

Stop Veolia/City Escalating War on USW 8751 Boston School Bus Union

Drop Outrageous Union Busting Frame-up Charges filed by Boston Police Department (BPD) against Steve Kirschbaum, Chair of the Grievance Committee and a founder of the Local.

On July 3, 2014, four plain clothes BPD detectives paid two visits to brother Kirschbaum's home while he was at the Boston Teachers Union in contract negotiations with Veolia Transportation, Inc. Lieutenant Detective Thomas Hopkins served Steve's daughter with his Summons charging him with Assault and Battery with a dangerous Weapon, Trespass, Breaking and Entering during the Daytime to Commit a Felony, and Malicious Destruction of Property. These false, defamatory, and outrageous charges are identified as "offenses" alleged to have occurred on June 30th at the Solidarity Day rallies and march.

On June 30th Solidarity Day nearly 500 USW 8751 Boston School Bus drivers and supporters took the struggle against Veolia/City union busting to the streets surrounding the Freeport bus yard and Veolia Corporate Headquarters. Protestors were demanding the rehiring of the 4 illegally fired leaders, a just new contract, and, joining with the community of Boston, saying "NO" to the City's austerity cutbacks. The protest included an opening rally featuring Labor and Community supporters followed by a march to Veolia HQ for another rally. The demonstrators then took to the streets again, concluding with an impromptu "union membership briefing" in the Freeport Driver's Room. The union leaders advised both company representatives and BPD that the union members were asserting their contract right to "access to the property" to conduct "union activity" (Article 15, sec 1 and 3.), namely a critical briefing on that day's contract negotiations, as the contract expiration was just hours away. The doors to the facility were unlocked and opened. The union, drivers, monitors, families and supporters had access to the drivers' room facilities all day on June 30th, as is always the case. There was no issue of "disruption of operations," as there were no operations taking place at that time of the day. The company's illegal efforts to stop the meeting by calling the police proved ineffective in deterring the union. The meeting was held in an orderly, peaceful manner, and the gathering disbursed at the conclusion without incident. There are scores of witnesses that can confirm that the charges against Steve are absolutely false. These false charges seek to defame Steve Kirschbaum and USW 8751's 40 year history of dedicated unionism, social activism and solidarity with labor struggles locally, nationally and globally.

These frame-up charges represent the most recent link in an unbroken chain of vile anti-union attacks against the hard working women and men of USW 8751, their fighting union, and the communities they serve. It is part and parcel of the Veolia/City war against USW 8751 that has included the illegal firing of the four USW leaders, 18 Unfair Labor Practice charges against Veolia with the National Labor Relations Board, hundreds of individual and class action grievances, and more.

At the negotiating table the company is seeking to take away 40 years of collective bargaining progress while the city's cuts represent a most serious attack on the community's right to safe, on time, professional yellow school bus transportation and equal, quality education generally.

The Union busters will fail. USW 8751 has a proud history of defending its members, the majority of whom come from Boston's African American and immigrant communities; winning wages, benefits and working conditions; and ensuring union rights that are the envy of the school bus industry. The unity and solidarity demonstrated by Solidarity Day will prove decisive in the battle to win Safety for the Students and Justice for the Drivers. This is a struggle to defend Local 8751 and the union movement as a whole.

Drop the anti-union charges against Steve Kirschbaum NOW! Rehire the fired leaders! No Concessions! Contract Justice NOW!