

[REDACTED]
January 25, 2020

Mr. George L. Miranda
President, Teamsters Joint Council 16
265 West 14th Street, Room 1201
New York, NY 10011

Dear Brother Miranda,

Though I'd been thinking about it for several years, in May 2019 I took steps to enroll in the Joint Council's free Commercial Driver's License classes in Deer Park (in Suffolk County) for JC 16's Teamster members. I obtained my CDL B permit from NYS DMV and filled out & submitted the CDL class enrollment form to the Joint Council.

I was very pleased when I received the letter from you noting the start of the program (on August 10, 2019). I called the Joint Council immediately; I wouldn't be able to start that day due to a previously scheduled vacation! They were very kind to me on the phone; they told me to start the program when I got back to NY and that everything would be fine.

The first class I was able to attend was on August 25th. I met the instructor (Brian McGarrity of Local 812, I believe) and joined the class. Brian quickly realized that I'd need a lot of help and encouragement; I'd not driven a manual transmission car in many years and the physical size of the 33,000 lbs. straight truck was not something I adjusted to quickly. At the same time, Brian must have seen my potential as a CDL B driver; he would always offer encouragement and say "Make sure you come here to class every week!"

I knew what my plan was to be. I'm approximately 4.5 years away from my retirement from the New York City Housing Authority and I am looking to continue to be productive in my retirement (but probably no longer as a desk-bound bureaucrat). I knew I wanted a CDL for part-time employment and for potential volunteer activities.

So I came to every class. I participated in the vehicle inspection training. I participated in the air brakes training. I participated in the basic maneuvers training. I participated in the road experience training, including work on operating the truck's 6-speed manual transmission. I participated every week.

And today I passed my NYS DMV road test. Yes, it took me two tries to get through all of the portions - I passed vehicle inspection, air brakes and basic maneuvers on December 16, 2019 and the on-road portion this morning. I believe other members of the class also completed and passed the NYS DMV test this morning.

I know my purpose for taking the CDL class was different than most of the other members. As noted, mine is for retirement productivity (compensated and/or volunteer); most of the others were looking to advance in their positions with the CDL B qualification (go from driver's helper to driver, for example) or simply gain new positions with their employer (or a new place) with a new and higher salary rate (and one member was encountering the closure of his current worksite - he needed a new job, period!).

But the individual reason that our brothers and sisters were taking the class doesn't truly matter. More importantly, each of us wanted to accomplish the good things that come with the traditional and solid middle class employment, including the ability to advance in that employment – and at the same time, moving forward with our lives and families. I know this class accomplished that for me and for many of the others in it.

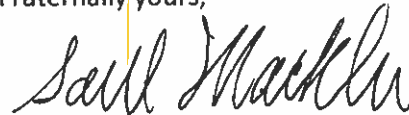
Beyond that, the training and experience in what truck drivers truly encounter on the road will be valuable in every aspect of my driving – whether in my usual passenger car or in a 33,000 pound truck.

And the class from JC 16 is free to the JC 16 local union membership. Yes, for me it had an expense of getting to Deer Park, but I did the calculations – even including the tolls for the Throggs Neck Bridge, that cost is close to nothing in comparison to going to a private school for similar training. And Brian noted to me one day that he was also a student in the class, once upon a time!

I have no idea what it costs JC 16 to run the class. I assume the CDL A and CDL B instructors need to be paid; I know the trucks and trailers cost money to own or rent and maintain, plus fuel costs and probably other expenses I can't even imagine. But I thoroughly recommend that JC 16 continue with this class and, if possible, even expand it! I know I have two Local 237 meetings coming up in the next two weeks; I'll be "talking it up" at those meetings!

I'll go to NYS DMV in a few days (they apparently need at least two days to get the test results bureaucratically entered into their computer systems) and get my driver's license changed to CDL B. After that, I may continue with a private school for the P and S endorsements; I'll get the towing manual from NYS DMV and take that exam, too, for the W endorsement. I really don't know if CDL A is in my future; that is a decision that I'll not be making right now. But if CDL A is in my future, I would look forward to taking it with JC 16 in Deer Park!

Fraternally yours,



Saul Mackler
Member, Local 237, Teamsters

Cc: Gregory Floyd, President, Local 237
Carl Jiles, Housing Division Director, Local 237
Joseph Vitta, President, Local 812
Steve (understood to be retired but runs the program; assumed from Local 812) ✓
Brian McGarrity, Local 812