

The Chief

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“Whoever lied to Transit Workers should resign”

TWU Contract Math

TO THE EDITOR:

Many of us rely on The Chief for unbiased factual reporting. A fundamental point of confusion regarding the recent Transit contract was whether the 1.5-percent contribution for retiree medical coverage (a new benefit) amounted to a 4.5 percent reduction on the 10.5-percent negotiated settlement, as Vice President Ainsley Stewart and others told us members and published in his newsletter.

Is it a 1.5-percent reduction or a 4.5-percent reduction of the 10.5-percent raise? Is it effectively a 6-percent wage increase or a 9-percent wage increase after the health-cost contribution? Mr. Stewart should explain what formula he used to arrive at his conclusion.

The Chief should explain this once and for all. Many transit workers' and their families' lives have been affected by these lies and deception. I feel that if Roger Toussaint lied and the wage increase is 6 percent, then he should resign, and if Ainsley Stewart lied, he should resign. We cannot afford to play politics with our future and that of our families.

TERRENCE WILLIAMS
Car Inspector

EDITOR'S REPLY: The 1.5-percent health-care premium under the rejected contract for Transport Workers' Union Local 100 would have reduced the value of the wage increase by just that amount, not the 4.5 percent that some of the deal's critics claimed.

It's true that the deduction would have been in effect throughout the 37-month duration of the rejected pact. But to count it three times would be erroneous. If that same logic were applied to the wage increase, it could be argued that members' pay would have gone up by 20.5 percent (not counting compounding). But you wouldn't conclude that because a transit worker's pay was 3 percent higher than under the previous contract in the first year, 7 percent higher in the second year, and 10.5 percent in the third year, you should add those three numbers to calculate the amount of the wage hike.

In the same vein, you wouldn't add the 1.5-percent charge for each year of the contract to calculate how much the health premium reduced the value of the wage package. At the end of the deal, the cost to workers still would have been 1.5 percent above what they paid for health care under their previous contract.