McBART?

Attacks on workers at McDonalds have increased and they are demanding some sort of protection. Some of the videos online make downtown S.F. stations seem sane! Will they be in a booth like transit workers? But as transit workers everywhere know, there isn’t any guarantee of protection.

But there are things to do for workers’ safety. At BART it would be a start to have adequate staffing. Why should there ever be just one agent assigned to a booth, especially in high-traffic stations? Or a Train Operator doing sweeps alone, or one System Service Worker at the far end of the platform?

The Elections

No, not those elections where campaigning began a year ago, but the union elections. Some of the ATU 1555 officers have been elected and others will be decided in the runoffs. Elections should be more than someone getting elected while those with less votes disappear from union activity until the next election.

Elected or not, it is still your union. No matter what anyone says, a handful of people elected to office can’t change anything alone. But they can use their position to do all they can to help get people involved. That doesn’t mean going to a monthly union meeting.

Everyone knows that BART is preparing for the next contract. It’s not just BART, it’s all the forces we faced during the 2013 contract. We need to get our forces together and that means going beyond BART – reaching out to the public, those who ride BART.

Pigeonholed

Upward mobility? Yeah, right. For some, BART might be full of opportunities. If you know the right people, or even better are related to them – you might be one of the lucky ones moving into different positions quickly.

But for the majority of hardworking BART employees, we’re just lucky to be here. When we keep getting denied for positions we know we qualify for, we can’t help but wonder what is going on. It grinds down our morale. Sometimes it can feel like we get pigeonholed into staying where we’re at – for years! And it does not feel good to be stuck.

Leaky Boat

BART is just like a leaky boat. The problems in the system are like holes letting in water, and instead of fixing them management just patches them up. At first they were just patching up holes, but now they’re patching up the patches.

People who work at BART deserve to operate in a functioning system, and the Bay Area deserves reliable public transportation. Maybe the people working the boat ought to be the ones running it; they actually know and care about what needs fixing.

Addressing Homelessness the BART Way?

In the Bay Area homelessness has skyrocketed over the last two years as rents keep going up and shelters are full with long waiting lists. In Alameda County homelessness increased by 43% since 2017. Unfortunately for many, BART stations and trains are among the few places left to seek shelter.

And now BART has teamed up with Salvation Army to collect donations for the homeless. It may be a nice gesture. But this is a social problem that will take a lot more than some change and a few blankets to deal with.

Is There a Pattern Here?

Thank You!

Many thanks to those who made a donation to support the Speak Out newsletter. The newsletter is a tool to reach out to other workers, to talk about what is going on at BART and around the world. The challenges at BART are similar to the challenges at AC Transit, MUNI, hospitals and other workplaces. The bosses stand together to defend their interests – we need to also.