of San Diego, and Edgar Hopida from the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Now we look forward to an even greater mobilization for the upcoming elections in 2013. All 5 TAC driver representative seats will be open, and our goal is to have a much higher percentage of lease drivers get involved, consider running for one of the seats, and show up to cast their vote.

November 2011 Election Results

Rank	Driver	Votes	%
1	Berhanu Lemma	340	86%
2	Hussein Nuur	324	81%
3	Noor Tayeser	37	9%
4	Abebe Antallo	35	9%
5	Mohamed Hussein	26	7%
6	Reza Solati	14	4%
7	Rufino Espindola	11	3%
8	Mohamed Amiri	2	.5%
9	Tsegai Gebregziabher	1	.3%

(Based on approximately 399 votes counted by four impartial election observers)



President's Message
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The struggle continues. With an impromptu strike at the airport in December 2011, we fought for and won an end to front-of-the-line privileges. We also proudly joined in solidarity with labor unions fighting for worker's rights, human rights, and freedom of assembly.

In 2012 our priorities are to:
•Revise Ordinance 11 for equal rights and protections for drivers
•Lower lease rates to protect a living wage



- Improve driver safety
- Stop illegal competition by charter vehicles, busses, and TCPs
- Protect drivers from exploitive tax fraud
- Educate drivers and support driver representatives
- Put Drivers First – Unify the voice of San Diego drivers

Get involved and help us achieve these goals! Remember, if we fail to participate, we plan to fail.

We are not alone. We have rights!

-Mikaiil Hussein, President

UTWSD Awards

All of the outstanding accomplishments and organizing of UTWSD in 2011 achieved recognition and support from two of San Diego's most progressive non-profits working for change and equality in San Diego: The Center on Policy Initiatives and the Interfaith Committee for Workers Justice.

and redevelopment. For the taxi drivers, CPI offered key staff and logistical support for the Taxi Advisory Committee (TAC) driver elections and has, at every step of the way, encouraged and contributed to UTWSD's efforts to shape local government policy on behalf of the drivers and their families.

In October, UTWSD received the Center on Policy Initiatives (CPI) award honoring outstanding organizing of working people. CPI is a nonprofit research and advocacy center that works to end poverty by building a fair economy that allows working people to live with dignity. CPI's efforts in the community and their comprehensive research and analysis has helped to shape public debate for the last ten years, and CPI is regularly sought out by local and state policymakers on the economy, local governance,

At CPI's annual gala, the short film "Organize: The Power of a Collective Voice" featured UTWSD President Mikaiil Hussein along with award recipients, and UTWSD Strategist Dr. Jesse Mills presented the CPI award for Worker Organizing. Hussein also accepted a Certificate of Recognition from the California Legislature signed by State Assemblyman Ben Hueso.

In December, the Interfaith Committee for Workers Justice (ICWJ) recognized UTWSD for achieving fair

Free Life Insurance For UTWSD Members

We are very happy to announce that **American Income Life (AIL)**, one of the nation's largest providers of supplemental life insurance, has signed on to offer valuable benefits to protect drivers and their families at no cost for UTWSD members. AIL excels in high customer satisfaction among their more than two million policyholders, including labor unions, credit unions, and associations.

at point of service on vision, hearing, prescription drugs and chiropractic therapy. On average, members receive discounts up to 30% per prescription and up to 60% on vision care, chiropractic therapy and hearing aids. This program is not insurance, so members are not required to fill out forms. All they need to do is show a discount card when they visit a participating pharmacist or health care provider.

- No Cost Value-Added Benefits:**
- The **Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit** of \$2,000 (no cost)
 - Health Services Discount Plan** provides members and their families with discounts

- Child Safe Kit** to collect vital information to help find missing children
- Family Information Guide** to minimize confusion in an emergency by having critical information in one place.

American Income Life Testimonials

"The Value-Added Benefits have helped with membership recruitment, membership retention, and provide needed benefits for our aging members." – Kim Deshano, Veterans of Foreign Wars State Adjutant/Quartermaster of Virginia
"AIL is consistently there for us, whether they are providing for our members, raising money for the UFCW Leukemia-Lymphoma Fund, or delivering turkeys to the needy of our community." – John Ulrich, Union Representative/Vice President UFCW Local 101, South San Francisco



UTWSD drivers and staff accept State legislature recognition at the Center on

and Recognition

representation for taxi drivers on the TAC. ICWJ of San Diego County was established to bring the faith community together with the local



UTWSD's 2011 Worker Organizing Award

struggles for worker justice. ICWJ represents clergy, synagogues, churches, mosques, faith and justice organizations, and many people of faith in San Diego. ICWJ has been instrumental in

securing economic justice for many San Diego workers and their dedication to justice for all is highly valued in the nonprofit community.

At ICWJ's annual "Voices for Justice" awards breakfast to honor workers and their advocates, Mikaiil Hussein took the stage among the honored guests and spoke on behalf of the drivers. Hussein expressed his gratitude for not only the award, but also for ICWJ's pledge of solidarity with UTWSD as we unite for fair representation and safe working conditions.

We are humbled by the tremendous honors and recognition by both CPI and ICWJ, and thank both organizations for their continued support and inspiring efforts to achieve justice for all workers.



and outstanding worker organizing award Policy Initiatives banquet

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



Emily Howe, J.D.

United Taxi Workers of San Diego are very proud to honor Emily Howe who has volunteered her time, knowledge, and inspirational work ethic for the benefit of all taxi drivers.

Emily is a graduate of University of San Diego School of Law, where she served as an executive board member of USD's Public Interest Law Foundation (PILF). But Emily's passion for the public interest started well before she entered law school. Prior to her legal career, Emily served two years in the U.S. Peace Corps as a rural community health volunteer in Benin, West Africa.

Emily volunteered through the Employee Rights Center and served as an Equal Justice Works Summer AmeriCorps scholar to provide legal assistance to UTWSD. Since coming to UTWSD in January 2010, she has been a crucial part of the growth of the organization. Emily's legal

expertise have been essential in helping drivers resolve grievances, and in advising UTWSD staff and members on drivers' rights. Emily played a central role in planning the Taxi Advisory Committee elections, and has been instrumental in helping to facilitate cross-cultural cooperation and communication among diverse driver communities to achieve justice for taxi workers. Most importantly, Emily has consistently motivated and energized the staff, advocates, and drivers with her passion, conviction, and effectiveness.

Emily is most impressed by the hard work of the drivers and advocates, and their dedication to fight for a fair and just taxi industry. UTWSD is privileged to have Emily as a member of our volunteer team and recognizes her advocacy and her dedication to protecting drivers' rights.

Upcoming Events

UTWSD

7364 El Cajon Blvd. Ste 108
San Diego, CA 92115

Membership Meetings

5348 University Ave. Ste 110

Jan 24 – 3:30-5:00p.

Feb 21 – 3:30-5:00p.

Mar 19 – 3:30-5:00p.

Information Session

UTWSD office

Jan 31 – 3:00-5:00p.

Feb 28 – 3:00-5:00p.

Mar 27 – 3:00-5:00p.

Airport Meetings

Commuter Terminal 3rd Floor
3225 North Harbor Drive
San Diego, CA 92101

- Thursday, January 5, 9am
- Thursday, February 9, 9am (Special Mtng)
- Friday, March 9, 9am (Retreat)
- Saturday, March 10, 9am (Retreat)
- Thursday, April 12, 9am (Special Mtng)
- Thursday, May 3, 9am
- Wednesday, May 16, 9am (Budget Wkshp)
- Thursday, June 7, 9am
- Thursday, July 12, 9am (Special Mtng)

Public Safety & Neighborhood Service

202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92187

- Wednesday, February 15, 2pm

Taxicab Advisory Committee

1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

Meeting Dates for 2012:

- Friday, March 16, 9am
- Friday, June 15, 9am
- Friday, September 21, 9am
- Friday, December 14, 9am

Metropolitan Transit System

1255 Imperial Ave, 10th Floor
Suite 1000
San Diego, CA 92101

Board Meeting Dates

- Thursday, January 19, 9am
- Thursday, February 16, 9am
- Thursday, March 15, 9am (Finance Wkshp)
- Thursday, April 19, 9am (Finance Wkshp)
- Thursday, May 17, 9am (Finance Wkshp)
- Thursday, June 21, 9am



Mission:

The mission of UTWSD is to unify taxicab workers, to improve working conditions through direct advocacy and empowerment, to increase education and civic participation by taxi drivers and their families, and to improve professional transportation services for San Diego communities and visitors.

Vision:

We envision a driver-led taxi industry that provides exceptional, efficient, and safe service for residents and visitors, and that meets the comprehensive and diverse needs of taxi drivers and their families. We envision a professional working environment free from humiliation, intimidation, discrimination, and exploitation. We envision UTWSD providing strong and representative leadership in this healthy, productive, and inclusive taxi industry.

7364 El Cajon Blvd. Suite 108
San Diego, CA 92115
619-713-5404
619-713-5637
619-713-5374 fax
<http://www.utwsd.com>