



September 24, 2021

Dear Legislator:

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (“IATSE”), the union that represents 19,000 skilled crew and craftspeople living and working in New York, with the support of the New York State AFL-CIO, the NYC CLC, Teamsters Local 817, SAG-AFTRA, and Writers Guild of America East, writes to inform you of a collective bargaining contract impasse over dangerous work practices that have become intolerable to our members across the country. Given your long standing support for the Empire State Film Production and Post Production tax credits, for which we are deeply appreciative, and which has had such a large impact on production and jobs in our state, we believe it is important for New York State’s policymakers to know the facts.

IATSE is currently in collective bargaining with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (“AMPTP”), which represents media mega-corporations collectively worth trillions of dollars. The AMPTP is refusing union proposals to provide safe working conditions, including meal and rest periods for our members. Given their position, IATSE is impelled to call for a strike authorization vote. A strike would effectively shut down a majority of New York State’s film and television production industry.

The most grievous workplace conditions we are trying to improve include:

- Excessively unsafe and harmful working hours, including Fridays that often last well into Saturday (aka “Fratursdays”).
- Wages for the lowest paid crafts that cannot sustain a decent living.

- Exceedingly long workdays without any break for a meal, to put down equipment, to unmask and get fresh air, or to just sit down.
- Consistent failure to provide reasonable rest periods between workdays (which also includes weekends).
- Substandard rates for the same work on “new media” (streaming) projects, including those productions with budgets that rival or exceed that of traditionally released blockbusters. This financial “relief” is being provided to the most profitable companies on the planet, including Apple and Amazon.

Despite booming business, the studios have rejected IATSE contract negotiation proposals that would address the most egregious health and safety conditions. Management refuses to recognize these core health and safety issues which have proven systemic problems plaguing the industry for decades; the studios’ production stance in the U.S. stands in stark contrast to their superior treatment of our members’ counterparts in other countries, including Canada and in Europe. The AMPPTP’s refusal to discuss these matters has created a deadlock, leading to the imminent strike vote. Be assured that the studios are seeking to characterize these issues as being about “money” but that is merely a deflection to the reality that this issue is about protecting the health and welfare of our members.

As the representative of these unionized, highly skilled film and television workers, the IATSE again wants to say that we greatly appreciate your long-term support of our industry. New York’s film and television industry has prospered greatly over the past two decades with the success of the Empire State Film Production and Post Production tax credits. This public/private partnership has created a vibrant film and television production community with over 50,000 workers and generates billions of dollars in economic activity. Moreover, post-pandemic, film and television production is approaching pre-pandemic levels while the rest of the city’s economy is struggling. This is largely due to the fact that our members returned to work a year ago – at great personal risk – to ensure our industry a swift recovery. With all this success, it is both outrageous and immoral that the studios oppose basic worker rights, an opposition that may lead to a highly successful industry’s shutdown.

Sincerely,

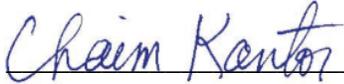


Matthew D. Loeb
International President
International Alliance of Theatrical
Stage Employees
I.A.T.S.E.



Mario Cilento
President
New York State AFL-CIO

IN SOLIDARITY



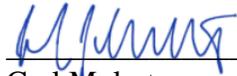
Chaim Kantor
Associate National Executive
Director
International
Cinematographers Guild
IATSE Local 600



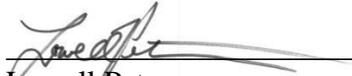
Paul Moore
Eastern Executive Director
Motion Picture Editors Guild
IATSE Local 700



John Ford
President
Motion Picture Studio
Mechanics
IATSE Local 52



Carl Mulert
National Business Agent
United Scenic Artists
Local USA 829, IATSE



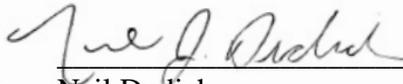
Lowell Peterson
Executive Director
Writers Guild of America East



Patricia White
President
Theatrical Wardrobe Union
Local 764 IATSE



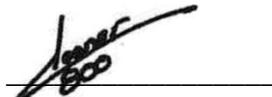
Jeffrey Bennett
Executive Director, New York
Screen Actors Guild -
American Federation of Radio
& Television Artists



Neil Dudich
Eastern Executive Director
Directors Guild of America



Thomas J. O'Donnell
President
Theatrical Teamsters
Local 817



dooner
Associate National Executive
Director
Art Directors Guild
IATSE Local 800



Angela L. Johnson
President
Make-up Artists & Hair
Stylists
IATSE Local 798