

California IATSE Council

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Dear Legislator:

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (“IATSE”), the union that represents 52,000 skilled crew and craftspeople living and working in California write to inform you of a collective bargaining contract impasse over dangerous work practices that have become intolerable to our members in this State and across the country. Given your longstanding support for the California Film & Television Tax Credit Program, 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 California’s State 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, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (“IATSE”) is compelled to call for strike authorization vote. A strike would effectively shut down California State film and television production.

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

Despite booming business, the studios have rejected these IATSE positions that would address the most egregious health and safety provisions in contract negotiations. Management does not appear to even recognize our core issues as problems that exist in the first place. These are working conditions the studios already afford our members’ counterparts in other countries, including Canada and in Europe. The AMPTP’s refusal to budge has created a deadlock, leading to the strike vote. They keep characterizing these issues as being about “money”

but really, they are primarily about equity, health, safety and planning. The unions impacted include all 13 IATSE Hollywood Locals, as well as Locals in San Francisco, San Diego, Orange County and across the State. Together they represent 52,000 working women and men who live in our State.

As representatives of these Unionized, skilled film and television workers, we again want to say that we greatly appreciate your long-term support of our industry. California's film and television industry has prospered greatly since the California Film & Television Tax Credit Program was passed by the Legislature in 2014. The program has revitalized an almost dead film and television production community, with over 52,000 workers and billions of dollars in economic activity every year. Moreover, post pandemic, film & television production is approaching pre-pandemic levels while many other industries are still 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.

Please contact Thom Davis at CIC@californiaIATSECouncil.org if you would like more information.

Sincerely,



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