



NEWS

Facebook bus drivers unionize amid concern about work conditions

By John Ribeiro | [Follow](#)

IDG News Service | Nov 19, 2014 11:10 PM PT

Drivers of buses that shuttle employees to Facebook's campus have decided to unionize, reflecting an increasingly assertive contract workforce at tech companies in California.

The drivers, who are employees of Facebook contractor Loop Transportation, voted Wednesday to join Teamsters Local 853 in San Leandro.

The 87 drivers, who ferry Facebook employees to and from the company headquarters in Menlo Park, complain that they are forced to work split shifts, often waiting six hours in between picking up and dropping off Facebook employees—all unpaid, according to a statement Wednesday by Teamsters.

Drivers often start work at 6 a.m. and end the day at 9:45 p.m., according to the union. Companies need to stop demanding the lowest bid contract and pay their contractors enough so that unions can negotiate for decent wages and benefits for the drivers, it said.

"Of all the industries in the world, the tech industry can afford to compensate those that help make them successful." Rome Aloise, secretary treasurer of Teamsters Local 853, said in the statement.

The tech industry in Silicon Valley has been criticized previously for its policies on using contract staff in functions like security guards, janitors and cooks.

"These 'invisible' workers do not share in the success of the industry which they daily labor to keep running," according to a report in August. The report by community labor organization Working Partnerships USA said that tech

companies in Silicon Valley use underpaid black, Latino and immigrant workers, hired through contractors, as landscaping workers, janitors, cooks and security guards.

In the wake of these concerns, Google said in October it had decided to have security guards on its payroll, rather than have them placed by a contractor.

On Wednesday, Derecka Mehrens, executive director at Working Partnerships, said the drivers are part of the invisible workforce that makes Silicon Valley run. "They are members of our communities that work hard every day, but live in poverty, and the business model of tech companies like Facebook counts on that."

Facebook could not be immediately reached for comment on the drivers' decision to unionize.

In October, Aloise had written to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg to get him to ask Loop to recognize the drivers' union. A rally on Tuesday outside Facebook's Menlo Park campus repeated the demand, Teamsters said.

The tech industry has also been under pressure from civil rights groups, such as the Rainbow Push Coalition of civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson, for not employing enough of blacks and Latinos in their staff. Employee diversity data released by some companies like Google, Twitter and Facebook showed that their employees in the U.S. were predominantly white followed by Asians.

John Ribeiro — *Bangalore Correspondent*

John Ribeiro covers outsourcing and general technology breaking news from India for the IDG News Service.



 **Insider Resume Makeover: How (and When) to Break the Rules**

