

The Chief

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Letters to the Editor

September 19, 2008

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'237' Work Getting Results

To the Editor:

Political foolishness is to be expected in any labor union, and Teamsters Local 237 is no exception. But the silly letter of Local 237 member Dexter Lino in the Sept. 12 issue of The Chief takes the cake. Mr. Lino was a 2004 candidate for office in our union, and received a resounding 6 percent of the vote. His letter to The Chief suggests that vote total will be his highwater mark.

Mr. Lino claims that Local 237's President, Greg Floyd, has not done enough in the fight against budget cuts in the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). He claims that Local 237's latest in a series of mass rallies protesting budget cuts — this one drawing 10,000 people, on May 1 — was too little, and too late. "Where does that leave us?" asks a bewildered Mr. Lino.

In fact, this is what the leadership of Greg Floyd has accomplished:

- 1) Immediately following our union's dramatic May 1 rally, Sen. Chuck Schumer proposed the release of \$1 billion in emergency funds for U.S. public housing programs. Supported by Greg Floyd, who dispatched emergency letters to the 99 other Senators, Schumer now has 33 Senate co-sponsors for his proposal.
- 2) This was not the first example of substantial results following Local 237 protests. Following our rally in June 2007, Greg Floyd's lobbying in tandem with NYCHA and elected officials played a major role in getting an additional \$47 million in state aid for NYCHA passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Eliot Spitzer.
- 3) Greg Floyd has unleashed our union's political power in support of Housing's allies. In the Democratic primary Sept. 9, Local 237's support was important to the victories of Assemblyman Michael Benjamin (Bronx) and Senator Kevin Parker (Brooklyn) over challengers. Both men's districts were flooded with fliers highlighting their alliance with Local 237 to stop "privatization" of NYCHA developments. Local 237 now plans mass voter registration of NYCHA residents, in order to show all politicians they must heed NYCHA issues. (Mr. Lino might try reading The Chief to know about these registration efforts.)
- 4) It is a fact that Local 237 has not suffered one layoff of its NYCHA members, despite the ruinous \$611 million in cuts to NYCHA's budget ordered by the Bush administration. That accomplishment is pretty much unique among New York City municipal unions.

Mr. Lino is surely entitled to his own opinions. Unfortunately for his imagined political career, he's not entitled to his own facts.

CHRIS MAISANO, Deputy Director, Housing Division, Local 237

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