

Monitoring the Monitor:

Keeping FirstGroup Honest

As a result of Teamster exposure of FirstGroup anti-union practices and other activities, FirstGroup has made public commitments and has taken action to address the anti-union culture in its U.S. based affiliates, First Student and First Transit.

- At the 2006 Annual General Meeting of FirstGroup Martin Gilbert, Chair of the Board of Directors, stated: "We are absolutely committed to stamping out our anti-union behavior and you have our undertaking that we will do whatever is necessary to remain neutral as far as union membership is concerned."
- The FirstGroup Corporate Social Responsibility Policy the Company issued in 2007 provides: "Employees have the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining. We respect the right of our employees to choose whether or not to join a trade union without influence or interference from management." (p. 13, section 3.2).
- In January, 2008, First Student announced that it had established an independent compliance monitoring system to address complaints arising out of workplace practices that violate its Freedom of Association and Corporate Social Responsibility policies. FirstGroup appointed Professor William B. Gould IV to serve as its Independent Monitor. Professor Gould is the former Clinton appointed Chair of the National Labor Relations Board and is currently the Charles A. Beardsley Professor of Law, Emeritus at Stanford Law School. Professor Gould has developed a complaint form that the Union or workers can send to him if they believe the Company has violated the Freedom of Association policy. As of the March 27th Workers Congress the Teamsters had filed complaints at seven school bus yards. Three decisions from the Independent Monitor have been issued with two finding substantial violation of the Policy.

How Should We Use The Independent Monitor In Our Campaigns?

- The Teamsters recommend that complaints be filed with the Independent Monitor if the Company engages in any anti-union activity. This covers anti-union conduct and speech by members of management or by others who we can prove were encouraged by members of management. We should also file a complaint if pro-union workers are treated in an unequal or discriminatory manner or given less access/right to campaign for the union than anti-union workers.
- We should continue to file unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB when the National Labor Relations Act has been violated.
- We should continue to conduct marches on the boss, community outreach and other activities to protect workers' rights and to push job issues.
- Workers who feel the Company policy has been violated should be encouraged to work with the Teamsters to get their complaint filed.
- Please send a copy of all complaints to the Independent Monitor and decisions to Kim Keller at the IBT. We are carefully trying to monitor the monitor and need full information. Information can be emailed to kkeller@teamster.org or mailed to:

*Kim Keller
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Drive Up Standards
School Bus and Transit Workers United