



TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25

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NEWS >>

IN WASHINGTON, POPE FRANCIS CALLS FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Coli, Hoffa Attend Papal Reception at White House Prior to Speech

In an unprecedented address for the Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis stood before a joint session of Congress on Thursday and spoke passionately of the need to restore social justice to a world increasingly fractured by hatred, greed and corruption.

On the eve of the historic speech, and a just a day into Pope Francis' first trip to the United States, Teamsters Joint Council 25 President John T. Coli and Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa attended a special reception with His Holiness at the White House. The labor leaders were invited to the event on Wednesday in recognition and celebration for the overwhelming focus Pope Francis has already placed on economic equality and worker dignity since his papacy began in March 2013.

"It's an extraordinary honor to be in attendance with Pope Francis, and the invitation from the White House speaks volumes to the work the Teamsters Union is doing today to improve the lives of working people across North America," Coli said. "Pope Francis has spoken publicly worldwide about the urgency and the virtue of having a vibrant labor movement to protect the rights of workers. The Teamsters welcome the Pope with open arms as he bring that message to the United States."

Throughout his address to Congress, the Pope called on legislators and policymakers to set aside personal political differences to do more for the betterment of humanity. With respect to immigration, environmental issues, capital punishment and economic justice for all, the leader of the Catholic Church called for greater dialogue, compassion and shared social responsibility to lift up the disadvantaged and working people in America and across the globe.

"We are asked to summon the courage and the intelligence to resolve today's many geopolitical and economic crises. Even in the developed world, the effects of unjust structures and actions are all too apparent," Pope Francis said, who cited American icons like Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. "Our efforts must aim at restoring hope, righting wrongs, maintaining commitments, and thus promoting the well-being of individuals and of peoples. We must move forward together, as one, in a renewed spirit of fraternity and solidarity, cooperating generously for the common good."

In addition to Coli and Hoffa, President Barack Obama was also in attendance with the Pope during Wednesday's reception.

Teamsters Joint Council 25 is America's premier labor union for Chicago, Illinois and northwest Indiana.