

**GMB**  
**CONGRESS 2025**

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**BARBARA PLANT**  
**(National President)**  
**(In the Chair)**

**MALCOLM SAGE**  
**(Honorary Co-Chair)**

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**Held in:**

**The Brighton Centre,**  
**Brighton**

**on:**

**Sunday, 8th June 2025**  
**Monday, 9th June 2025**  
**Tuesday, 10th June 2025**  
**Wednesday, 11th June 2025**  
**-and-**  
**Thursday, 12th June 2025**

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**PROCEEDINGS**

**DAY FIVE**  
**(Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025)**

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## **FIFTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 12th JUNE 2025**

### **MORNING SESSION**

*(Conference assembled at 9.30 a.m.)*

#### **Call to Order**

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Congress to order, please. Here he comes. We have two birthdays today so they are having their photograph taken with the General Secretary. I hope you got down to the demo yesterday. I do not think Brighton has ever seen anything like that. And if you were in the hall in the workshop, I hope you had a good time with Mark and Megan yesterday. We do still have a fair bit of business to get through. I am sorry if you are flagging, but we are on the home stretch and we will be finished today. In order for us to finish in good time, could you please make sure to keep to time on your speeches and, where possible, formally second. We are keeping to the planned order of business, with the addition of Motion 131, and Composite 7 and Emergency Motions 5, 6, 8 and 9.

Can I ask Karen Dudley, Chair of the SOC to move SOC Report No. 6, please.

#### **Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6**

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, I am moving SOC Report No. 6. Withdrawn motions and rule amendments. First, this is

just to confirm that Southern Region withdrew the following rule amendments yesterday: Rule Amendments 298, 299, 315, 316, 317, and 323. Secondly, the SOC has been advised that the following motion from Wales & South West Region has been withdrawn: Emergency Motion 1: Urgent Clarifications to Protect Trans Women Considering the Supreme Court Narrow Definition of a Woman. Emergency motions. The SOC has agreed two further emergency motions. This is Emergency Motion 8: Solidarity with Trade Unionist David Huerta, from London Region and Emergency Motion 9: Condemn the Escalation by the State of Israel Against Humanitarian Aid Flotilla from Southern Region. The times when the emergency motions will be heard will be advised as soon as possible.

Bucket collection. The London Region bucket collection in aid of Cuba Vive raised £279.83 and €30 in cash, plus £110.50 online through the QR code, making a total of £390.33 and 30 euros (*Applause*)

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 6

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Karen. Does anyone want to speak in opposition to that? May I put that to the vote? All those in favour of SOC Report No. 6, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Standing Orders Report No. 6 was **ADOPTED**.*

## **Announcements**

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen and the SOC, for all your work this week. *(Applause)* Just before we move on to business a couple of announcements. On that bucket collection, I did fail to let you know at lunchtime that it was happening so if anybody still wants to contribute, they can see Ida in London Region and they have a QR code and regional committees will also be asked if they want to donate further.

The second announcement is about Bookmarks. They have already left but if you have not ticked up your reserved book, especially the one “Hold on Edna” by Neira they will be down at the info desk to collect it. If you need to collect that book, please go there before you leave. And lastly, there was a pair of glasses left on the floor last night so if it is somebody’s glasses they are up here.

### **Regional Success Videos**

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we have our final group of Regional Success videos from London, Midlands and North Western & Irish. Before the videos are played, could the movers of motions and seconders of Motions 236, 237 and 238 please come to the front to be ready to speak?

*(London Region video was shown)*

*(Midlands Region video was shown)*

*(North West & Irish Region video was shown)*

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you to all those regions and the beautiful tribute from North West & Irish Region. Another great set of uplifting, inspiring videos showing just how many campaigns our members are involved in. Well done.

### **Social Policy: Justice**

THE PRESIDENT: Back to business. We move on to Motion 236. Could I have the mover, please?

## **CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTI-PROTEST LEGISLATION**

### **MOTION 236**

#### **236. CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTI-PROTEST LEGISLATION**

This Congress believes;

The right to protest is a fundamental democratic right and is essential for working people to ensure fair and just treatment. The Public Order Act 2023 and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (commonly referred to as the Anti-Protest Laws) represent a dangerous erosion of this right and signal a move toward an increasingly authoritarian state.

This Congress resolves to;

- (a) Campaign for the repeal of the Public Order Act 2023 and the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.
- (b) Raise awareness among GMB members about the dangers posed by this legislation to democratic freedoms and trade union activities.
- (c) Stand in solidarity with individuals and groups targeted or prosecuted under these laws and provide support where appropriate.

(d) Urge all GMB-sponsored MPs to actively oppose these laws and advocate for their repeal, both within and outside Parliament.

This Congress recognises that the ability to protest is crucial for trade unions, workers, and the public to voice concerns, challenge injustices, and protect hard-won rights.

These new laws undermine this right and risk silencing dissent, making it harder for people to hold power to account. As a union committed to defending democracy and justice, we must lead the fight against these authoritarian measures.

## **L27 LEICESTER HEALTH CARE BRANCH**

### **MIDLANDS REGION**

*(Carried)*

ASHTON GREEN (Midlands): Moving Motion 236, Supporting Anti-Protest Campaign Legislation. *(Applause)* The right to protest is a fundamental democratic right and is essential to working people to ensure fair and just treatment. In recent years this right has been increasingly under attack. The Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act of 2022, the Public Order Act of 2023, often referred as anti-protest laws, are reforms that increase the powers of the police to intervene in disruptive protests and have harsher penalties for those involved. They represent a dangerous erosion to the right of protest and a signal of a move towards an increasingly authoritarian state. These controversial acts have been opposed by campaigners who question their compatibility with human rights legislation. The human rights organisation Liberty won the initial judicial review against the Home Office in May 2024 and the Court of Appeal has recently ruled that the Home Secretary acted unlawfully when these regulations to restrict the right to public protest were made.

This Congress resolves to campaign for the repeal of the Public Order Act 2023 and the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act 2022, raise awareness among the GMB members about the dangers posed by this legislation, stand in solidarity with individuals and groups targeted by these laws, and urge all GMB-sponsored MPs to actively oppose these laws and advocate for their repeal both within and outside of Westminster.

This Congress recognises the ability to protest is crucial to trade union workers and the public to voice concern, challenge injustices and protect hard-won rights. These new laws undermine this right and the risk of silencing makes it harder for people to hold power to account. As a union we must be committed to defending democracy and justice. We must lead the fight against those authoritarian measures because together we are GMB. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ashton. Secunder?

HELEN SOMES (Midlands): President, Congress, speaking in support of Motion 236, the Campaign Against Anti-Protest Legislation. The power of peaceful protest in the UK has shaped our society by its lasting impact on many aspects of employment law and the political landscape. Throughout our history peaceful protests have been a vital factor in our ability to express our views, to challenge injustice and discrimination, and influence change without resorting to violence. The campaign to free the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Suffragettes campaign for women's voting rights, the Chartists' campaign for political reform have all paved the way for the democracy that exists today. We are indebted to them all. More recently climate change demonstrations and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament have used peaceful protest to raise public awareness and push

Governments to act on critical issues. The Pride movement has grown from a peaceful protest in response to the Stonewall rights of 1969 to a worldwide platform for solidarity against discrimination and oppression. What sets peaceful process apart is its ability to unite diverse groups of people for a single cause, to create a platform where voices can be heard. It promotes dialogue and compels policymakers to listen, often leading to legislative reforms. It reminds us that change is possible through non-violent means and that together we are stronger. Please support this motion. I second.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Helen, well done. Mover of Motion 237, please?

## **JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIE**

### **MOTION 237**

#### **237. JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED**

This Congress condemns the continued horrific delays in UK courts and tribunals. These are particularly severe in the crown court where victims and those accused of crimes have their lives put on hold for years while they wait for justice to be done. Sometimes justice is defeated when memories fade or victims withdraw.

Congress resolves to campaign for proper resources for justice and a proper plan for the courts and tribunals to eliminate unacceptable delays while safeguarding the quality of British justice.

## **J25 JUDGES BRANCH**

### **SOUTHERN REGION**

*(Carried)*

RHIAN GRIFFITHS (Southern): Good morning President, Congress, moving Motion



237: Justice Delayed is Justice Denied. I move this motion on behalf of the GMB Judicial Branch, which represents judges and experts who work for our courts and tribunals. I speak with first-hand experience working as a prison custody officer since 2021. I stood in the courts and witnessed the scale of delay, seen cases pushed back for years and seen the toll this takes on those waiting for justice. Justice is not just about reaching a verdict. It is about reaching it in time for it to matter. Yet in our courts today it is common to see trial dates set years in the future, years where victims must wait, reliving trauma, years when memories fade, witnesses disengage and victims give up on justice. Years where the accused remain in uncertainty, unable to clear their name or know their fate. And for those found guilty after a prolonged remand, time served is doubled and deducted from their sentence, meaning that delays do not just rob victims of closure; it also means that justice when finally delivered, is weakened.

For years our justice system has struggled with delays and lack of funding but the pandemic magnified these challenges. Courtrooms went dark, legal proceedings halted and the cases that desperately needed resolution were left in limbo. Victims were forced to wait longer for closure and the accused were denied timely trials and families were stranded in uncertainty unable to move forward. Even now the backlog created by years of austerity and then Covid 19 continues to plague our courts. The Crown Court backlog reached a record high of 73,105 cases by September last year. This figure is not just a number. This represents tens of thousands of people whose lives are on hold waiting for their day in court. This is justice denied.

What is the solution then? It begins with investment, fixing crumbling courts that have been unfit for purpose for years, reopening courtrooms that the Ministry of Justice

closed, with the broken promise to reinvest the savings in modernising the rest, providing modern IT systems and equipment that works, funding the legal aid system properly.

Congress, we have a choice: the rule of law or the law of the jungle. Citizens and our members deserve a justice system that works and everybody has confidence in. Congress, we must act. We must acknowledge that delays in justice are not inevitable. They are the result of choices. Choices that justice is not a priority, that courts can be underfunded, that out-of-date IT system are fine, that victims and people accused of crimes do not matter. But today we have a different choice, to stand up and demand a change: a justice system that works for everyone. I urge you, support this motion, protect the integrity of our legal system and ensure that justice delayed is never justice denied. I move this motion on behalf of the GMB Judicial Branch. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rhian. Secunder for Motion 237?

CHRISTOPHER WONGSOSAPUTRO (Southern): Madam President, General Secretary, Congress, good morning. I am from K19, in Southern Region, the proud host of this Congress. Many thanks to all delegates, members and GMB and event staff for making this event happen. This has been a brilliant Congress thanks to all of you. *(Applause)*

Congress, the Southern Region would like to second Motion 237, Justice Delayed is Justice Denied. I would like to start by asking Congress if anyone here has heard about

court delays. Please raise your hand if you have. I can see hands in the room here, so people do know about this issue. So, what is the scale of the problems we are facing, Congress? The House of Lords Library figures noted a near doubling of case backlog from 38,000 in 2019 to 73,000 last year. So, why does this motion matter at all? Congress, this is not just a debate. There is a human story behind each of these 73,000 delays. Each of these delays could be our friends, our family, our colleagues or acquaintances. The House of Lords Library highlighted the negative effects of the delays on the health, jobs and educational outcomes of victim and defendants, not to mention the impacts on their loved ones as well. Some have even resorted to drugs, alcohol and self-harm to cope with the delays. Given the current situation, what can be done, Congress? First, uncap the number of crown court sitting days. That is what the Society of Labour Lawyers suggest. This is currently capped at 105,000, which is a 2% drop from last year. Secondly, the Royal Society called for the following: (1) investment in our courtrooms, staff and judges, which is what my colleague Rhian mentioned earlier; (2) more legal aid funding; (3) reduce cases settled in the courtroom through resolutions such as mediation and increase the use of technology.

To conclude, justice delayed is not just a number. Behind this number lie countless human stories, each waiting to be heard and resolved. Justice delayed is justice denied. Congress, we second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Christopher. Mover of Motion 238, please?

## **MOTION 238**

### **PRESS ANONYMITY OF WORKERS IN THE PRISON ESTATE**

## **238. PRESS ANONYMITY OF WORKERS IN THE PRISON ESTATE**

Congress notes that staff working in prisons, or whose work involves them entering the prison estate may be potential targets for coercion or other criminal acts.

Congress notes that many GMB members make deliveries to prisons, or provide services to prisons, for example, Bidfood drivers.

Congress notes that in a recent very high-profile case of a prison escape, the identity of a Bidfood driver, and GMB member, was widely reported in the press. Neither the prison service, the police nor Bidfood have suggested that the driver was in any way at fault. The reporting of his name was entirely gratuitous.

Congress believes that except in cases of compelling public interest, then the identities of workers involved in the prison service, or working in the prison estate should not be reported by newspapers, or broadcasters, as advertising their identity potentially exposes them at risk from the criminal associates of some inmates.

Congress resolves that GMB should lobby the Department of Justice asking that judges should give due consideration to reporting restrictions in criminal cases where workers involved with the prison estate may be identified.

Congress further resolves that GMB should lobby the Independent Press Standards Organisation to make changes to the IPSO Editors' Code asking that the identities of workers in the prison estate should not be published unless there is a compelling public interest.

## **W15 THREE SHIRES BRANCH**

### **SOUTHERN REGION**

*(Carried)*

CHARLIE NUNN (Southern): Moving Motion 238, Press Anonymity of Workers in the Prison Estate. Excuse me I have lost my voice a bit today. As an ex-prison officer

I am only too aware of the pressures on staff in establishments across the whole of the UK. I support this motion because the issue before us is urgent, serious and fundamentally about safety, both personal and professional. Everyday staff across our prison system walk into environments that most people could not even imagine: hidden from public view and an often forgotten emergency service, very rarely mentioned. They work under pressure, under threat, and in the shadow of constant risk, not just from the people they supervise but, increasingly, from the way that they are exposed to the public through the media and subsequently exposed to risks from associates of those who remain in the community and therefore further risk outside of the prison fences.

Let me be blunt, the current media standards do not protect our people. When innocent people are named publicly this further exposes them to the very possible and all too real threat of harm or fear for their own safety or that of their loved ones. It increases the risk of being conditioned or coerced into criminal activity or breaking prison rules in order to protect themselves and their families from such harm. The Editors' Code of Practice does not prohibit the naming of prison officers, educators, healthcare workers or chaplains, or any staff who enter prison walls. This omission leaves a dangerous loophole that some outlets will exploit for the sake of their stories, not as a public interest. When a prison incident occurs and a name appears in the headlines that person does not just carry professional scrutiny, they carry personal risk. Some are stalked, some are harassed online, others are targeted in their communities. Their homes are watched and their families end up living in fear. And for what? For doing their jobs, for keeping society safe, or providing an essential service to those kept in custody.

This can all be prevented and risks mitigated with one single action by those who have the power to do so. The current press guidelines may claim to protect privacy, but they fall short where it matters the most: when that privacy is a matter of life and death. We have press rules that rightly protect children, victims, even suspects in early legal proceedings, yet we offer no such standard protection to the very people that we ask to face violent offenders behind bars every day. This Congress must send a clear message that this is not acceptable. That is why we must not only support anonymity, we must demand it as a matter of policy and of principle. We must lobby the Ministry of Justice to demand that all judges are compelled from the offset to enforce reporting restrictions in relevant criminal cases where prison staff may be identified. Furthermore, we should also lobby the Independent Press Standards Organisation to revise the Editors' Code of Practice to include clear guidance. No prison staff or associated contracted staff shall be named in media reports without explicit and exceptional justification for the need to do so in the public interest. Never where there is risk to life, well-being or the safe operation of our prisons. It is about not hiding from misconduct, we believe in accountability, but it does not require personal exposure of staff, and certainly not their families. The system already has rigorous oversight mechanisms to tackle accountability. What it lacks is a safeguard for those who go to work every day knowing they are stepping into danger. This motion is about dignity, fairness and, above all, protection. We ask Congress to vote to protect our prison staff as they protect us every day and protect their names and their families. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlie. Secunder?

RHIAN GRIFFITHS (Southern): Morning again, seconding Motion 238. Every single

day prison staff walk into environments defined by volatility, uncertainty and risk yet their safety, their privacy and their rights to security beyond those prison walls remain precarious. What kind of society are we if we allow those tasked with maintaining order in our justice to be exposed to intimidation, harassment and even physical danger simply because their names appear in the press? We demand professionalism from our prison officers, educators, healthcare workers and chaplains. We expect them to uphold justice and rehabilitation, even in the most difficult of conditions, but in return we owe them something essential: a guarantee that their safety will not be compromised by careless reporting or legal loopholes that fail to protect their anonymity. Let us be clear, this is not about just about shielding misconduct. It is about upholding a basic human right: security.

Congress, the Press Code fails these vital workers and yet we already afford anonymity to vulnerable groups, victims and even suspects. Why then do we refuse the same safeguarding to those who face danger every day on behalf of the public?

I urge you, stand with those who serve in silence, stand with those who risk their well-being so that justice can function. Let's pass this motion and commit as a matter of policy and principle to protect the protecters. Thank you. I second this motion.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, thank you. Does anybody want to speak in opposition? No. I call Kevin Jones of the CEC to respond. And could I have call movers and seconders of Emergency Motion 5 and Emergency Motion 6 to the front, please.

KEVIN JONES (CEC): Speaking of behalf of the CEC. In response to Motion 236, which the CEC supports with qualification. We are unequivocal that the right to protest is a cornerstone of the trade union and democratic life. Existing GMB policy already commits us to resist attacks on that freedom, reaffirmed in Composite 14 to Congress in 2021. For that reason, we are pleased to support the motion but with an important qualification. Rather than call for the wholesale repeal of the Public Order Act 2023 and the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act 2022, we believe the GMB should target specific sections that curtail legitimate protest. A blanket repeal would sweep away provisions that the union and many emergency service members actively support.

One example is Part 1 of the 2022 Act, which introduced tougher sentences for assaults on emergency service workers. That measure arose directly from a protect and protesters campaign and have been vital to safeguarding paramedics, ambulance crews and other front-line staff. Our focused support therefore has two strands. Firstly, lobby to appeal or amend those clauses that restrict peaceful assembly and picketing and, second, defend provisions like enhancement of safety or advance other GMB objectives. On that basis the CEC urges Congress to carry Motion 236 with the stated qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Does Midland accept the qualification on Motion 236? (*Agreed*) I will put that to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. I will take 237 and 238 in one group because CEC are supporting both those Motion 237 and 238, all those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are carried.



*Motion 236 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 237 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 238 was **CARRIED**.*

## **Emergency Motions**

THE PRESIDENT: Could we have the mover of Emergency Motion 5, please?

### **PROTECTING TRANS AND NON-BINARY MEMBERS' RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE**

#### **EMERGENCY MOTION 5**

#### **EM5: Emergency Motion: Protecting Trans and Non-Binary Members' Rights in the Workplace**

The Supreme Court case brought by For Women Scotland Ltd against the Scottish Ministers, regarding the definition of “woman” for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010. Resulted with a judgement on 16 April 2025, confirming that for the purposes of the Equality Act, “sex” refers to biological sex.

Following this, on 25 April 2025, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) issued new guidance making it compulsory for workplaces to provide single-sex spaces. This move has serious implications, effectively discriminating against the Trans and Non-Binary community.

Groups advocating for these restrictions, insist their aim is to protect women and girls. However, the real threat comes not from Trans women, but from predatory men. Targeting Trans women as scapegoats misdirects the conversation and places an already vulnerable community at greater risk of abuse.

Trans, non-binary and intersex workers are entering uncertain times.

This isn't just about trans people – it's about anyone who doesn't fit narrow expectations of gender. If these rules are enforced, countless gender nonconforming individuals could be challenged, excluded, and humiliated in their own workplaces.

We must be clear: trans people will not be the only ones targeted. No one who defies rigid gender norms will be safe.

The GMB's established policy is to stand firmly in solidarity with our Trans and Non-Binary members. We must now put this commitment into action.

We call on GMB to:

- Remind employers to respect and support Trans and Non-Binary workers in all workplaces.
- Ensure Trans and Non-Binary workers are protected from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Reaffirm our policy to all GMB-sponsored politicians and urge them to uphold it during debates and votes.

It is vital that all our members — including Trans and Non-Binary members — are protected, respected, and able to work in safety and dignity.

**REGION: GMB Scotland**

*(Carried)*

CIORSTADH REICHLE (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, moving Emergency Motion 5. We are meeting here today in the wake of a deeply trouble development. On 16th April the Supreme Court ruled in favour of For Women Scotland Limited, confirming that for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, “sex” refers strictly to biological sex. And less than two weeks later the Equality and Human Rights

Commission issued new guidance requiring workplaces to implement single-sex spaces. This is in the just legal semantics. This is not a minor change. This has real and serious consequences. The ruling and the EHRC's guidance mark a dangerous shift in how our rights and the rights of trans, non-binary and inter-sex members are being interpreted enforced. These measures open the door to exclusion, discrimination and harm, in the very places where we should feel safe - in our workplaces. We are told these new rules are about protecting women but let's not be misled. The threat to women is not coming from trans women. It is coming from abusive, predatory men. Targeting trans people does nothing to address this. It simply turns one marginalised group into scapegoats while the real issues go unchallenged. Trans and non-binary people, and anyone who does not conform to narrow outdated gender expectations, are now facing an era of uncertainty and fear. What happens when a non-binary person is told they cannot use either changing room? Or when a trans colleague is questioned at the door? When someone is excluded not because of who they are but how they are perceived? And make no mistake, this is not just about trans people, this is about all of us. Anyone who does not fit rigid gender norms, anyone who has ever been told they look too masculine or too feminine is now at risk. And that means we must stand together. The GMB has long held a proud and public commitment to stand in solidarity with our trans and non-binary members. That commitment must mean more than words: it means action.

So, today we call on the GMB to remind every employer that trans and non-binary workers deserve dignity, respect and support in their workplaces, ensure robust protections against bullying and harassment and discrimination are in place and enforced, and reaffirm our unwavering policy for all GMB-sponsored politicians and

demand that they uphold in every debate, every vote and every room where these decisions are made.

This is a moment that will test our resolve. But we know who we are. We are a union that fights for fairness; a union that believes every worker - every single worker - deserves to feel safe, respected and seen. So let us send a clear message, we will not abandon our trans and non-binary members. We will not be divided and we will fight together. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ciorstadh. Secunder?

MELANIE GALE (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, from GMB Scotland, I will say this for the last time - the Brave. Seconding Emergency Motion 5. Congress, GMB's policy has always been to fully support our transgender members. This has not changed. However, not everyone follows this policy to the letter. This deters the LGBTQ community from becoming members. The clarification released by the EHRC is unclear and can easily be misinterpreted. As a union we need to stand with our trans, non-binary and intersex members. We need to be able to say GMB is the union that will support all. And we do this by action, not words. The Supreme Court decision has opened the door for discrimination and exclusion of some of our members. Imagine being informed that there are no bathroom facilities for you to be able to use, you need to use the same space of the sex you were assigned to at birth because you are not welcome in the space that you identify with. This is wrong. For Women Scotland Ltd and those that share their ideology do not want trans men in their space, but they expect trans women to share the same space as cis men.

Congress, this is discrimination and exclusion and GMB does not tolerate discrimination and exclusion. We need to be reinforcing to our employers against negative behaviour towards our trans, non-binary and inter-sex members. Please support this motion. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Melanie. Mover of Emergency Motion 6?

## **EHRC CODE OF PRACTICE CONSULTATION**

### **EMERGENCY MOTION 6**

#### **EM6: EHRC Code of Practice Consultation**

Congress notes that following the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of sex in the Equality Act published on the 16 April 2025, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is consulting on a new draft code of practice. This consultation is open until Monday 30 June 2025. Congress notes that initially the EHRC consultation on the 24 April 2024 was announced for 2 weeks for the public to respond to 58 pages of amendments to its Code of Practice.

This timeline was then extended to 6 weeks after pressure from the Government Women and Equalities select committee. Human Rights organisation Liberty are pushing for it to be extended to 12 weeks.

The public comments by the current chair of the EHRC shows that the EHRC does not appear to be acting as an upholder of Human Rights for all and appears to be biased against trans & non binary people.

Congress notes that the EHRC leadership was originally appointed by a Tory government including Baroness Falkner appointed by Liz Truss in 2019.

The EHRC draft guidance on the code of practice for services, public functions and associations includes suggestions about asking service users' sex at birth which could be invasive, violate people's right to privacy and put ordinary workers in very awkward positions in the course of their duties.

There are currently legal challenges against the EHRC including by the Good Law Project, Trans Legal Clinic, and others.

Congress notes that trans and non-binary workers are fearful that their employers will suddenly change their access to gendered spaces and roll back commitments to support trans people particularly in workplaces.

We call for:

1. Branches and regions to continue to support individual trans and non-binary members with compassion and understanding.
2. Branches and regions to be visible and vocal about supporting trans and all LGBT+ members.
3. Branches and regions to arrange training on the GMB trans and non-binary toolkit.
4. Branches, regions and sections to organise and campaign for employers to prevent workplace discrimination and harassment against trans and all LGBT+ people.
5. Branches, regions and sections to continue to support their trans and non-binary members to use the workplace facilities of their choice in which they feel safe.

Furthermore, Congress calls on

- The Government to confirm that the intention of the current Parliament is not as set out in the Supreme Court decision.
- GMB to write to the Minister for Equalities to request she appoints a new EHRC Chair once Baroness Falkner's term finishes in December 2025.

**REGION: London**

*(Carried)*

JORDAN MILLWARD (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate, second-time speaker now. *(Applause)*. Speaking to move this important emergency motion regarding the recent judgment of the Supreme Court and the actively dangerous interim guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. After the decision laid down by the Supreme Court, there was a palpable sense of fear, not just amongst trans and non-binary people but amongst the LGBTQ community as a whole. The language we have heard from them not just from the Tories and Reform but Labour as well, gender-critical organisations and the EHRC themselves, have justified those fears.

First, the consultation on the updated guidance was slated for only two weeks, only being extended to six weeks after significant outcry not only from without Parliament but from within. We were also given interim guidance that on its face either runs counter to the law as confirmed by the Supreme Court judgment, or breaches the Human Rights Act. The interim guidance states that facilities could only be used based on biological sex but also that trans people could be excluded from those facilities if they looked too much like their assumed gender, in effect, segregation by any other name.

The Supreme Court and the Equalities Act explicitly does not allow this. Any exclusions can only be applied when they are a proportionate means to achieving a legitimate aim. A blanket ban is not proportionate and “because some people might feel a bit uncomfortable” is not a legitimate aim. This sort of exclusion due to discomfort or ignorance, has been applied in the past to any number of minority groups from the ethnically diverse community to gays and lesbians when the politicians used to say, “The gays might be looking at your kids in the changing rooms.” As we called those out as discrimination, we need to call this out as discrimination as well.

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 was intentionally put in place to ensure that there was a means of clarifying who counted for the purposes of law who was a woman, was a man. However, in order to get a certificate, you need to be able to live as that gender for a period of two plus years. If you are excluded from these facilities that can in fact be used as evidence that you have not been and then be denied a certificate.

We heard from the wonderful Vicky McCloud the other day and I was privileged to discuss issues with her before her speech. She is a solid GMB member and she and all trans women, men and non-binary people deserve our support. We cannot stand by and allow people who have supported bigoted groups to run the EHRC or let them wring their hands and say, “Sorry, all the rights and everything you thought you had, and all the rights that the courts have upheld for you, society is upholding for you, are actually all a mistake, so our bad.” The fact that now, eight years ago we had Theresa May of all people saying yes, we should accept self ID. That is insane. GMB must add our voice to ensure the EHRC actually lives up to its name, supporting equality and human rights. And trans rights are human rights. Congress, please reaffirm our union support



for all workers to work and live in dignity regardless of whether they are cis, trans or non-binary. I move.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jordan. Second?

LUCY ATKINSON (London): Congress, President, seconding Emergency Motion 6. It was an honour on Monday to hear from Victoria McCloud and she outlined the significant flaws in this ruling better than I ever could, and so have the previous speakers. From how it affects all women to how anyone is meant to even prove your assigned sex at birth is beyond me. So, I will focus, and we should all focus on what we can do to make it easier and more dignified for our trans siblings in the workplace. Like many of you, I am a rep, and it is our duty to ensure that all of our colleagues feel safe at work. So, what does this look like in terms of supporting trans people in the workplace? It means respecting people's pronouns and identity, making every effort to respect people's pronouns and if you mess up, just correct yourself, say sorry, and make sure you do better next time. It means making the case for gender neutral toilets, keeping sanitary products in all gendered loos and ensuring that if your loos have lock codes on them, make sure that they are the same for all genders so that no one should feel physically blocked out of using the space they feel most comfortable in. I noticed this issue at a council I worked at. I brought it to a JTUC and it got changed easily, and made many of my colleagues feel safer. It also means educating yourself and arranging training in your branches and meetings. In my workplace as a member of the LGBT staff committee, we arranged for Gendered Intelligence to come in and train staff on

trans issues and it was incredibly insightful. You can also get more information at the Equalities stand downstairs on how you can organise training.

So, Congress, please support this motion. Fight transphobia and send out a message from this union that we stand in solidarity with trans workers and trans people everywhere. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, well done. Any delegate wish to speak in opposition? Can I ask Kevin Buchanan from the CEC, please, and in the meantime can movers and seconders of 274, 276, 277 and 279 come to the front.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (CEC): Thank you, President, Congress, responding to Emergency Motion 5 on behalf of the CEC. The CEC welcomes this motion in defence of our trans and non-binary members and are supporting it but with a small but important qualification. That is that the EHRC guidance of 25th April was an interim guidance only, meaning that it is not legal guidance and did not make it compulsory for employers to provide any single-sex spaces that exclude our trans siblings. We want to make it clear so that our reps know employers do not have to follow that interim guidance, which has about roundly challenged. Congress, please support Emergency Motion 5 with the qualification I have set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Does GMB Scotland accept that qualification? *(Agreed)* I will put that to the vote. All those in favour of Emergency Motion 5, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Emergency Motion 5 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: CEC are supporting Emergency Motion 6. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is also carried.

*Emergency Motion 6 was **CARRIED***

### **Social Policy: Transport**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I have the mover of Motion 274, please?

### **NO TO PAY AS YOU GO MILES TAX**

#### **MOTION 274**

#### **274. NO TO PAY AS YOU GO MILES TAX**

This Congress, when car tax wasn't high enough, potholes alone is a reason money is not being invested into our roads infra structure, tax has risen time and time again, but yet we have more and more potholes. You must ask "where has the money gone"? Taxing drivers per mile is simply a way of controlling us and raising taxes to which we will eventually pay more in the long run. An average of 10000 miles could end up costing us £600 per year. From five pence to fifteen pence per mile one year, then twenty to thirty pence another year. When will the rising costs stop? We need value for service, not another way to make money from us. Congress, say "No" to pay per mile on cars, as it is another attack on working people, old people and people who live in rural areas.

### **B22 BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH**

#### **LONDON REGION**

*(Carried)*

ADRIAN STOHR (London): Moving Motion 274: Say No to Pay-as-you-go Miles Tax. Congress, I speak to you of a concern that could resonate deeply with the working class of today: the idea of a pay-as-you-go miles road tax by the Government. Congress, this not only threatens our wallets but also the very fabric of our daily lives. At its core this tax is a direct assault on the freedoms that we as citizens have taken for granted. The idea that our Government would impose a charge based on the number of miles we drive is not just an inconvenience, it is an infringement of our personal liberty and the right to travel. We live in a nation where mobility is essential, where the ability to travel freely for work, education, leisure is our fundamental right. To tax us for every mile travelled is to penalise our very existence. Consider the implications of the tax on our everyday lives. Vital services bear the brunt of this policy. A family living outside of a town or village where they are shut off from public transport are already struggling with the rising cost living of today as we know it. This would be a further burden and extra expense. Is this the kind of controlled society we want to create? A society where it becomes a privilege only to those who can afford it? The ramifications of these proposed taxes will be felt by small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, and depend on transport to deliver goods and services. This idea of a pay-as-you-go miles tax will inevitably lead to increased costs for businesses which will in turn be passed on to the consumers. We are already grappling with the impact of inflation and rising costs. Do we really want to add a financial strain to families and business alike?

And what about the argument on the environment? We have constantly struggled to fix potholes. Congress, while it is crucial that we pursue sustainable practices and reduce our carbon footprint, imposing a mileage tax is not the solution. Instead of penalising drivers we should be investing in public transport, electric vehicles, infrastructure and greener alternatives. Friendly choices without financial hardship. We need innovative solutions that encourage reduced emissions without compromising our mobility and economic stability. Furthermore, this tax raises significant concerns about privacy and surveillance. Tracking the miles we drive means tracking our movements, an unsettling reality in an age where personal data is constantly under threat. Is this really a system that we want? Congress, please support this motion. Say no to road pricing. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adrian. Secunder?

PETER O'DONNELL (London): I am from London Region, in a branch containing thousands of mini cabs and taxi drivers. On first sight, Motion 274 will deny a new stream of income to local government, which, as every delegate knows, has had its funding starved during the Tory years. And although Rachel Reeves said she rejects austerity, the squeeze on council services does continue. Of course, travel has never been free. Drivers spend money on fuel and car maintenance and time sitting in traffic. But we are asking you to support Motion 274 because, frankly, there is a Conservative trap accusing our party and movement of planning to tax car drivers per mile. Actually, the Labour Government and Labour Mayors have ruled out road pricing because it could stall the switch to electric vehicles. The Tories and Reform UK are as unusual, lying when, actually, we now have the biggest ever investment by a British Government

in transport upgrades between cities. That is why I am seconding Motion 274. No to payment per mile. Yes, to more investment. And let me wish everyone here a safe and pleasant journey home from a GMB Congress that has been friendly and a terrific learning experience for us reps - to make work better. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Peter. Mover of Motion 276?

## **I FELL DOWN A POTHOLE: WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS**

### **MOTION 276**

#### **276. I FELL DOWN A POTHOLE WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?**

This Congress We now live in a time where almost every road has potholes, this is a health and safety issue for pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, etc. The problem is that although Highways are responsible for the potholes it is difficult to gain any form of compensation for the following reasons –

1. Has the pothole been reported to Highways? This will be at your Local Authority, and they will have a grading system which states when the hole has to be repaired.
2. What evidence have you got that you did fall down the pothole? This also includes damage to vehicles, drivers or anything else that has been damaged because of the Pothole. The law needs to change and be more specific around how soon a pothole should be repaired. We also should have an awareness campaign on potholes so that our members know how to report a pothole and what to do if they have an accident because of a pothole.

### **T08 TAMESIDE BRANCH**

### **NORTH WEST AND IRISH REGION**

*(Carried)*

LINDA MERCER (North West & Irish): Hello everyone. President, Congress, moving Motion 278, “[Graham] Fell Down a Pothole: What are His Eights? Some of you will have seen Graham this week. He is a big chap with a walking stick and, unfortunately, today he has had to go for some more tests to do with the injury that he got falling into a pothole. Graham is a waste service driver. He was getting out of his wagon and hit a pothole and went flying on his back. He got some injuries from that and was off work for quite some time. And I came round with my magic wand and I said, “Would you like to take over from me, Graham and you can be the branch secretary,” which he has done.

The state of our roads these days is not just a health and safety hazard for drivers; it is a health and safety hazard for all of us. What we are asking for is that you can support the union by helping to get the Government to do some work on these potholes because the money that they give to your local authorities is not enough. And the amount of staff that we have got now, in Tameside we have gone from nearly 8,000 members of staff down to 2,500 members of staff, so you can imagine there is not enough staff to go and check all the roads and the potholes. There is no money to fill the potholes and they will only go and do it if it has been reported and it is of the right depth and the right length to be able to repair it. So, if it is just a small hole it does not matter, even though they know that a small hole will in a few weeks’ time get bigger. You get the idea. So, that is what we need. I am reading Graham’s notes and I have made a few of my own. One manager of engineers can plan assessments to check the major incidence of potholes and assess them to see whether it is the right thing to do to repair them. That seems a bit strange when somebody has put in a claim against the council because they have fallen down a pothole. So, 14 years of Conservative austerity is now coming

home to roost and is affecting each and every one of us. There needs to be a comprehensive re-think of how to maintain our roads and the networks of our roads. We should be the envy of the world. Please support this motion. I thank you all.  
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Linda, for stepping up at the last minute. Secunder?

MICHAEL BRADY (North West & Irish): Seconding Motion 276. Across the country our roads are in a shocking state of disrepair, which affects all of us. For too long workers, especially those in essential roles such as bus drivers, delivery delivers, care workers and refuse collectors, have had to risk injury, damage to their vehicles and disruptions in their working day because the local infrastructure has been neglected. This is not just a matter of inconvenience. It is a matter of health and safety. Our members deserve to work in the same conditions whether on the factory floor or behind a wheel. A lot of people do not know who they need to contact to report the potholes and the necessity to collect evidence of the potholes damaging their vehicles or any injuries to themselves. I urge Congress to support this motion and stand up for safe road conditions for all. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Mover of Motion 277?

**INCLUSION OF LIGHT RAILWAYS AND TRAMS IN LABOUR  
GOVERNMENT'S RAIL NATIONALISATION POLICY  
MOTION 277**



## **277. INCLUSION OF LIGHT RAILWAYS AND TRAMS IN LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S RAIL NATIONALISATION POLICY**

This Congress notes with approval the Labour Government's commitment to bringing the heavy rail industry back into public ownership. This move is a vital step towards creating a more equitable, efficient, and sustainable transport network that prioritises public needs over private profit.

However, this Congress also recognises the critical role light railways and tram networks play in urban and regional connectivity, sustainability, and economic development. Currently, light rail and tram systems are excluded from the nationalisation agenda. These systems, often operated under fragmented private contracts, are vital to the daily lives of millions, providing an environmentally friendly alternative to cars, reducing congestion, and supporting urban regeneration.

This Congress believes:

1. Light railways and tram systems are as integral to the public transport network as heavy rail systems and deserve the same protections and public oversight.
2. Continued private operation of light rail systems undermines the potential for an integrated and equitable public transport network.
3. Nationalising light railways and tram systems would allow for greater coordination, fairer pricing, and a stronger focus on sustainability and accessibility.

This Congress resolves to:

1. Campaign for the Labour Government to expand its rail nationalisation policy to include light railways and tram networks.
2. Lobby MPs, local authorities, and transport policymakers to recognise the value of publicly owned light rail and tram systems.

3. Work with other unions, passenger advocacy groups, and environmental organisations to build a broad coalition of support for this policy expansion.

4. Ensure that the voices of workers in the light rail and tram sectors are central to any campaign or transition process, safeguarding jobs, working conditions, and collective bargaining rights.

The exclusion of light railways and trams from the nationalisation agenda risks perpetuating a two-tier system within public transport, where only heavy rail benefits from public ownership's efficiencies and fairness.

This Congress calls on all delegates to support this motion and send a clear message to the Labour Government: an equitable and integrated public transport network must include all its key components—heavy rail, light rail, and tram systems alike.

#### **N67 NOTTINGHAM TRAM BRANCH**

#### **MIDLANDS REGION**

*(Carried)*

ANTHONY BROWN (Midlands): Moving 277. *(Applause)* Thanks. I would like to start by thanking the CEC for supporting this motion, albeit with qualifications. The CEC's qualification is that the nationalisation should be shaped and led by local and regional public authorities. We agree completely with that. We are not calling for everything to be controlled from Westminster. We are calling for real power to be given to local communities who know and rely on these services. This motion is about making sure that light rail and the tram systems are not left behind. Labour are rightly committed to bringing heavy rail back into public ownership, but what about tram and the light rail system? They remain stuck in a fragmented mess of private contracts. Yet these systems are vital. They are clean, efficient and used by millions daily to go to

school, work and hospitals. They cut congestion, lower emissions and drive local economies. So why are they not part of the nationalisation plan? We have systems like Blackpool, Edinburgh and now Sheffield which are now publicly owned and locally run. We are not asking for a one size fits all. We want local leadership, fair funding and real accountability. We need a joined-up public transport system where buses, trains and trams work together with fair prices and public control. The workers must be at the heart of this. Public ownership must protect jobs, terms and conditions and the right to organise. This is more than about transport. It is about fairness, climate action and giving workers a say in a public service. If we exclude trams and light rail, we entrench ourselves in a two-tier system that is both unfair and short sighted. Thanks again to the CEC for supporting this but let us make sure no one is left behind: not the passengers, not the workers and not the networks that keep our cities moving. I move.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anthony. Secunder?

ARSHAD HUSSAIN (Midlands): Good morning, Congress. I do apologise. I just gave myself palpitations, I thought I had my shopping list instead of the speech. I just saw £1.70 and I thought “Oh God”! *(Applause)* I am seconding this motion on the basis that our light rail systems from the Tyne & Wear Metro to Manchester Metrolink and Nottingham Express Trams are the veins that keep our cities moving, but right now those veins are being squeezed by private operators who put profit before people. These are public services run for private gain and it is working families, our members, who pay the price through rising fares, unreliable service and poor investment. Nationalisation is not a radical idea. It is a rational necessity. Public ownership would

mean reinvesting profits into improving services, not shareholder dividends. It would allow for fairer wages, safer working conditions and stronger local accountability. And it would be run for public good, not private greed. Look at the East Coast Mainline when it was publicly run. It delivered record passenger satisfaction and returned millions to the Treasury. We can do the same for light rail. We must do the same.

Transport is not merely going from A to B. It is about connecting communities, growing local economies and tackling climate change. If the current Government is serious about levelling up and going green, nationalising light rail is a no-brainer. Therefore, Congress, please, I urge you be to bold and send a clear message that our public transport should be in public hands. I urge you to support this motion.  
*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ash. Mover of Motion 279?

## **STOP THE BUS FARE CAPPING INEQUALITIES**

### **MOTION 279**

#### **279. STOP THE BUS FARE CAPPING INEQUALITIES**

Bus capping has been welcomed by many throughout the UK. It has resulted in cost savings of up to 80% on single journeys. For example, a single ticket from Broadstairs to Cliftonville was capped at £2 last year and this year at £3.

Whilst this is good for some journeys, this has resulted in higher fares for short journeys. The system is not fit for purpose for short journeys, which used to cost less than £2 but are now costing more than £3. This is more than doubling short distance fares, no wonder bus operators are making more profit under this scheme.

This is however at the expense of people who work locally and need to make these short journeys. A cap should be introduced, which addresses this and people should never have to pay more in single fares under the cap.

Without addressing this, the purpose for the cap becomes void and puts an unnecessary financial burden on low paid workers who make short journeys to their workplaces. Congress, please support the motion.

## **L26 RICHMOND AND WANDSWORTH BRANCH**

### **SOUTHERN REGION**

*(Carried)*

KATHY KETTELL (Southern): President, Congress, comrades, moving Motion 279.

The national bus fare cap introduced across the UK has been widely welcomed for making long-distance travel more affordable. However, this well-intentioned policy has inadvertently penalised short-distance travellers, many of whom are low-paid workers, students and elderly residents, by increasing the cost of local journeys that previously cost less than the capped fare. While the capped fare has reduced costs for longer routes, it has simultaneously increased fares for short journeys, some of which have more than doubled in price. For example, a previous journey that cost £1.30 now costs £3 under the cap. This represents a massive 131% price increase, disproportionately affecting those who rely on buses for short essential trips. This shift undermines the original purpose of the cap, to make public transport more accessible and affordable for all, and instead places an undue burden on those least able to afford it. Low-income workers who commute locally are now paying more for essential travel. Elderly and disabled passengers who make short trips for health care or shopping are affected. Students and young people face increased costs for school

and college commutes. Local economies may suffer as residents reduce travel due to higher costs. We propose the following amendments to the fare cap policy:

1. Introduce a tiered fare cap system, so capped fares based on distance or travel zones, under two miles £1.50, two to five miles £2 and over five miles £3.
2. Protect legacy fares, so ensure no journey costs more under the cap than it did prior to its introduction.
3. Implement a local travel subsidy, so offer additional discounts or travel passes for low-income workers and frequent short-distance travellers.

In conclusion, the current flat fare cap while beneficial in some contexts is not really fit for purpose for short-distance travel. Without reform it risks exacerbating inequality and undermining public trust in transport policy. We urge Congress and relevant transport authorities to support this motion and implement a more equitable fare structure that truly serves all members of our community. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kathy. Secunder, and can I have the movers and seconders for 147, 149 and Composite 8, please?

AYSHA MAHMOOD (Southern): Good morning, President, Congress. I am from Southern Region, a first-time delegate and speaker, so please bear with me. *(Applause)* Thank you. Bus fare capping was introduced with the right intentions - to make travel more affordable and accessible. For many long distance commuters it has worked but, let's be honest, this system is failing those who make short local trips. Journeys that used to cost 1.50 or even less are now capped at a flat rate £3 fare. That is not a saving, that is a price hike. It is doubling, sometimes tripling the cost for those taking the bus

for a few stops. Who are these people? They are not tourists or long-distance travellers. They are the cleaners, carers shop workers, students and parents doing the school run. They are people living and working in the same community, many on low incomes, often without cars now being punished for the crime of living nearby. And who is benefiting? Bus operators. Their profits have risen whilst those who rely on public transport the most are left worse off. That is not a policy that supports equality. That is a policy that quietly shifts the burden to those least able to carry it.

So, let's be clear, no one should pay more for a journey under a cap. The fare capping system must be fair for all journeys long or short and more flexible distance-based or zone-based approach must be implemented to ensure the poorest are not left subsidising everyone else. This motion is not anti-capping. It is pro fairness. Congress, please support this motion and let's stop the inequalities in bus fare capping. Thank you, Congress. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Aysha, it is hard having to wait until the last day to make your first speech. Well done. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? Can I ask the CEC speaker Kamran Ali to reply.

KAMRAN ALI (CEC): Speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motion 276 and 277. Motion 276 calls for faster repairs and simpler compensation when cratered roads wreck vehicles or injure road users. The CEC agrees in principle that years of austerity have hollowed out highways budgets and left our members many of whom keep those roads safe, struggle with the consequences. Our qualification is one of leverage and timing. The Government has already earmarked £1.6 billion for road

maintenance in England, the biggest single injection councils have ever received. We will press for comparable funding in the devolved nations. If that money reaches the frontline quickly, the legal changes envisaged in the motion may prove unnecessary. Moreover, clear guidance on claiming compensation is already freely available online. Mounting a separate GMB awareness campaign would consume resources we could deploy elsewhere. For those reasons, the CEC supports Motion 276 with the qualification that we focus on ensuring the promised funding is delivered and monitored rather than duplicating existing advice services and seeking legislation that new investment may render redundant.

Motion 277 urges that trams and light rail systems be folded into publicly owned integrated transport networks. As existing union policy set by Composite 7 in 2015 already backs the goal, and the CEC continues to believe these systems belong in public hands alongside rail and buses, our qualification concerns governance because trams and light rail are local by nature and should be operated by relevant city or regional public authorities, as several already are. Any national campaign must be led by workers and unions active in the sector to ensure that local knowledge and industrial realities guide the final model. With that safeguard, we support Motion 277 and stand ready to work with sector activists to say win public ownership that genuinely serves passengers and staff alike.

In summary, Congress, please support both Motions 276 and 277 with the qualifications I have outlined. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kamran. Does North West & Irish accept the



qualification for Motion 276? (*Agreed*) And Midlands, do you accept the qualification for 277? (*Agreed*) Motion 274 and 279 are both supported by the CEC so I will put those to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are both carried. All those in favour of Motion 276, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 277, please show. That is also carried.

*Motion 274 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 279 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 276 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 277 was **CARRIED**.*

### **Industrial & Economic Policy: Private Section**

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to the mover of Motion 138 please, which is continuing with the private section motions.

### **BRING BACK TIME AND DISTANCE FOR FAIR PAY**

#### **MOTION 138**

#### **138. BRING BACK TIME AND DISTANCE FOR FAIR PAY**

This Congress recognises that many private hire operators are currently following fixed fare cards, providing drivers with set prices to cover trips that do not always reflect the true value of a job. These offers, often based on algorithms, lack transparency and do not clearly explain how the fare offer is calculated. We believe that reinstating time and distance-based pricing will provide a clear and fair guide for drivers, ensuring they are paid appropriately for their work. Time and distance calculations offer transparency and a predictable payment structure, allowing our

members to better understand how their pay is determined and ensuring they are compensated fairly for every trip. This Congress calls for the reintroduction of time and distance-based payment systems across all private hire platforms to ensure fairness, transparency, and consistency for our members.

### **S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH**

#### **SOUTHERN REGION**

*(Carried)*

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): President, Congress moving motion 138: Bring Back Time and Distance for Fair Pay. Congress, back in 2003, as an ethnically diverse person I got my first private hire licence in this city. Brighton Council set clear rates that all operators had to follow. It was based on a meter, calculated by time and distance. It was simple, it was transparent, the riders knew what they were paying and the drivers knew what they were earning on each trip. Congress, fast forward to 2025. The system of the meter is no longer used by most app-based firms. Instead, they use algorithms and so-called dynamic pricing. They hide behind AI with no proper explanation or breakdown of each trip. Congress, drivers no longer know or understand how the fares are really calculated. There is no consistency, no transparency and no way to challenge errors because there is no pricing guide and nothing our members can rely on. They are just left with guesswork.

Congress, our members are tired, tired of playing app-based auctions just to earn a living. Tired of unfair pricing models designed to benefit companies and shareholders. Our members want change. They want these dynamic prices gone. This motion does exactly that. Congress, this motion is very clear: Bring back time and distance. The

old style tried and tested pricing structure; a system that pays our members fairly for every mile driven and every minute worked. Congress, let's support this motion. Let's restore fairness. Let's bring back time and distance because work must pay. I move.

*(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ali. Secunder?

KARINA SMITH (Southern): President, Congress, seconding Motion 138, Bringing Back Time and Distance for Fair Pay. Congress, why is it that for every so-called progress it is always us, the workers, that are at a disadvantage, not just our terms and conditions but our actual existence? At this stage in our history we are experiencing a moment just like the Victorians did transitioning from horses to steam. The digital age is galloping at unprecedented speed and as a union we must take the introduction of AI extremely seriously for our members. A progress for millionaire app owners should never be at the expense of the very people that provide those millionaire owners with their profits. We understand that the digital age is the here, but we need to have a system that benefits everyone, especially for the drivers that are the very heart of the business model and producing the very profits for said owners. There have been too many examples of errors without a driver being able to see with transparency what occurred to make sure their wage is secured. Bringing back time and distance would benefit everyone in the chain, from owner, driver and consumer, and completely negate these anomalies. It makes perfect sense to do so and the only reticence is from the multi-millionaire owners that directly benefit from the status quo. Please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Karina, thank you. Mover of Motion 139.

## **NO BLAME, PAY THE TIME - COMPENSATION FOR FALSE ALLEGATIONS**

### **MOTION 139**

#### **139. NO BLAME, PAY THE TIME – COMPENSATION FOR FALSE ALLEGATIONS**

This Congress recognises the serious impact that false allegations can have on Taxi and Private Hire Drivers, often leading to periods of being offline and unable to work. We believe that operators have a duty of care towards their drivers and must ensure that drivers are protected from unjust accusations

If a driver is temporarily taken offline due to an allegation, operators are responsible for conducting a fair and thorough investigation. If no evidence or fault is found against the driver, they must be reinstated to the platform and compensated for the potential earnings lost during the period they were offline.

This Congress calls for operators to implement clear policies to protect drivers from the impact of false allegations and to ensure compensation for lost income when drivers are cleared of any wrongdoing.

### **S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH**

#### **SOUTHERN REGION**

*(Carried)*

LISA EDWARDS (Southern): First-time delegate, third-time speaker. Good morning Congress. Good morning President. Good morning comrades. I rise to speak in support of Motion 139, No Blame, Pay the Time. Let me start by saying I

had to support this motion as I felt so passionate about it that I did not hesitate to move it and stand before you here today. This is another personal heartfelt topic. My brother is a taxi driver. This is his livelihood, his daily bread and butter, as us Scousers would say. Let me ask: how many of us in the room use taxis or private services? I guess most of you at some point. Yet the people behind the wheel, our taxi, our private hire drivers, can be taken off instantly by a press of a button and you are deactivated, often based on false or unproven allegations, usually through an app by somebody trying to game the system. There are countless examples of CCTV footage clearly showing drivers did nothing wrong, and still no warning, no chance to explain and, worst of all, no income. For these drivers being taken off, it is not just an inconvenience, it means not being able to pay the bills, it means choosing food or fuel, it means telling your partners your families, even your children, “Not this week, love, I’m still waiting to hear if I can go back to work.” The impact does not stop with the driver. Their families suffer too: their partners, their children, their entire household left in limbo while somebody somewhere investigates a claim that may not be true and then when they are cleared there are just told, “You can log back in now.” No apology, no compensation, no recognition of the stress, the destruction, the dignity loss or the financial hardship they endure. This is not justice. This is not good enough.

The motion calls for three essential protections: a fair and a transparent investigation process for any allegation, compensation for loss of earnings if the drivers are found not at fault, clear and consistent operation policies to prevent the harm caused by false or malicious allegations or claims. Congress, drivers deserve better. If they have done nothing wrong, they should not be the ones paying the price and neither should their

families. No blame - they pay the time. I urge you to support this motion and stand with the drivers who keep our communities moving. I move this motion. Thank you Congress. Thank you President. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Lisa, and good luck in your new role. Thank you. Secunder?

SYLVESTER IJEH (Southern): President, Congress, President G50 Southern Region, the winning region. (*Applause*) I stand here this morning rather unhappy because how can you take a person off from his work for an allegation that has not been looked at and then not pay that person? How does that person exist? I consider this to be ridiculous and suicidal. Take a look at it, even the money they pay is not sufficient and even that small amount money is not being paid when they are taken off. And the way they are taken off is they just press a switch and they are off-line.

I am here to second what my colleague has said and to let you know the misery our members face from this action. That is why it is important for Congress to take action and that action should be now. Congress, let's be clear that our drivers deserve something better. Congress, I support this motion and I urge you to support it too. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sylvester, well done. Mover of Composite 8, please?

**NUMBER OF PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES LICENCES NATIONAL STANDARDS, AND THE DE-REGULATION IMPACT ON PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY TRADE**

**COMPOSITE MOTION 8**

**Covering Motions:**

**Motion 141: Cap the Number of Private Hire Vehicles in England – Southern Region**

**Motion 142: Campaign to Give All Councils the Ability to Cap the Number of Private Hire Licences and Introduce National Standards for Private Hire Licensing - Midlands Region**

**143: Deregulation Impact on Private Hire & Hackney Trade – North West & Irish Region**

**C8. NUMBER OF PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES LICENCES, NATIONAL STANDARDS, AND THE DEREGULATION IMPACT ON PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY TRADE**

This Congress acknowledges that our members working in the private hire sector are struggling to earn enough money to live on.

Congress notes this issue has been exacerbated by the emergency of highly competitive app-based operators; rates per journey have been slashed to the bone, and driver earnings are at an all-time low.

Congress, we call upon the GMB to work with the Government, Local Mayors and Local Councils to correct the consequences of the De-Regulation Act of 2015 on the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Trade. The Act has led to a number of consequences for the safeguarding of drivers, the effective enforcement of regulation by Local Authority Licensing Departments and on the livelihoods of Members. It has also led to a significant increase in the numbers of vehicles, operating in many towns and villages across the UK and with-it a consequential impact on environmental controls and Air Quality targets.

We are calling on the Trade to be Re-Regulated and for the cap on the number of vehicles to be restored. This should be based upon local surveys of needs to establish the number of plates and licences required in any Local authority area.

This Congress calls on the government to amend the law to give local authorities the power to cap the number of private hire vehicles in their areas. The uncontrolled growth of private hire vehicles has created an oversaturated market, driving down driver earnings and allowing operators to benefit unfairly at drivers' expense.

Congress should be aware that while the rates might be low, drivers still have to pay the associated costs of their trade (vehicles, sky-rocketing insurance premiums, fuel, MOTs, vehicle maintenance, and the cost of applying for and then renewing their private hire licences). All the financial risk is undertaken by the individual driver, while the operator simply takes a cut out of every fare. As a result, it suits the app-based operators to have more drivers than they need working on their platform, as there is always a driver available when a customer books a job, and they will get their commission.

However, for private hire driver members of P42 branch, they are often left waiting for hours with no work, and when they do get a booking, the rate is so low they may only just break even after deducting their costs and VAT. Many of our members are working long hours 7 days a week just to survive. Congress should be aware that this issue has been compounded by Wolverhampton City Council dominating private hire licensing.

The number of vehicles now operating outside of the area in which they were licensed, has grown substantially. For example, Wolverhampton now has up to 10,000 registered Private Hire Vehicles operating in Greater Manchester. From FOI information requested by GMB, we established that Wolverhampton issued 8,563 private hire licences between 01/01/24 - 01/05/24, compared to 277 at neighbouring Birmingham City Council. Wolverhampton are charging drivers for these licences, knowing that the work is not available for them. Wolverhampton correctly state



that they are unable to refuse applicants providing they meet the licensing requirements. The same applies in other towns like Liverpool, Preston and other districts outside of where they are registered. This undermines and fragments effective enforcement by Local Authorities.

This trade over supply is destroying the livelihoods of Drivers as availability is outstripping demand leading to loss of earnings for drivers both in Private Hire and the Taxi Trade as a whole. Income going to Authorities that have turned the Licensing process into a “Cash Cow”, is undermining Local Authority Licensing Standards and the revenue they need for overseeing the Licenced trade in their area. Drivers now hunt for the authorities with favourable reduced standards, regulation and licencing costs.

However, enforcement of regulations can only be conducted by the Authority under which a driver is licenced. A change in the law to allow councils to cap private hire licences in the event that they already have enough drivers to meet the requirements of the area, along with the introduction of national standards for licensing so that the tests, costs and application process is the same across the UK would make private hire work fairer and pay better for our members.

We believe forward looking Mayors like Andy Burnham who have committed to work with the GMB drivers to bring in new controls and legislation to improve the position that is spiralling out of control need our support.

Giving local councils the power to cap licenses would:

- Protect drivers' incomes by reducing excessive competition.
- Give local authorities better control to manage the trade based on local needs.
- Create a fairer balance between operators and drivers, preventing exploitative practices.

This Congress believes these changes are vital to ensuring a sustainable private hire trade that supports drivers, benefits customers, and strengthens local oversight.

Congress adopts as policy that GMB campaign for national standards for private hire licensing, and for allowing councils to cap the number of private hire licences to ensure their existing licenced drivers can earn a fair wage.”

We call upon the GMB to campaign for a Re-Regulation of the Trade, improved legislation, common standards & conditions to apply across the industry in the UK. Also, Local Authorities who engage in excessive registration of vehicles should be forced to share revenue with other Authorities for vehicles operating outside their licence area in order to ensure effective enforcement.

### **Moving Region: Southern Region**

### **Seconding Region: Midlands Region**

*(Carried)*

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): President, Congress, moving Composite 8 Cap Private Hire Vehicles in the UK. Congress, the uncontrolled growth of private hire vehicles has created a flooded market, driving down earnings, allowing operators to benefit unfairly at the expense of our members. Congress, we are urging the Government to amend the law to give local authorities the power to cap the number of private hire vehicles operating in their areas. Congress, giving local councils this power would protect drivers’ earnings, allow local authorities to manage the trade based on local needs, create a fairer balance between operators and drivers, protect the industry for the future, protect the industry for the many, not for the few. Congress, our members deserve a fair chance to earn a decent living. Customers deserve safe and reliable services and local authorities need the tools to manage the trade effectively in the interests of all. Congress, please support this motion. The time has come to remove

the unlimited fuel that powers the operators. It is time to put powers back in the hands of our members and it is time to make private hire great again. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ali. Secunder?

STEPHEN SHINER (Midlands): President, Congress, Private Hire Drivers Representative, P42, Drivers Branch. First-time delegate, second-time speaker, so hopefully I am bit less nervous this time. Congress, all across the Midlands Region GMB members who work as private hire drivers are being pushed to breaking point. The increasing dominance of app-based operators such as Bolt and Uber means that we as private hire drivers have no choice but to use these platforms if we want to work. In England we have 381,000 drivers. Just think of that. Some 27,000 are licensed by Wolverhampton - 27,000 vehicles in the Midlands Region. These global operators are able to keep their fares low by bringing in more and more drivers. In England we have 381,000 self-employed drivers. I am often left as a private hire driver waiting hours for a job, competing with other drivers and having to accept a low-pay trip. Drivers' costs include fuel, vehicle insurance, much, much more, and all of the physical risks are taken by those drivers whilst the companies' profit is bigger and bigger. The rates of pay for each trip I take are calculated by algorithms and special formulas which drivers have no idea about. Congress, I struggle to think that the industry in the UK is going to get any better. We need your support. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Speaker from North West & Irish Region?

KEVIN FLANNAGAN (North West & Irish): You have missed me this week, haven't you?

THE PRESIDENT: I have, Kevin.

KEVIN FLANNAGAN: From the beautiful North West & Irish Region, speaking in support of Motion 8. Brothers and sisters, you have heard of Bolton Wanderers. Well I will tell you what, we have got Wolverhampton wanderers all over the place, I tell you! The deregulation of the industry has been the worst thing that that has happened for the benefits and for the needs of our members up and down this country. Some 49% of the private hire drivers operating across greater Manchester are from outside the area. This is no good for the trade. It is no good for passengers, it is no good for industry, and it does not help the local authority when it comes down to licensing and controlling the trade that is operating in their area. The money that is being raised from those licences is being held by other authorities who can be hundreds of miles away from where they are actually operating.

Let's be clear, I am not trying to set driver against driver, but we really need to get a grip. I applaud my colleague Habib in North West and my other colleagues who have worked with us. We have met virtually every single council to raise this issue and now we have the Mayor of Manchester Andy Burnham who we have met a couple of times now, who has just finished a 12-week consultation on the needs of the trade. Thank you, Andy. I ask you to ask your Mayors in your areas to do the same. He is on to our agenda. We want new legislation passing to reverse what happened when they deregulated the trade in order to give people a livelihood and a way to actually learn a

living. What is the point in being sat in a rank if you can't earn a living? It is disgraceful. They cannot even pay the bills for their own vehicles and for the charges by the operators, let alone feed their kids. This madness has to stop and we have to get new legislation to enable us to do that. Colleagues, lobby your MPs, get out there. Let's win this campaign because it is an important campaign for our members. Safety and security are very important. At the end of the day our drivers want a few things that most of us want. They want to go to work, to be valued, to be affirmed in what they do, to earn a reasonable living, and to be respected. You have seen and I have seen the pressures they face. Sadly, last summer a number of their vehicles were damaged and drivers were attacked. We are not accepting that and we will never accept that in the GMB. They know we are the union for private hire and Hackney drivers.

My branch is a branch that has a lot of the Uber, Hackney carriage and other drivers in it. It is important that we are seen to be active and we are seen to win one of the most important pieces of legislation that we need to protect their lives and their livelihoods. This is where the GMB is great, brothers and sisters. This is where we make real change to people's lives. It is time that we actually make sure the legislation is there. Congress, and by the way those operators who are not acting fairly on the fare and industries ---

THE PRESIDENT: Kevin, could you wind up, please.

KEVIN FLANNAGAN: I see the meter is running out. Thank you very much, Congress. Support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Any delegate wish to speak in opposition to

any of these motions? No. In that case can I ask CEC speaker Dian Burke to come to the rostrum, please. Can I have movers and seconders of 144, 145 and 146 to the front, please.

DIAN BURKE (CEC): Speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Composite 8. The CEC supports Composite 8 with qualification. The composite seeks to address what many members see as an oversaturated licensing regime. The CEC is ready to back this so we can develop detailed proposals, national standards, licence caps or alternative regulatory tools together with the relevant sector memberships. Our qualification is simply that any cap of licences could have unforeseen consequences for drivers' livelihoods and passenger service. Those potential knock-ons must be fully assessed in consultation with members before a final position is adopted. With that qualification we are happy to support Composite 8. To summarise, the CEC is asking Congress to support Composite 8 with the stated qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dian. Do Southern, Midlands and North West & Irish Regions accept that qualification? (*Agreed*) CEC are supporting both Motion 138 and 139 so I will take those as one. All those in favour, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? They are carried. Composite 8 with the qualification, all those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Motion 138 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 139 was **CARRIED**.*

*Composite 8 was **CARRIED**.*

## **Industrial & Economic Policy: Private Section**

THE PRESIDENT: Could I have the mover of Motion 144, please?

### **SAFETY AND REGULATIONS IN COURIER SERVICES**

#### **MOTION 144**

##### **144. SAFETY AND REGULATIONS IN COURIER SERVICES**

This Congress, in the light of increasing incidents involving hazardous materials in the courier industry, this motion seeks to enhance safety regulations and protect couriers from harm. We call on Congress to work with the HSE and the courier industry on the following:

##### **Hazardous Parcels**

Establish clear guidelines for the identification and handling of hazardous materials to ensure the safety of the couriers and the public.

##### **Prohibited Items**

Implement a comprehensive list of prohibited items that cannot be transported by couriers with strict penalties for violations.

##### **Restricted Deliveries**

Enforce regulations that limit couriers from delivering parcels that are classified as restricted or hazardous without proper training and equipment.

##### **Spillages in courier vehicles**

Mandate the inclusion of spill containment measures and proper training for couriers to handle potential spillages safely.

##### **Batteries leaking acid**

Develop specific protocols for the transportation of batteries and other hazardous materials prone to leaks, including proper packaging and correct labelling.

## Injury prevention

Ensure that couriers are protected under workers compensation laws, especially in cases where injuries occur without fault of their own.

We call for immediate action to implement these measures, ensuring the safety of couriers and the integrity of the transportation system. By addressing these concerns, we can foster a safer working environment and protect our couriers and public health.

## **G50 EVRI BRANCH**

### **LONDON REGION**

*(Carried)*

ALISON GENTRY (London): Congress, President, good morning. I am moving Motion 144. This Congress in the light of increasing incidents involving hazardous materials in the courier industry, this motion seeks to enhance safety regulations and protect areas from harm. We call on Congress to work with the HSE and the courier industry on the following.

Hazardous parcels. Establish clear guidelines for the identification and handling of hazardous materials to ensure the safety of the couriers and the public.

Prohibited items. Implement a comprehensive list of prohibited items that cannot be transported by couriers with strict penalties for violations.

Restricted deliveries. Enforce regulations but limit couriers from delivering parcels that are classified as restricted or hazardous without proper training or equipment.



Spillages in courier vehicles. Mandate the inclusion of spill containment measures and proper training for couriers to handle potential spillages safely.

Batteries leaking acid. Develop specific protocols for the transportation of batteries and other hazardous materials prone to leaks including proper packaging and correct labelling.

Injury prevention. Ensure that couriers are protected under worker compensation laws, especially in cases where injuries occur through no fault of their own.

We call for immediate action to implement these measures ensuring the safety of couriers and the integrity of the transportation system; by addressing these concerns we can foster a safer working environment and protect our couriers and public health. I move. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Alison. Secunder?

ANN RALPH (London): Vice President, Congress, seconding Motion 144, Safety and Regulations in Courier Services. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

The safety of all workers is of paramount importance to the GMB. These days there are many more packages being sent and delivered through the courier network. Most of these have not been labelled correctly. Our courier members are expected to handle different kinds of packages properly to prevent damage while in transit and ensure they remain safe at all times. How can they do this if they themselves do not know what is inside? They should be thoroughly trained in all safety procedures, including that in

the event of any accident or emergency. Regulations need to be in place to protect the couriers, especially in cases where injuries occur without fault of their own. Courier drivers are unknowingly transporting hazardous parcels and can suffer injuries as a result of this. Handling spills or being exposed to dangerous substances can cause cuts, severe burns, respiratory problems or even long-term health conditions dependent on the nature of the hazardous material. Some of these vans can literally be ticking time bombs. Let's get them the training they deserve. Please support this motion. I second.

*(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Ann. Mover of 145?

## **DANGEROUS AND HAZARDOUS GOODS WITHIN THE COURIER NETWORK**

### **MOTION 145**

#### **145. DANGEROUS AND HAZARDOUS GOODS WITHIN THE COURIER NETWORK**

This Congress condemns the disregard from courier delivery companies on volatile substances being shipped throughout the courier network.

Self-employed couriers are unknowingly carrying dangerous and hazardous goods in their own private vehicles which puts the courier & recipients in danger of health implications, such as poisoning, burns and chemical reactions.

Clients of the courier companies are not labelling the parcels with the correct hazardous goods signage, which is in breach of the COSHH regulations, parcels are not adequately packed where parcels are easily damaged going through various stages of transportation before getting to the courier final mile, causing leaks, damage, cross-contamination (making parcels volatile).

Self-employed couriers need to have their own courier business insurance and, as such, one of the questions asked is “do you carry hazardous goods or compressed gas”. Because these goods are not supposed to be through the network, couriers inform the insurers that they don’t carry hazardous or compressed gas items.

If a courier has an accident, or a hazardous item leaks in their vehicle, this would then potentially invalidate their insurance.

This motion is asking for the intervention of the CEC to lobby, MP’s and Parliament to keep our member’s safe, and take these courier companies to task as they are showing a complete lack of disregard for the safety of their courier network

## **EVRI E02 BRANCH**

### **WALES AND SOUTH WEST REGION**

*(Carried)*

JAYSON FORROW (South West & Wales): President, Congress, moving Motion 145: Dangerous and Hazardous Goods Within the Courier Network. Congress, every day thousands of self-employed couriers - our members, our colleagues, our friends - set out on the roads trusting that the parcels that they carry are safe, properly labelled and compliant within the law but the truth is that trust is being portrayed. Courier companies and their clients are sending volatile substances, chemicals, flammable liquids, acids, even compressed gases through our networks without proper labelling, without adequate packaging and without a second thought for the people who carry them. This is not just a breach of the COSHH regulations; it is a breach of basic human decency and workplace safety. Let’s be clear, when hazardous goods are not clearly marked, when they are not securely packed, it is the courier who pays the price. A

leaking chemical can cause burns, poisoning or trigger a chemical reaction in the back of the car or van. A mislabelled parcel can turn a routine delivery into a life-threatening emergency. And when the worst happens insurance companies can and will refuse to pay out because the courier in good faith declared that they do not carry hazardous goods. This is not just theoretical. We have seen time and time again the devastation caused when hazardous materials are mishandled, from the tragic explosions in Beirut and Tiananmen to the countless smaller incidents that never make the headlines. The lesson is clear: misdeclared, mismanaged dangerous goods are a ticking time bomb.

Congress, we cannot allow our members to be put at risk for the sake of corporate convenience or profit. We demand action. We call on GMB to lobby MPs and Parliament to hold these companies accountable, to enforce the rules that already exist and to ensure that no courier is forced to gamble with their health, their livelihood or their life. Let's stand together for safety, for dignity and for justice for our courier networks. I support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Jayson. Secunder? *(Formally seconded)* Thank you. Mover of 146, please.

## **REGULATED AND LICENSED BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL CYCLES AND E- SCOOTERS**

### **MOTION 146**

#### **146. REGULATED AND LICENSED BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL CYCLES AND E-SCOOTERS**

This Congress calls on the Union to work with the relevant authorities to regulate and license business/commercial cycles and e-scooters with the aim to enhance safety and ensure

accountability for these increasingly popular modes of transport. By establishing clear guidelines for operation, maintenance, and rider behaviour, such regulations would not only protect users but also contribute to more organised, sustainable urban mobility.

Licensing would also help local authorities manage the number of vehicles on the road and ensure compliance with safety standards, promoting a balance between accessibility and responsible use.

We call on the National Union to raise awareness to the Government and highlight the importance of this motion with respect to Health & Safety and the current statistics on road traffic accidents involving these means of transport.

### **I35 ISLINGTON & HARINGEY BRANCH**

#### **LONDON REGION**

*(Referred)*

GEORGE SHARKEY (London): President, Congress, from the big and inclusive London Region moving Motion 146. Congress finishes at 7.30 each night going forward. Well, that got your attention. Actually, it is regarding the Regulated and Licensed Business/Commercial Cycles and E-Scooters. Colleagues, we are seeing a transport revolution unfolding on our streets e-scooters, commercial bikes, cargo bikes and rickshaws are now commonplace in cities across the UK. Delivery drivers zigzag through traffic, rickshaws entertain tourists and e-scooter riders whizz along our pavements, but with this growing presence comes growing concern. Concern about safety, regulation and responsibility. Let me be clear, this motion is not about pushing back innovation or progress. It is about ensuring that progress does not come at the cost of public safety, workers' right or road users' lives.

Under current UK law private e-scooters remain illegal on public roads while rental e-scooters are legal only in trial areas and must meet strict requirements but enforcement is patchy. Meanwhile business use cycles and rickshaws, many operating for profit, are largely unregulated with no standard for training, no licences and no accountability when things go wrong. According to the Department for Transport figures e-scooter related casualties increased by nearly 24% between 2022 and 2023, and that is just reported cases. The number of serious injuries is growing year on year including among pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users. Unregulated commercial cycles are often heavy-loaded, oversized or ridden on pavements and are now involved in a rising number of urban collisions. What we are asking for is simple and sensible. A mandatory licence for business using these vehicles. Clear safety standards for vehicle maintenance. Training accountability for riders operating commercially. And local authorities to have power to regulate numbers and zones of use, as they do with taxis or buses. Colleagues, this is a workplace issue. Many of the workers using these vehicles are gig workers; underpaid, uninsured and under pressure to deliver faster with little concern for their well-being. By regulating these modes of transport, we ensure better health and safety protection for these workers, too. We must not wait for people to be hurt before action is taken. We must not let streets turn into free-for-alls where responsibility is absent. Licensing regulations do not hinder progress. They shape it safely. We call on GMB to lobby Government to push for reform and to make the case that sustainable transport must be safe, fair and properly managed. Let's help make our cities safer, our roads more organised and our transport future more responsible. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, George. Secunder?

SIMON RUSH (London): Good morning President, Congress and comrades. Motion 146: Regulated and Licensed Business/Commercial Cycles and E-Scooters). E-bikes are a fun way to explore the capital. That is London for anyone that does not know - the capital in England. The e-bike pedal assist gives you the potential to explore more of London without exerting more energy, plus you will be fresher when you arrive at your destination compared to using a traditional push bike. However, cycles and e-scooters are often left in inappropriate places, in some instances just flung to the ground, creating an issue for the disabled or parents with pushchairs. This must be part of the regulations, with the relevant authorities holding full details of the hirer, should the e-bike or e-scooter be left in a dangerous position. All riders must adhere to clear guidelines, such as when signing up they at least have an understanding of cycle roadcraft on our public highways and adhere to the Highway Code at all times. E-bikes should be tracked by the corporate owner similar to car rental businesses, with rider behaviour monitored with repeat abusers banned from using them in worst-case scenarios. All equipment needs to be under regulation by the supplier to include evidence that the cycles or e-scooters are well maintained with a provable service record to help with safety, brake failure or faulty batteries that could lead to dangerous consequences for the user or members of the public. There should be a minimum age requirement, a restriction on speed limits of no more than 15 or 20 mph. Any higher will actually mean an e-bike is classed as a motor vehicle and require the same rules and regs as any other motorised vehicle. They should not ---

THE CO-CHAIR: Can you wind up now please, Simon?

SIMON RUSH: Wrapping up. None of us in the conference hall wants to prevent sustainable transport but we must ensure they are correctly regulated for the safety of us all. Thank you, Conference. Please back this motion. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you Simon. Anyone wish to speak in opposition? No. I will now call on Kevin Buchanan on behalf of the CEC. Could movers and seconders of 229, 231 and 232 come to the front please.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (CEC): Speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 144, 145 and 146.

On 144, the CEC backs the core demands for stronger protections, but delivering that goal will require a sizable piece of cross-sector work. We need engagement not only with government but also with the GMB, Private Section Committee and industry stakeholders. For that reason, we support the motion with the qualification that a detailed work plan covering consultation, evidence gathering and legislative options must be developed before we launch the campaign.

Motion 145 focuses on a specific but equally urgent risk. The union is already tackling this issue in co-operation with Evri and in dialogue with the DVLA, the Health and Safety Executive and insurers. We are happy to widen that effort to explore any necessary political or legislative asks. Accordingly, the CEC supports the motion with



the qualification that our ongoing multi-agency work will shape the final demands that we place on government.

Finally on Motion 146, the motion raises questions about whether new licensing rules will help or hinder our courier members. The CEC believes that we need more evidence before taking a firm position. We therefore ask London Region to refer this motion so that we can assess its potential impact on members' livelihoods and safety.

In summary, Congress, the CEC asks Congress to support Motions 144 and 145 with those qualifications and asks London Region to agree to refer 146 for further study. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Kevin. Does London accept the qualification on 144? (*Agreed*) Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on 145? (*Agreed*) Does London agree to reference back on 146? (*Agreed*) We will now move to the vote. All those in favour of 144, please show. Any against? That is carried. All those in favour of 145, please show. Any against? That is carried.

*Motion 144 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 145 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 146 was **REFERRED**.*

**Social Policy: General**

**STOKE-ON-TRENT POTTERY**

## **MOTION 229**

### **229. STOKE-ON-TRENT POTTERY**

This Congress asks for support and immediate action that all GMB Regional Offices have Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire pottery, i.e. mugs and plates within their buildings. To also campaign for all TUC offices and venues throughout the country to have the same, along with a campaign for local government offices, the Houses of Parliament and the House of Lords to have Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire pottery within their buildings to show our historical heritage that this government should be proud of.

### **S75 STOKE UNITY BRANCH**

### **MIDLANDS REGION**

*(Carried)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Could the mover of 229 please come to the rostrum.

SHARON YATES (Midlands): Stoke Unity, SN5 Branch, Midlands Region.

*(Applause)* I am moving Motion 229: The Pottery Industry. I would just like to thank everybody for signing the pledge for us as well. That means a lot, it means a great deal. Stoke-on-Trent is still the world centre for the ceramic industry, famously known as The Potteries. I am here today to ask the question: if we are so famous throughout the world then why aren't our own country and our own central Government having our beloved ceramics within their parliamentary offices but mostly have foreign pottery, even cheap imports known as "China dumping". This is also happening in local government offices, TUC offices and other offices including our own GMB regions and national offices. I cannot keep standing here asking for help if our own Government, TUC or unions are not listening or supporting our plea.

So, I am asking you all to push with me and support our industry by campaigning to the Government, TUC, all unions to have our ceramics within their offices and to promote the importance of buying British ceramics. The pottery industry is in critical condition and I have found out while I have been here another historical factory is on the brink of closing if nothing is done. So please help us. (*Applause*) Please tell everybody - family, friends - flood social media with the sound of buying British ceramics. As an industry we cannot rely on the exports. We need to re-build our own market and I need your help. We can do this together. Please support. I move. Buy British ceramics! (*Applause and cheers*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Sharon. Secunder? (*Formally seconded*) (*Applause*)  
Thank you. Mover of 231?

## **FAIR TREATMENT FOR FOOTBALL FANS**

### **MOTION 231**

#### **231. FAIR TREATMENT FOR FOOTBALL FANS**

This Congress notes that in Scotland, fans at professional rugby matches are permitted to drink alcohol across the stadium, as are hospitality fans at professional football matches, but that ordinary fans are not permitted to drink alcohol within football grounds.

Congress condemns the blanket ban against ordinary football fans which is unfair and outdated and amounts to the demonisation and criminalisation of working-class people who turn up week-in, week-out, home and away to support their football team.

Congress notes that many fans and clubs have called for the end of the ban; and believes that in doing so, this would create another revenue stream for Scottish football to improve the game and encourage yet more fans to attend Scottish football grounds in support of their team.

Whilst recognising GMB Scotland's right to determine its own policy with regards to the Scottish Parliament, congress supports its calls for the Scottish Government to end the blanket ban on alcohol at football matches in consultation with trade unions, fans, industry bodies, clubs, and football associations.

## **BREWING GLASGOW 05 BRANCH**

### **GMB SCOTLAND**

*(Referred)*

WILLIAM MCCLUSKY (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, second-time delegate, first-time-speaker. *(Applause)* Moving Motion 231: Fair Treatment for Football Fans. I am here to talk about something that affects not just our weekends but our local economies and our communities: the antiquated ban on alcohol sales in football grounds in Scotland. For too long Scottish football fans have been treated as second-class citizens. You can go to a rugby match, a concert or even a cinema and enjoy a beer. You can walk into a pub right next to a football ground and have a drink. You step inside the stadium and suddenly you are deemed incapable of responsible behaviour. This is not just an inconvenience; it is, frankly, an insult to the vast majority of law-abiding football supporters. This ban was brought in almost 45 years ago, a knee-jerk reaction to a very different era. It was brought in to tactical hooliganism, a problem that thanks to the concerted efforts of clubs, police and supporters' groups has largely been eradicated from our game. We have moved on but this draconian law remains, a relic of the past and serves no real purpose in the

present. So, what does it do? It pushes fans out of the stadiums into pubs before the games and into the streets surrounding the stadiums. This creates its own problems away from the regulated environment of the ground. It starves the smaller clubs, many of which are vital hubs in the community, of crucial revenue; revenue that could be invested in youth development, ground improvements and making the match-day experience even better for everyone. Let's be clear, every penny that is lost by a club is a penny not spent in our communities, not supporting local jobs.

And let's not forget the workers. Our GMB workers in brewing (of which I am a member), hospitality, catering and security would benefit from increased opportunities and fairer wages within the thriving match-day economy. Lifting this ban is not just about a pint. It is about jobs, it is about local economies and it is about treating workers with respect.

The evidence is clear. In England alcohol sales are allowed in the stadiums. The sky has not fallen in. Major tournaments hosted in Scotland have seen alcohol sales permitted with no widespread issues. This is not about promoting excessive drinking. It is about normalising the match day experience, allowing responsible adults to enjoy a drink in a safe controlled environment. We believe in commonsense, we believe in trust, and we believe in empowering our members and communities. That is why the GMB must throw its full weight behind this campaign to repeal this outdated ban. Let's lobby our MSPs, let's engage with the Scottish Government. Let's make a case for change, not just for football fans but for the economic well-being of our clubs and the communities they serve. Congress, it is time to bring Scottish football into the 21st

century. It is time to repeal this ban. Let's stand together and get this done. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, William. Secunder? (*Formally seconded*) Thank you.  
Mover of 232?

## **AFFORDABLE COUNCIL SPORTS FACILITIES**

### **MOTION 232**

#### **232. AFFORDABLE COUNCIL SPORTS FACILITIES**

This Congress recognises that the cost to use Council run Sports facilities is prohibitive for young families. Currently, some Councils try to make money from these facilities, even those which receive external funds such as Government or Lottery Foundation funds. At the moment the total rent for the pitch for grassroots football clubs is around £150 and £80 if you want to rent 1/3 of the pitch.

We are asking Congress to use our GMB Councillors networks to ensure that grassroots clubs or individual children and young people pay a reduced price (around 30% of the price) to use these. Congress, there is also an issue with access to these facilities. External companies such as Footy Addicts block book and take over, using the pitches where young people could use them for training until 8:30pm. From 8:30pm the pitches are empty until 10:00pm.

We need our children to be healthy and be outdoors, but the costs of council run gyms, swimming pools, tennis courts and other sports facilities are too high. Young people do not use them because their parents cannot afford them. Again, we are asking Congress to use our GMB Councillors networks to ensure local children can afford access.

## **W61 WALTHAMSTOW 1 BRANCH**

### **LONDON REGION**

*(Carried)*

ADAM WACLAWCZYK (London): Hello everybody. Even though I sometimes have trouble pronouncing English words, I really like standing here. *(Applause)* I would like also to apologise to John Wood for stealing your personality, your name and your surname, but it was not my fault!

President, Congress, friends, moving Motion 232. Some council-run sport fields, halls, swimming pools and gyms are located in the community or in schools or colleges, but the cost of using them is expensive. We are asking that all non-professional clubs training children and teenagers should have a 70% discount, as well as priority for renting facilities managed and run by the council. For example, the cost of renting the entire pitch at Waltham Forest Council is £150. The council gives a discount but only for the entire pitch which usually is not available and the cost for a quarter of the pitch is £80. Currently some councils try to make money from these facilities, even from those in which external funds, government or Lottery Foundation funds, were invested. The next thing was for the councils to put these facilities under the management of private companies, contractors whose priority is to make money, and they do not allow renting these facilities to children and young people. Clubs such as grass-roots football try to attract as many young people as possible to keep them away from the street life, especially in London where youth crime is increasing day by day. I believe that the future of children and young people is in our hands. Please support the motion.  
*(Applause)*

ADRIAN LUKASIEWICZ (London): President, Congress, London Region Branch

Secretary of P35, Peterborough Local Authority branch. Thank you John -- I mean Adam! Congress, we all know what sport really means in our communities. It is not just about kicking a ball or lifting weights. It is about belonging. It is about giving young people a place to grow, to build confidence, to stay out of harm's way. It is about physical health, mental well-being and social connection. But instead of investing in that, councils are turning public facilities into profit centres. Community pitches and leisure centres have been priced so high that ordinary working families simply cannot afford it. The result: empty pitches, locked gates and young people pushed out.

Congress, this is disgraceful. These facilities were built with public money. They should be serving the public, not sitting empty because private companies have outpriced the very people they are meant for. We do not need barriers, we need access, we need action. This motion calls for fairness. It calls for councils to make these spaces affordable. It calls for protection for youth clubs, grass roots teams and low-income families. We want our kids on the pitch, not on the streets. Congress, this motion is asking for something simple and fair. Use our GMB networks, use our councillors and push for reduced pricing. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Adrian. Anyone wish to speak in opposition? If not, can I call on Gordon Gibbs as the CEC speaker and ask for Motion 131 and Composite 7 to come to the front, please?

GORDON GIBBS (CEC): First-time CEC speaker this year because they would not let me up here prior to the elections! On a serious note, I would like to personally congratulate Barbara on her re-election to National President, and I did so personally



yesterday. And also, sincerely congratulate Sonya on her election as our new Vice President. I look forward to working with both Barbara and Sonya and our CEC colleagues. (*Applause*)

I will go to the script now. President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC in response to Motions 231 and 232, and a proud member of the GMB regardless of what region I come from.

THE CEC seeks to refer Motion 231. The concerns raised about ticket pricing, fixture scheduling, policing costs and travel disruption are undoubtedly important to supporters. They also touch directly on workplaces where many of our Scottish members earn their living in hospitality, hospitality venues, cleaning contractors, stewarding firms and local authority services tied to match days. Because these employment interests are uniquely Scottish, the CEC believes the debate is best carried out inside Scotland itself, where it can consult fully with the members most affected and shape a campaign that reflects the industrial realities for this region. We respectfully request the referral of Motion 231.

Turning to Motion 232, the CEC supports the motion with a clarification. We wholeheartedly support the principle that communities need low-cost, well-maintained pitches, pools and courts and that local councils should keep them open. Our qualification relates to the motion's call for a nationwide councillor network to drive the campaign. In practice, only some regions currently have GMB councillors in sufficient numbers to say lead such an initiative. Where that local political leverage exists, we should encourage regions to use it. Where it does not, regions

need to pursue other tactics such as campaigning or bargaining with leisure management contractors. Regions should decide how and through whom they press the case for affordable facilities.

In summary, Congress, we ask for GMB Scotland to agree to refer Motion 231 and ask Congress to support Motion 232 with the qualification as stated. Thank you.

*(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Gordon. Do Scotland agree to reference back on 231? *(Agreed)* Does London agree to the qualification on 232? *(Agreed)* We will go to the vote now. All those in favour of 229, please show. Any against? That is carried. All those in favour of 232, please show. All those against. That is carried.

*Motion 229 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 231 was **REFERRED**.*

*Motion 232 was **CARRIED**.*

THE CO-CHAIR: Can I have mover of 131 to the rostrum, please?

## **Industrial & Economic Policy: Private Section**

### **PROTECTION FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES IN UNRECOGNISED WORKPLACES**

#### **MOTION 131**

#### **131. PROTECTION FOR UNION REPRESENTATIVES IN UNRECOGNISED WORKPLACES**

This Congress notes that at present GMB activists in a hostile anti-union environment such as Amazon are not properly protected by the provisions of section 146 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. If GMB is not formally recognised, then the protection provided by section 146 only applies to activities outside of working hours. Congress believes that this limited protection means that UK legislation fails to properly protect the freedom of association of workers as enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights.

This Congress resolves to campaign to ensure that proper protection for trade union activists and representatives is enshrined in the legislation to be introduced as part of the Labour Government's new deal for workers. This legislation should explicitly protect normal day-to-day conversations about the union during the working day that do not significantly disrupt production.

## **A25 AMAZON WORKERS BRANCH**

### **MIDLANDS REGION**

*(Carried)*

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LOUVEZA IQBAL (Midlands): Amazon Workers' Branch, Midlands Region, moving Motion 131, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, right now in workplaces that are not recognised union activists have very little legal protection. As a GMB activist myself who has worked in hostile anti-union environments, I know first-hand the issues this brings. This motion is about challenging that and ensuring that workers in the UK have the right to join and support a union without any potential threats. This is something that the European Convention on Human Right says that we should have and it brings up the question why we do not have it yet. If union activists are not protected, workplace managers will exploit this and use it to their advantage to tear us down. This has happened to me personally and it has happened to many other representatives within Amazon. The management monitor every single step that a

union activist takes. They monitor who we talk to, when we talk to them and what we say. Not only does this create a sense of fear within activists but it also stops non-union members from wanting to learn more or join a union. At Amazon they have created a new disciplinary offence of soliciting which basically means that they try to punish for us talking about the union to our co-workers. So essentially, they punish us if we challenge a manager who lies about the union, they punish us if we ask people to sign a collective grievance and they can punish us if we ask co-workers to speak up about a health and safety concern they might have.

The law that is supposed to protect us from this is section 146 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act of 1992. However, recently, the Supreme Court said that this law does not match up with Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights which says everyone has a right of peaceful assembly, the right to form or join trade unions and the right to protect their own interests, which is different from section 146, which says that a worker has a right not to be targeted, penalised or dismissed for taking part in union action, which on paper sounds great, but in reality this law offers protection for union activities only if those activities happen at an appropriate time. And what is an appropriate time? Well, according to the law, it means either outside of work hours or during work but only if the employer gives permission. So essentially, you can only talk about union things at work if the boss says it is okay. That is not real freedom, that is not real protection. So, the Government must agree and realise that section 146 does not offer a strong protection. We need a change in the law so that we are free to speak to our co-workers about the GMB, so that we are free to speak about the campaign and so that we are free to talk about our rights without the fear of punishment. Nothing less is acceptable. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

ASHLEY HUGHES (Midlands): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I would like to second Motion 131: Protection for Union Representatives in Unrecognised Workplaces. Congress notes many individuals in this room have served or are currently serving as trade union representatives in their workplaces. I would like to put you in the shoes of union representatives in unrecognised workplaces for a moment. These representatives often face significant challenges, including the lack of allocated time and protection to effectively carry out their roles. This situation leads to numerous late nights spent preparing for investigations, disciplinary actions and sickness reviews while their counterparts, the management, have the advantage of preparing during their working hours. Furthermore, the health and safety aspect of this role is critically important. Without proper recognition and support in investigating incidents and collating workers' feedback on safety concerns must be completed outside of working hours adding to the burden of these representatives. Congress, without these protections these dedicated individuals are placed in the position of modern-day Tolpuddle Martyrs, and that cannot be right.

Therefore, Congress, we strongly urge you to support this motion to ensure employers must provide designated time during working hours for trade union representatives to perform their duties, ensuring they are not forced to work late into the night. Congress, I urge you to support this motion for protecting union workers in unrecognised workplaces. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Ashley. Mover of Composite 7?

**AI ON IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS, NOT REPLACING SKILLED OR EXPERIENCED WORKERS, AND TACKLING AI IN AMAZON**

**COMPOSITE MOTION 7**

**Covering Motions**

**143. Embracing AI to Improve Working Conditions for GMB Members - Midlands Region**

**135. AI To Support Not Replace Skilled And Experienced Workers – Wales & South West Region**

**153. Tackling AI in Amazon - Midlands Region**

**C7. AI ON IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS, NOT REPLACING SKILLED OR EXPERIENCED WORKERS, AND TACKLING AI IN AMAZON**

This Congress recognises that Artificial Intelligence and Technology is moving fast and has potential to be very useful in assisting knowledgeable and highly skilled staff in their roles. This Congress notes the continued use of AI technologies by Companies such as Amazon in the excessive monitoring of employees.

In France, the Supervisory Authority (SA), carried out several investigations into Amazon. These investigations found several breaches of the GDPR regarding: Warehouse stock and order management. Failure to comply with the principle of data minimisation (Article 5.1.c GDPR). Failure to ensure lawful processing (Article 6 GDPR) by using three indicators which are illegal. Work schedule and employee appraisal. Failure to comply with the principle of data minimisation (Article 5.1.c GDPR). Failure to comply with the obligation to provide information and transparency (Articles 12 and 13 GDPR). Video surveillance processing. Failure to comply with

the obligation to provide information and transparency (Articles 12 and 13 GDPR). Failure to the obligation to ensure the security of personal data (Article 32 GDPR). As a result of these breaches, the French SA imposed a fine of EUR 32M€ on Amazon. The exact same breaches are happening in the UK, but no action has yet been taken. Amazon workers deserve better.

This Congress believes;

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform workplaces by improving efficiency, reducing workload, and enhancing safety.
2. If implemented responsibly, AI can lead to better work-life balance, increased productivity, and the creation of new opportunities for workers.
3. it is not ready nor safe to be used unsupervised, particularly in serious decision-making situations such as healthcare. For example, replacing GPs, consultants and pharmacy clinical decision making and databases that provide that clinical data support to those GPs and hospitals.
4. Artificial Intelligence should be used as a tool to support human decision making and not be a replacement for skilled employment, nor be allowed to risk public safety or health.
5. Workers must be at the heart of AI integration to ensure its use supports their wellbeing, protects jobs, and upholds rights.

This Congress resolves to:

(a) Actively support the use of AI in workplaces where it demonstrably enhances the working lives of members, such as:

- Automating repetitive or hazardous tasks.
- Providing tools for upskilling and professional development.
- Enabling better work-life balance through smarter scheduling and workload distribution.

(b) Ensure that the implementation of AI is guided by the following principles:

- No job losses as a result of AI deployment.
- Full consultation with workers and their unions before introducing AI systems.

- Transparency in how AI systems operate, including their decision-making processes.
  - Worker protections against AI misuse, such as unfair surveillance or bias in decision-making.
- (c) Campaign for the establishment of clear regulations and industry standards to govern the use of AI in workplaces, ensuring it benefits workers.
- (d) Provide training and resources for GMB members to help them understand and adapt to AI technologies, enabling them to thrive in an evolving workplace.
- (e) Advocate for employer-funded retraining programs for workers whose roles are impacted by AI to secure their future in alternative or upgraded positions.
- (f) GMB to lobby Government and ensure skilled jobs and public safety are protected.
- (g) to campaign to ensure that the Government undertakes an investigation of Amazon regarding breaches of GDPR through the Information Commissioner's Office or other regulatory department.
- (f) Building on the work of the GMB our sister unions and the TUC in drafting the Artificial Intelligence (Employment and Regulation) Bill, this Congress also resolves to campaign for the Bill to be taken through Parliament. This will ensure that Amazon, and other employers who follow in their footsteps, are prevented from utilising AI technologies to exploit working people. AI represents a significant shift in how work is performed and organized. While it carries risks, it also offers unique opportunities to improve the quality of work and reduce the burden on workers. The GMB Union must lead the charge in ensuring that AI is used as a tool for empowerment, not exploitation, and that its benefits are shared fairly among workers. This Congress calls for a proactive approach to AI, ensuring GMB members are supported, jobs protected, and positioned to benefit from technological advancements in the workplace.

### **Moving Region: Midlands**

### **Seconding Region: Midlands**

*(Carried)*



LOUVEZA IQBAL (Midlands): Moving Motion 153, Composite 7. AI is a tool used by Amazon to create a dog-eat-dog environment. This is how it works. Everything you do from the moment you enter the building is monitored, every job, every movement and every pause is measured, clocked and recorded. In fact, the French Government recently fined Amazon €32 million for using a monitoring system that was intrusive and unfair. The AI in Amazon is used to collect data from the scanners we use, which then allows Amazon to compare each worker against every other worker. They do this to set us up in competition against each other. They do this to make us work like animals, to achieve a target that is almost unachievable. The daily targets that they set cannot be easily met and so the people with the lowest pick rates are singled out and given a warning which are also known as ADAPTs. The reason why these ADAPTs are bad is because they create a lot of fear amongst the workers. It forces people into a race against each other so they can stay out of the bottom group. In fact, people will even go in half an hour early just to bag the best work stations. Amazon does not explain to their workers how this monitoring system works. Most of us do not even realise how closely we are being watched until we are suddenly called into a “seek to understand” meeting or a formal disciplinary meeting. And workers are held responsible for low work rates solely because the AI algorithm said so. So, even if you had a valid reason, Amazon will always side with the algorithm, not the worker.

I am aware as a union we are against all forms of discrimination but the AI algorithm takes non-discrimination to a whole other level. If you have a disability, injury or medical issue and you are on a station that requires heavy lifting, the algorithm will not recognise this and you will be forced to either work harder and potentially injury

yourself or bear the consequences of a low rate. This is because the algorithm sees you as a robot - and we are not robots.

Currently there are many workers right now, including myself, who have a nine-month long written warning on their file just because the algorithm said we under performed. So, not only does Amazon use the AI algorithm to force workers to work harder but they have also gone one step further. They have installed a new AI system which allocates each worker to a random station. They have introduced this to stop workers from speaking to each other, to stop workers from coming together, to stop workers from having control. The result of this is that we now have to work 10-hour long shifts away from our friends and in total isolation. So essentially, AI is a digital whip in the hands of the managers. It is something that breaks down solidarity and gets workers to compete against each other.

Congress, this all shows how dangerous the use of AI can be in the wrong hands. We need resistance in the workplace against it but we also need a change in the law. This is why I urge you to support this motion. We need clear laws that cut Amazon down to size. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, colleague. Seconder? *(Formally seconded)* Anybody wish to speak against? No? I will call Dean Gilligan the CEC speaker. Could Emergency Motion 8 and Emergency Motion 9 come to the front, please?

DEAN GILLIGAN (CEC): Good morning everyone. President, Congress, responding to Composite 7 on behalf of the CEC which we are supporting with a qualification.

This motion correctly calls for vigilance over the implementation of AI so that it does not undermine workers either by deskilling or through pay. It is also correct in pursuing transparency measures over the use of AI. We are wholly supportive of members campaigning to ensure that their data is secure and that their employer does not use it illegally or improperly. Amazon exploits data that they receive freely from customers and that which they extract from their workforce in order to make profit for shareholders. There is no equitable sharing of the wealth that it creates from those who take it from them. It is pure exploitation. We support this composite but with the qualification first, that we would need to assess how we might approach the ICO on this matter and reserve this campaign to be determined by the membership. Secondly, while we do our best to keep in pace with understanding technological advancements, we may not be able to deliver the training as outlined in the composite. Thank goodness, for that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Dean. Do the regions agree a qualification on Composite 7? (*Agreed*) We will now go to the vote. All those in favour of 131, please show. Any against? That is carried. All those in favour of Composite 7, please show. Any against? That is carried.

*Motion 131 was **CARRIED**.*

*Composite Motion 7 was **CARRIED**.*

THE CO-CHAIR: Could Emergency Motion 8 come to the rostrum, please?

**SOLIDARITY WITH DAVE HUERTA**

## **EMERGENCY MOTION 8**

### **EM8: Solidarity with Trade Unionist David Huerta**

Congress notes the violent arrest on 6 June of David Huerta, president of SEIU California and SEIU-USWW, in Los Angeles while he was serving as a community observer during an ICE raid there.

Congress notes Article 20 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights guaranteeing freedom of Assembly and Association. We further note the plans to prosecute him with a conspiracy to interfere with a federal officer.

Congress condemns the arrest and injury and agrees to send messages of solidarity to David Huerta and his union. Congress calls on the TUC and the Labour government to send messages of solidarity also.

### **REGION: London**

*(Carried)*

DAVE LEVY (London): President, Congress, moving Emergency Motion 8: Solidarity with David Huerta. This motion is not very long and neither will this speech be. David Huerta is a senior trade unionist on the West Coast of the United States. He was violently arrested while acting as a community observer to a demonstration in Los Angeles. I recommend you have a look at what the media are saying about the protest in Los Angeles. He is currently free but under threat of prosecution and the process is not finished. I do not plan to talk about the politics of the protests but the rights of assembly and association are universally recognised. They are central to the rights of trade unions to organise and this universality is underwritten by their inclusion in article 20 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Since we are meeting this

week, I ask you to support this motion and send messages of solidarity to David Huerta and his union and call on the TUC and the Labour Government to do so, too. Solidarity means that an injury to one is an injury to one. Solidarity! I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder? *(Formally seconded)* Thank you.

**CALLING TO CONDEMN ESCALATION BY THE STATE OF ISRAEL  
AGAINST HUMANITARIAN AID FLOTILLA  
EMERGENCY MOTION 9**

**EM9: CONDEMN THE ESCALATION BY THE STATE OF ISRAEL AGAINST HUMANITARIAN  
AID FLOTILLA.**

Congress, On the evening of the 8th June 2025, the Madleen Freedom Flotilla, which was bringing vital humanitarian aid to Gaza, was targeted by the Israeli Defence Force, and 12 activists were arrested. Not only is this a gross breach of International Maritime Law of Article 87 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea but demonstrates the lack of humanity the Israeli Government is showing for the people of Gaza. The 12 activists included Greta Thunberg and Rima Hassan, French MEP.

This motion calls on GMB to condemn the escalating actions of the Israeli State in arresting the 12 activists in International Waters, for the GMB to urge the British Government to demand an end to the blockade of Gaza, to allow vital humanitarian aid into Palestine and for Congress to show solidarity with those arrested on the flotilla along with all those impacted by the conflict.

**REGION: Southern**

*(Carried)*

AYSHA MAHMOOD (Southern): Moving Emergency Motion 9: Calling to Condemn the Escalation by the State of Israel Against Humanitarian Aid Flotilla. On the evening

of 8th June, the Madeleine Freedom Flotilla which was bringing vital humanitarian aid to Gaza was targeted by the Israeli Defence Force and 12 activists were arrested. Not only is this a gross breach of international maritime law of Article 87 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea but demonstrates the lack of humanity the Israeli Government is showing to the people of Gaza. *(Applause)* The activists included Greta Thunberg and Rima Hassan, French MEP. This motion calls on GMB to condemn the escalating actions of the Israeli State in arresting the 12 activists in international waters, for the GMB to urge the British Government to demand an end to the blockade of Gaza, to allow vital humanitarian aid into Palestine and for Congress to show solidarity with those arrested on the flotilla along with all those impacted by the conflict. Congress, I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Aysha. Secunder?

RACHEL BURGIN: Congress, President, I strongly second this emergency motion. What happened on 8th June was not just an attack on the flotilla; it was an attack on humanity. A peaceful mission bringing food, medicine and hope was met with military aggression. Humanitarian aid was met with handcuffs. And why? Because it dared to challenge the ongoing brutal blockade of Gaza. Let's be absolutely clear, intercepting aid in international waters is not just wrong; it is an act of cruelty. It sends a message that even the most basic of lifelines to the people of Gaza will be met with force. Congress enough is enough. This union has always stood up for justice - on the picket line, in Parliament and across the world. Now we must raise our voices again. We must condemn this violent escalation by the Israel state. We must demand the British Government breaks its silence and call for an immediate blockade. We show our

solidarity not just in words but in action - with those arrested, with those suffering, and with all who stand with peace and dignity, because when the Governments turn their backs, the people must move. We must rise, take on the fight and make our voices and their voices heard. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rachel. Does any delegate wish to speak in opposition to either of these emergency motions? No? The CEC are supporting both the emergency motions so I will take them as one. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

*Emergency Motion 8 was **CARRIED**.*

*Emergency Motion 9 was **CARRIED**.*

### **Announcement**

THE PRESIDENT: Before we go to hear from our guest speakers, we have got an important item. If you have seen the news this morning you will have seen there have been riots in Northern Ireland overnight. They set fire to a leisure centre where our members work. Robert Sharkey from North West & Irish Region, a delegate here, would like to make a short statement on this from the platform. (*Applause*).

### **Statement on Riots in Northern Ireland**

ROBERT SHARKEY (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and really would have preferred to have been a first-time speaker under better

circumstances. I just want to read a statement that our full-time officials produced. We have discussed it with the delegation and we are all in agreement that it is exactly the kind of thing we need to be doing at this difficult time. I am just going to proceed to read it.

“We unequivocally condemn the appalling racist violence that has erupted across Ballymena, Coleraine and Larne in recent days. These coordinated attacks have left over 30 police officers injured, displaced families from their homes and culminated in a disgraceful assault on Larne Leisure Centre where our members were working and where vulnerable people sought refuge. These are not isolated incidents. They are the result of years of neglect and failure by the Northern Ireland Executive to address the root causes of division and despair. The deepening crisis in poverty, social housing, NHS waiting lists and the destruction of community and youth services have created fertile ground for hate, fear and scapegoating. The Executive has failed to deliver on the promises of the Good Friday Belfast Agreement. It has failed to build a shared inclusive society. Most damningly, it has failed to confront the racism and xenophobia that flourish in communities left without support, leadership or hope. Newcomer communities, many of whom are the backbone of our health and social care systems, deserve safety, dignity and respect. There are not to blame for the failures of Governments. They are a part of the fabric of our society and must be protected. Many of them are our members. We call on the entire trade union movement to stand united against this wave of hate. We must defend our members, our communities and the values of solidarity, equality and justice. We urge all unions to mobilise, speak out and demand



action. This is a moment for collective resistance, not silence. We demand that the Northern Ireland Executive publicly condemn these racist attacks without equivocation, demand immediate support to displaced families and affected workers, invest in rebuilding community and youth services, tackle the root cause of division through real action on housing, healthcare and policy, and finally deliver on the vision of peace, equality and inclusion, promised by the Good Friday Agreement. Hate has no place in our workplaces, our communities or our society. The trade union movement will not stand by. Congress, we ask for your support and solidarity and at this time.”

THE PRESIDENT: Can we show our solidarity to those workers. *(A standing ovation)*

Thank you, Robert, and our thoughts are with everybody there.

**Guest Speakers – Tyrick Pollard and Antonio Rosaria, Amazon Teamsters USA**

THE PRESIDENT: I am pleased to invite to the stage activists from a sister trade union The Teamsters who work and organise in Amazon in the USA. They have been working closely with our Midlands Region, building solidarity and shared practice in the struggle against one of the most pernicious employers to have ever existed.

Tyrick Pollard and Antoni Rosario are two leading organisers for the Teamsters in Amazon and I am delighted that they have come all this way to address our Congress about their campaigns. Welcome Tyrick and Antonio.

TYRICK POLLARD: Good morning. My name is Tyrick Pollard. I am sorry I am a bit nervous. It is first time I am doing this. (*Applause*) Good morning. I am a Teamster and also an Amazon driver from New York. Before I get started, I would like to say thank you to all you nice people for being so friendly to me. This is my first time in the UK. I don't know who's friendlier, you guys or Canadians. Honestly speaking, this is such a great experience for me. The first time in the UK, it is so wonderful. It is the first time speaking you to you nice people. Hopefully, we will bring Amazon to the table. (*Applause*)

I have been a driver at Amazon for two years, about to be three coming in October. Amazon is ridiculous, if I am being honest. I have been there for two/three years and it was not until my second year I noticed that Amazon doesn't care about the drivers at all. They don't care about how much taxes you get, the working conditions, what you got going on in your life, public transportation, none of that. So it wasn't until last year that my friends Nate and Brendon introduced me to The Teamsters. We were having these meetings at Dunkin' Donuts every Wednesday. I was there learning my rights, learning what I should be doing as a person to better my company, to better other people around me, teaching them what they should do against Amazon and how to speak up for themselves. Honestly speaking, we decided that we wanted to be unionised so we had to start working our DSPs. We have eight DSPs in my warehouses and my DSP is DNA8. We had to work underground to get people to sign these union cards because, honestly speaking, everybody knows Amazon don't like the union. So, my message was to tell a friend that you trust to tell a friend. Honestly speaking, it worked. We reached the majority for us to be unionised within all eight DSPs. So, it

was time for us to come to march on Amazon and our employers, the DSP owners. When that time came, I'm not even gonna lie to you. I was very nervous. My job was on the line but I didn't care, I wanted to get this message across that we need to be treated with respect from everybody. It doesn't matter if it's the customers, the Amazon workers or Amazon themselves. I am a human being and I deserve to be treated fairly. *(Applause)*

When me and my fellow Amazon workers marched in on the boss, oh my God, we were loud. Everybody was just like, "Who's that? Who's screaming like that?" We marched on to Amazon first. They came with their excuses talking about, "There's nothing we can do for you guys". Blah blah blah. We weren't hearing it. We slammed the paper on their desk, whoever they are. They got the message and then we moved on to our DSP. Our DSP managers were just as shocked when we slammed the paper on their table and then we just walked out. Everybody felt great after that. We got the message across that we want to be unionised. But of course, the people in Amazon Warehouse and our DSP owners, they don't want to come to the table and bargain with us. So, we decided to take actions into our own hands. Before that Amazon got scared of us trying to unionise so they tried to butter us up. They started giving us hand trucks. There was a time it was winter they gave us coats. They decided to start cleaning the vans. The vans should be cleaned regularly. Am I wrong? Thank you. Also, these union busters are so annoying. You're making 50K a week. Come to talk to me saying 'Don't join a union'. Sir, you're in a union yourself; what are you talking about?" And also, these union bosses are always try to get into your head talking about how can you make the job better? Unionise, that is all we ask. We just want better treatment, better pay, a liveable wage.

Honestly speaking, I live by myself and I can't even afford myself. That sounds crazy.

Also, union busters aren't your friends. I had a friend named Manny who was just minding his business doing his job when a union buster decided to call him a derogatory word to bait him into getting into an altercation. By the end of the day there was witnesses around and everybody saw who started it, how it started, and that union buster got kicked. I don't know where he's at and I don't care. Excuse me, I've got to crib this now! (*Applause*)

Since Amazon still don't come to the table to bargain with us, we decided we was going to strike. The best time to strike was peak season when everybody wanted their Christmas gifts. I am sorry for whoever we delayed the packages for but Amazon didn't care so we didn't care either. We got the message across and we were there from the crack of dawn on December 21st until the 26th December. We were there from 3 am in the morning (*Applause*) to the day of Christmas Eve. We were there from there from 2 o'clock in the morning stopping people from coming inside the warehouse. We were stopping truck drivers. Honestly speaking, I almost got run over like five times. I was scared for my life. They didn't care. They were like, "I'm just doing my job." I'm like, "Me too, don't cross the picket line. Please can you respect that." We got some truckers who decided to respect us and then other ones who tried to run me over. I had to hop on a track for my life. I am still here!

We got that message across, but honestly speaking, Amazon still didn't come to the table. This is a long battle. This is a long vigorous battle. It is tiring for everybody. I

mean look at me - I look tired. It is a long tiring battle and, honestly speaking, I've got to say this, Rome wasn't built in a day. It is going to be long process but I'm in it to win it. Thank you. (*Applause and a standing ovation*)

ANTONIO ROSARIOM: Now that's a tough act to follow because that is a worker talking right there. I love you brother. (*Applause*) I can't tell you how proud I am of him and from that first moment I met him at Dunkin' Donuts. I wanna thank you, members of Congress and the President. Thank you for allowing us to be here to say a few words. It means a lot to us. Like Adam, I apologise for butchering the language a little bit. I am from New York, so apologies.

I was a young kid in the '90s. I lost my dad at an early age, I was 17, and I kind of got baptised into the union under fire knowing that my mother needed me to help her. I found a little job at UPS, loading trucks. Fast forward to 1997, I was part of one of the largest strikes in US history, where 185,000 UPS workers across the United States went on strike with Canada. (*Applause*) That is when I saw at a young age, 23 years old, what the power of a union is. Watching these workers come together at Amazon was really eye-opening for me. In my 2023 UPS contract campaign we were able to bring UPS to the table with just a threat of strikes. There was a great idea for the union to start taking people like myself that were used to fighting against corporations like UPS, to take on these fights against Amazon.

How do you measure success? I mean, I don't think we can really -- at the end of the day we decided that we were going to tell our workers it doesn't matter who the President of the United States is. They are not going to stop workers from building a

movement that is going to fight to make sure that every worker gets the proper benefits of insurance. I know right now times are tough but we as workers have gotta come together. When I think about when we had real international solidarity was about 1886 during the Haymarket Riot where workers fought for just a 40-hour work week, eight-hour day. I was speaking to Martin about that last night. That was the last time that I remember or one of the first strongest times when we as countries came together to fight for something. And that was for eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep and eight ours to do what we will. And slowly these corporations are trying to take that from us. We can't allow that to happen. *(Applause)* We can't allow them to take freedom of assembly. We can't allow them to do a lot of the things that they are trying to take from us right now.

I heard that you guys had a tough time during the election. 49% - that is a tough loss and I know that can be little demoralising, but think about the 49% that are still in the fight. Those are the people that you need to double down on. You have a chance to win this. Do not give up. You have to keep fighting. *(Applause)*

Like Tyrick said, it started with just three DSPs but that march on the boss was so impactful it was able to get into the other eight DSPs in that one facility, where we were able to unionise the whole facility, but that impact, the strike also inspired workers all over the country where we have new states and workers that are standing up. It starts small like a spark but that spark can ignite a fire than can go right through and bring these workers. When that fire in the belly starts to get lit, you can't stop that from happening.

We also have an expansion committee that started right during the strike to start going into other buildings, built from this group of workers, to start educating other workers on their rights and trying to get into those other buildings. Workers know that winning a union contract at their facility and winning across markets and across countries and across the globe is the only way that we are going to beat Amazon. We can't rely on government or law sometimes. We really as workers have to come together and stand up. They can't stop the workforce. We are the ones who move everything. It is trucks, it is the people that are loading the shelves at the stores. It is the teachers that are going to the schools. We are the workers, they cannot run without us, and it is time that they know that. *(Applause)*

I will just wrap it up by saying again thank you so much for having us here. We have a saying in the United States, I am sure you probably have it here, where we say, "When our communities and workers are under attack, what do we do? Stand up and fight back." And I would love to hear some of y'all say that. So, when our communities and workers are under attack, what do we do? *(All: Fight back!)* When our communities and workers are under attack, what do we do? *(All: Fight back!)* What do we do? *(All: Fight back!)* You are damn right we do! Thank you so much. Appreciate you all. *(Applause and a standing ovation)*

### **CEC Special Report: International Solidarity in a Changing World**

**[INSERT CEC SPECIAL REPORT INTERNATIONALISM]**

THE CO-CHAIR: Congress, we will now debate the Special Report on International Solidarity in a Changing World. We do still have a motion on the agenda that the CEC is asking to be withdrawn in favour of the report. That motion will be moved

and seconded by the region after we have debated the report. We will then take the vote on the Special Report. If the report carries then that motion will fall, as it stands in conflict with the report.

Moving the Special Report on behalf of the CEC is Barbara Plant, and Dave Douglas seconding. Can I please ask Barbara to the rostrum.

BARBARA PLANT (Southern): Chair, Congress, it is with great pride that I move this CEC Special Report. My international solidarity stems from when at the age of 14, I first started writing to a pen friend in Germany, a total stranger. For over 50 years we have visited each other, watched each other grow up and had families. We have shared in each other's joys and sorrows. When my dad met her father for the first time, I saw two former adversaries from the Second World War becoming firm friends. Regardless of our place on this planet, we share the same hopes and dreams for ourselves, our families and future generations. We are all connected by our shared humanity. If we cannot build the unity of working people across borders then who can?

This report is where we start, by outlining the past, present and future of our international work. It reconnects us to our first International Secretary and continued inspiration Eleanor Marx, who stood up for workers and humanity, no matter where they were in the world. We inherit a union made up of ordinary working women and men who did not stand by when the world around them was in dark times. When fascism came for the trade unionists, our Jewish comrades and many others in the 1930s, GMB members fought back abroad as well as at home. And just like GMB's campaign for Nelson Mandela's freedom in the 1980s, we were one of the founders of



the campaign to free Abdullah Öcalan, who has about in prison since 1999 for advocating for rights and peace for the Kurdish people.

These campaigns were not always popular but they were right at the time and they are right today. They were led by our own members who felt that injustice abroad is just as appalling as injustice at work. Because when the world around us falls apart, it is often trade unions that step up. In Ukraine since Russia's invasion, unions have assumed new roles to not only improve working conditions but also deliver material and medical aid in support of soldiers and those displaced. GMB branches have also answered the call. They raise money to assist Ukrainian trade unions carrying out that vital humanitarian work this report makes clear: humanitarian issues are trade union issues.

I have had the privilege, and it is a privilege, of visiting Palestine and Colombia to meet with workers and sister unions. I have seen first-hand the oppression of Palestinians living in the West Bank and the danger still of being a trade unionist in Colombia. When we think about how tough it can be in the UK, and it is tough, we must also support these struggles, sacrifices and hard-won victories of fellow workers abroad.

When I visited the West Bank, I saw workers forced to queue up through checkpoints and forced on to separate roads in disrepair on their way to work every day. And like so many, I have been absolutely horrified by the suffering, starvation and unfolding genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. But I am also inspired by the determination of Palestinian emergency service workers, trying to save lives and unions standing up for Palestinian rights despite the brutal occupation and indignities their members face.

Congress, there are workers and unions out there needing our solidarity and in GMB they should have a friend. They can count on a campaigning union that does just not just repeat Will Thorne's vision for a world filled with freedom, beauty and equality for all workers, but acts on it. Our members in Amazon have helped build a global network of solidarity, with workers exploited in those brutal warehouses just like our own. And solidarity with unions like The Teamsters, with Tyrick and Antonio today. Our members stand much taller than that co-operate giant and together we will win.  
*(Applause)*

Congress, I want to finish with a powerful and moving poem by James Baldwin, a black writer and civil rights activist which I feel captures why international solidarity is so crucial and hopeful.

“Every bombed village is my hometown –  
And every dead child is my child  
Every grieving mother is my mother  
Every crying father is my father  
Every home turned to rubble  
is the home I grew up in  
Every brother carrying the remains  
of his brother across borders is my brother.  
Every sister waiting for a sister  
who will never come home  
is my sister

Every one of these people are ours

Just like we are theirs.

We belong to them

and they belong to us.”

Please support this CEC Special Report. I move. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Barbara. If regions are putting in speakers on the report, could they please come down to the front and we are taking it in order of London, Midland, North East, Yorkshire & Humberside, North West & Irish, Scotland, Southern and Wales & South West.

DAVE DOUGLAS (CEC): President, Congress, comrades, talking about butchering the English language, I will see what I can do with this! I ought to apologise that I am from Yorkshire. Dave Douglas, North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region. I am seconding the CEC Special Report on International Solidarity in a Changing World.

Internationalism is not just a lofty ideal; it is our bread and butter. It stands at the heart of a better world and at the heart of how we make work better at home. Because let's be honest, Congress, the world will have no organising working class to show solidarity with if we cannot bring home the jobs offshored and the hyper globalisation and save our public services decimated by austerity. This report will help us be louder and more influential in our campaigning to bring these jobs and industries home. It also seeks to learn the lessons from where our union-to-union links abroad have helped our members to win in the workplace, so that when big trade deals decide the future of whole

industries, GMB members can leverage the highest decision-makers to defend their jobs so that more disputes can be won with the help of our union's union links abroad, just like London Region's fight against fire and re-hire in Pilgrim's Food Masters, and North West & Irish Region's fight to stop offshoring jobs at Jacob's Biscuits in Aintree, Liverpool.

As the world becomes a more dangerous place, we of course demand that our Governments pursue peaceful diplomatic solutions to overseas conflicts, but we must also prioritise what keeps us safe. Yes, this means investment in our domestic defence manufacturing sector and our members' jobs that make it. But it must not be paid for by cutting the welfare state or the terms and conditions of our public sector members. The economic security of our working people is the bedrock of our national security. The fruits of that investment must be spent on improving our own defence, not on joining military interventions across the globe that make us less safe. What this report sets out, Congress, is our ability to help make the world safer for working people everywhere through leverage, our worker-centred approach to trade which insists on enforceable labour rights in any new trade agreements, and action to support our exporting industries and on ruling out trade deals with regimes that systematically abuse and exploit workers. And our worker-centred approach to global issues such as climate change to ensure that any energy transition is led by workers, not done to them. This continues our union's work with the Climate Jobs National Resource Center in the United States for ambitious action on climate change with a plan that delivers good-quality work and a fairer and safer country.

Importantly, this report commits us to supporting our North American counterparts targeted by the rising far right and ensuring that such diverse ideology does not take root in the UK, not only through our solidarity but through industrial renewal. Because, Congress, there is no wealth without working people. To this end, the report commits us to developing our affiliated European and global networks of trade union federations, to support the unity of all working people in defence of their rights, jobs and freedoms. In the face of challenging world, it is time that the working class take control of our destiny together. Congress, please second this Special Report. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, David. London?

KIM HENDRY (London): Supporting the CEC Special Report on International Solidarity. President, Congress, in the brief time I have, I will speak to the Palestine section of the Report as that covers my branch's Motion 289.

Congress, the Palestine section of this report begins, as Barbara said, "Congress is outraged by the unfolding genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank by Israeli forces", and it rejects the racist and imperialist lie that this war began on 7th October 2023. It makes clear that Israel's offensive in Gaza follows decades of violations of Palestinian human rights, ethnic cleansing and the imposition of a system of oppression against all Palestinians that is recognised as apartheid by the ICJ. What we are witnessing is not a war between two states, where one side is dispossessed, starved, injured, buried under the rubble. No state, no standing army, no escape. Just parents writing their kids' names on their legs in case they do not survive. And on the other side the most powerful military in the Middle East, a nuclear state,

backed and funded by the most powerful country in the world, and supported by the western ruling classes including successive UK Governments. This is not self-defence.

Congress, we need to talk about the complicity of the UK Governments, Conservative and now the Labour Government, in this genocide. The report condemns the Labour Government's support for Israeli military action, saying the Government is at risk of being in breach of its obligations under international law, and complicit in war crimes. A Labour Government. It recognises the Government continues to allow the sale and supply of weapons, parts and military intelligence to support Israeli military action. And it pledges to work with our Parliamentary Group of Labour MPs to strengthen our calls on the UK Government to immediately ban all sales.

So, what is the current state of play? Obviously, I have only got a minute left or whatever, but very briefly. In September 2024, David Lammy suspended a small proportion of the UK arms export licences to Israel, 30 out of 350. The Government continues to claim this partial ban covers all items which can be used against Palestinians in Gaza, but this is false. There have been many reports, and I just quote one for time reasons. A report by the British Palestinian Committee catalogued both the validation of arms licences but also our Government's wider and deepening military collaboration with Israel, continued export of spare parts for F35 fighter jets bombing Gaza, just not direct but they are getting there; provision of logistical support to the IDF; repeated intelligence provision from the UK via surveillance flights from the Cyprus British base. Last month British campaigners at the Campaign Against the Arms Trade found that the three-month total of arms sales after the partial ban had exceeded all that the Tories had allowed.

THE CO-CHAIR: Can you wind up now, please.

KIM HENDRY: Apologies. This report upholds solidarity with the Palestinians and the working classes of Israel and the Middle East, based on socialist international working-class unity. Please support this report. Go back into your branches and try to implement everything in this report. It is urgent. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Kim. Midland?

JACQUELINE BURNETT-PITT (Midlands): President, Vice President, General Secretary, Congress and our guests, speaking in support of the CEC Special Report International Solidarity in a Changing World. As the saying goes: “United we stand, divided we fall”. This is the stance within the GMB union: united we stand. It is great to know that the GMB union are supporting the international trade unionists in their fight for employees’ rights. International employers such as Amazon (I did not actually know you guys were going to be here today) are constantly trying to beat down the presence of the union. Last year we had speakers from Amazon UK and from the US and this is what we call excellent networking.

GMB fight for humanitarian issues, as they are trade union issues - Ukraine, Palestine, just to name a couple out of many. They need our continued support, physically and monetarily. Solidarity to our brothers and sisters on the international platform. Congress let’s support this Special Report and let GMB continue the good work that they have so ably started. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you Jacqueline. The great North East, Yorkshire & Humberside.

FARZANA JUMMA (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Malcolm, in your last day as Chair, could I thank you - and could I also ask for a few seconds of leniency if I go slightly over. *(Laughter)* Congress, President, Chair, representing the North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region, in support of the report. Our international agenda of showing solidarity with other workers around the world comes from us, our members at home. When our members see the fight for injustice at work, how can they not speak out about injustices that they witness in the media around the world? How can they not feel sick to their core seeing the atrocities faced by babies, children, men and women. GMB has a strong history of standing up for injustices when it was not popular. It has been proven time and time again through history we were right to do so.

In 1985, our union's Congress expressed its solidarity with the struggle of black workers in South Africa, for genuine trade union rights, better living and working conditions, and against a system of apartheid. The shoulders of our GMB giants then in 1985 supported campaigns mounted by the Anti-Apartheid regime and the trade union movement to ensure that effective action was taken. Congress, often throughout my lived experience when I hear people mention, "You need to go home" especially when I speak out about injustices, I say this: I will, I'll be heading back to Yorkshire." Ultimately, the words that resonate with me are, "I am here because you were there." Let that sink in.



Solidarity, Congress, begins at home, building a truly international movement in a changing world. With this report we continue this work. I will be addressing some hard truths that the media does not address now. I will be addressing how we are seeing genocide in Sudan and the unfolding genocide in Gaza. Over 50,000 people have been killed and what we continue to witness is savage and unconscionable. The Government of Israel has intentionally cut off, food, water, fuel, electricity and aid to Gaza, creating a famine where two out of three people are starving to death. This is collective punishment. And I must point out that Netanyahu's Government does not represent everyone in Israel. Citizens are regularly protesting and demanding change, despite the violence that they face speaking out. Race and faith should not be factors in these despicable acts against civilians and for anyone trying to draw the GMB into that, we will not tolerate a hierarchy of racism.

Colleagues mentioned the Freedom Flotilla Coalition and the activists that were on there, and I thank the individuals who brought that forward. This is another example of how vital aid has been blocked. Congress, how many men, women and children need to die? What is the figure that the Government needs to do something meaningful? We also know that our British politicians are fully aware and there is only way out. Our Government must end arms sales to Israel and establish a Palestinian state. Justice here helps ---

THE CO-CHAIR: Wind up now please, Farzana.

FARZANA JUMMA: Congress, GMB encourages us to support our members' right to attend peaceful protests. Saturday 21st June is a National March for Palestine.

Congress, support this report so we the GMB, can remain on the right side of history.

Thank you, I move. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Farzana. North West & Irish (*Formally adopted*) Thank you. Scotland?

ROSS HERBERT (GMB Scotland): President, Vice President, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC Special Report, first-time delegate and first-time-speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, our union was founded on the basis of international solidarity. Our history is steeped in it. In a world that is becoming ever more uncertain, where the far right is on the rise and people feel the need to look ever more inwards, we must be prepared to extend the hand of friendship and solidarity to workers around the globe.

Trump's tariffs have been an obvious example of that uncertainty. His tariffs on Scotch whisky for example were not just damaging to workers here but workers also in America. Global trade wars make our international connections more important than ever. Speaking with a collective voice to our respective Governments will protect the trade routes which benefit us all across the Atlantic, the Continent and around the world.

This does not mean to say that a degree of protectionism is wrong. The abolishment of free trade rules which protect domestic content requirements benefit all workers by ending the race to the bottom on pay and terms and conditions. It will give Governments and businesses certainty that there will be a domestic market and workers the benefits of a skilled and well-paid job. Scotland will then be able to catch up in building the supposedly just transition we were all promised.

The far right around the world is seizing on these failures with their own hollow promises. They claim to have the solutions but will only deepen the crisis in our economy, the services and communities. Solidarity both at home and abroad is the antidote to the seeds of hatred and division being sown by the far right. With a response from the trade union movement on our shop floors, our break rooms, our homes, our social clubs and our streets we can halt and turn the tide. Congress, please support this Special Report. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Ross. Southern? And can the mover and seconder of Motion 288 please come to the front?

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): President, Vice President, Congress, supporting CEC's Special Report on International Solidarity in a Changing World. Congress, this support shows our union has a proud history of standing up for workers not just here in the UK but across the world. From our founding in 1889 to the campaigns we run today, we have taken action that makes a real difference, standing with unions in Ukraine, supporting Amazon workers in America, speaking out against unfair trade deals, the tariffs, and pushing back against the global rise of the far right.

Congress, the workers and communities we often support live far beyond our borders. They may be strangers to us but they are not strangers to struggle and pain. And even strangers must have access to basic human rights, freedom and justice. Congress, this report offers tools and support for reps and officers, and practical help for branches to get involved in international work. These are strong steps forward but we know there

is still more to be done. Congress, we need more of our members to take part. We must make international work a key part of our movement. We need to connect global struggles to the ones we face here at home, for secure jobs, better pay and strong public services for all. Just statements are not enough. It is about taking action. It is about turning words into support and real change. Congress, this report moves us in the right direction. Let's build on the work we have already done, create a union that speaks with one voice, for working people here and across the world. Congress, support this Special Report united in purpose, united in strength, united in unity. I support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Ali. And last but not least the wonderful Wales and South West *(Applause)*

MARTINA VRAJITORU (Wales & South West): President, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC Special Report. We give our full and unwavering support to the CEC Report on International Solidarity. This report is not just a document; it is a call to action, a blueprint, for our union must stand united not only within our borders but shoulder to shoulder with working people across the globe. Our region has a proud industrial heritage. From the slave mines of North Wales down through the coalfields of South Wales, through the docks of Bristol and the manufacturing towns of Cornwall, we know too well that the challenges facing workers are never confined to one workplace, one industry or even one country. When steel jobs are threatened in Port Talbot or the shipyards in Appledore faced closure the root causes often stretch far beyond our shores. Global supply chains, multinational employers and international trade agreements all shape our daily realities. The CEC report recognises this. It

reminds us we must be able to stand up to the challenges we face. If we do not do politics, politics is done to us and in today's world that means engaging internationally because decisions made in Brussels, Washington or Beijing can have as much impact on our members as those made in Cardiff or Westminster. Our union's history teaches us that the industrial victories need political back up. From the earliest days GMB has understood that laws and budgets passed in the Parliament often far removed from the shop floor, can make or break our hard-won gains. That is why we formed the Labour Party but in the globalised world we must work harder to protect our members. The report calls for us to strengthen our grass roots capacity, to build campaigns from the ground up, tailored to our devolved and global structures. Let's be clear, the rise of far-right populism and anti-union forces is not just a domestic threat. It is a global one.

The report demands a campaign in response to those who would scrap employment law and cut wider public services. We know from our experience that when rights are under attack anywhere, they are threatened everywhere. We must use our influence through labour, through the TUC and through the international bodies to press for strong employment rights, to challenge fire and re-hire tactics and to demand justice for all workers including those in supply chains that feed our local industries. Our solidarity must be more than words; it must be action. Our region has always looked outwards. Welsh miners fought the Spanish Republicans, the Bristol dockers stood against apathy. We follow in that proud tradition.

The CEC report's commitment to international solidarity is a natural extension our values and our history. Congress, the CEC report sets out a vision for our union that is as strong in international solidarity as it is in industrial action. It is a vision I am proud

to support. Let us remember the power of our union lies not just in what we do for ourselves but in what we do for each other, across the regions, across nations and across the world. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, Martina. Mover of 288?

## **RESETTING BRITAIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO**

### **MOTION 288**

#### **288. RESETTING BRITAIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NATO**

This Congress notes that the British government has made a "cast iron commitment to spending 2.5% of GDP on defence' and that NATO is 'part of Britain's DNA."

Congress further notes that

- NATO is the largest military force the world has ever seen, accounting for 57% of global military spending in 2023, spending 5 times more than China, 10 times more than Russia, 7 times more than whole of Asia and 31 times more than the whole of Africa.
- NATO's record of overseas interventions, including: the bombing of Yugoslavia, which used depleted uranium, cluster bombs, and other weapons to kill 500 civilians, injure 6,000 more and cause substantial environmental damage; the disastrous war in Afghanistan, which killed more than 200,000 people, including 46,000 civilians and 453 British servicemen and women and, the intervention in Libya, which threw that country into chaos.
- NATO is playing a key role in the war being fought between Russia and Ukraine, which is bringing the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe and has led the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists to set the Doomsday clock to 90 seconds to midnight for two years running, calling this 'the most dangerous moment in modern history'.

- The government's 'cast iron' commitment to funding its obligations to NATO stand in contrast to the decision to means test the Winter Fuel Allowance for pensioners, the Chancellor's call for 5% efficiency savings from all government departments and its refusal to abandon 'ironclad' fiscal rules for government spending that could create economic growth.

Congress believes that the interests of the British people lie in a government that is committed to peaceful diplomatic solutions to overseas conflicts and a diversion of spending toward creating economic growth.

Congress calls on the GMB to campaign for:

- A reset of Britain's defence policy so that it privileges domestic defence over interventionist treaty obligations:
- A review of the commitment to NATO obligations subject to wider economic growth targets.
- The convening of a labour movement conference to discuss how trade unions can build support for de-escalation of global conflicts.
- Opposing any further expansion of NATO.

## **X59 NW LONDON BRANCH**

### **LONDON REGION**

*(Fell)*

JAMES ROLLES (London): Good afternoon, Congress, President. After I move this motion, it is probably last-time delegate last-time speaker! I thank the CEC for its very excellent statement, but I am here moving this motion because my branch does not feel the CEC Statement adequately covers the issues that were raised in our motion.

The UK Government have committed to levels of military expenditure that are at the highest this century. Given the spending and borrowing constraints that our

Government has adopted, this will directly attack vital areas of social spending and public services that will create and support our economy. Britain is being transformed into a major military power, one with a permanent war economy and the capability to intervene across continents.

The Scottish Government has published some research that shows that military spending has one of the lowest employment multipliers of all economic categories, lower than agriculture, energy, food, manufacture of chemicals, iron and steel. Throwing public money at armaments designed to project British and American military power across this world makes no economic sense. We need to break this death spiral. Britain's role in the world does not need to be like this. We could be creating a multilateral world and fostering diplomatic solutions to world conflicts. Instead, we are widely seen as a belligerent nation across the globe. We could be fostering a broad-based growth in our economy for investment in manufacturing, infrastructure, healthcare, transport and education instead of cutting these areas and inflicting more social and economic distress, fostering the growth of the far right and enriching a handful of armament corporations.

Many of the arguments that I am making can be found in the Alternative Defence Review, and I would urge all delegates to take the time to read this document. We need to start a debate in the GMB and the wider trade union movement about returning to the basis of international solidarity for all working people; the promotion of peace. We need to revisit the ideas of defence diversification on the basis of just transition, just as we are doing with the environment.



This needs to start with a review of our policy of support to NATO and a conference of the Labour movement to discuss what our policies should be. The target for military expenditure is now 3% of GDP by the next Parliament. When Keir Starmer announced this, the Trump White House demanded that we increase our defence spending to 5% of GDP. Delegates, I am reminded of the Anglo-Saxon King Ethelred the Unready who thought he could buy off a tax from the Vikings by paying the so-called Danegeld. However, once the Vikings received their tribute, they only wanted more and more. Ethelred found himself of the mercy of more unwanted attention from the Viking Lords. This is our situation now we find ourselves in. No matter how much Danegeld we give to the Barbarians they always want more. This is why we desperately need to re-set our relationship with NATO. If you can, please support this motion. The war is over if you want it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE CO-CHAIR: Thank you, James. Seconder? (*Formally seconded*) Does London Region agree to withdraw the motion? (*Not agreed*) Right, we will now go to the vote on the Special Report No. 4 from the CEC. The CEC are asking you to support this report. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried.

*CEC Special Report No. 4 CARRIED.*

*Motion 288 FELL.*

THE CO-CHAIR: With the Special Report carrying that means automatically that Motion 288 falls. The reason for that is because it stands in conflict with the report.

*Motion 288 FELL.*

**Video: H.E. Ambassador Dr Husam Zomlot, Head of Palestine Mission to the UK**

THE CO-CHAIR: We will now move on. There is a video. *(Video shown) (Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: A powerful video there from the Palestinian Ambassador to the UK Dr Husam Zomlot. As you heard in the debate previously, it is really important that we hear Palestinian voices in these dark times.

**Video: Yolanda Diaz Perez, Second Deputy Vice President of Spain and Minister of Labour and Social Economy**

THE PRESIDENT: To finish off our videos of international solidarity, we are honoured to have also been sent a message from the Second Deputy Vice President of Spain, which is their Deputy Prime Minister role. Yolanda Diaz Perez is also the Minister of Labour and Social Economy. As she will explain in her video, she is dedicated to the betterment of working life for the people of Spain, embedding rights for workers, so that people can live with dignity. *(Video shown) (Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I hope you have enjoyed those videos throughout the week. I think they have all been really powerful and all shown in their own different ways why international solidarity is so important and that we must continue to build it.

**Omnibus Vote of Thanks**

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to invite Linda Carr-Pollock, CEC member from GMB Scotland, to give the omnibus vote of thanks. *(Applause)*

LINDA CARR-POLLOCK (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, it is an honour and a privilege to have been nominated by GMB Scotland to deliver this year's vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC. Wow, hasn't it been a very, very, very, very busy last four and a half days and it has flown by. It has been a very busy week and we have heard a broad range of motions and speeches. We have heard from first-time speakers, motions covering industrial, workplace and social issues and we saw from the many videos our campaigns keep growing and industrial action taken.

Your motions share with us what is important to you. You share your wins, your highs, your struggles and you share such emotive stories with us, your GMB family. Your presence and contributions have made this Congress vibrant, dynamic and powerful. We have had many rule amendments, Special Reports and of course had our guest speakers, especially The Teamsters for coming all the way from the US to address us at our Congress. *(Applause)*

Being an NHS worker myself, I had the pleasure of speaking to Aneira Thomas, known as Nye. What an inspirational woman she is. And I could have listened to her stories forever and ever. I would love to read her book too of all the things she did not or could not tell us. Thank you to all of you for supporting the ask to establish an Aneurin Bevan Day on 15th November. We all need the NHS and without the contribution of Nye Bevan we would not have such a thing. *(Applause)*.

Thank you all for your participation in the elections of our President and Vice President. Thank you to those who stood for election but were unsuccessful. Your speeches are testament to the work that you do and continue to do. Congratulations, Barbara, on your re-election to be our President and continue in your excellent leadership through the next term of office. (*Applause*)

And to Sonya, our newly elected Vice President, we wish you every success as you begin a new stage in your union journey. Well done. (*Applause*)

Congratulations also to this year's award winners, Kelvin, Louren, Carley, Abigail and John. Congratulations also to the second cohort of GRASP Ambassadors.

Before I begin the rest of the thank yous, I am going to apologise now in case I miss anybody off. Thank you to you the lay members for engaging in the motions and debates, and for not just demonstrating but exercising your voices in our union democracy to oppose the CEC in securing an increase of the £20 allowance to £25. I am sure the financial team are already busy working out how that changes the bank balance.

It is you the lay members that have made that change possible. A special thanks to the national office staff, Gavin Sibthorpe for stepping into very big shoes. You have done amazing. (*Applause*) Laurence Turner, Anna Barnes, Ross Holden, Cassie Farmer, and Sangeeta Gilani for planning and organising Congress. To the National Office staff on reception including Pat Gannon and Lacey Smith, Kevin Panton and Bob Robinson

for the internet cafe. And to Steve Short and Hilary Perrin for the exhibition area and all the unseen national staff doing a great job behind the scenes to support the smooth running of the union across the rest of the year.

Thank you to our signers and the wonderful, wonderful job you do in contributing to the accessibility of our Congress. (*Applause*). You do amazing work keeping up with fast speakers and dealing with the many, many accents we hold across this room. To all attendees, thank you for your active participation and engagement.

Thank you to the venue staff here at the Conference Centre, the stewards, the catering staff and all the organisations hosting stalls. Thanks to Barry Smith, Karen Dudley and everyone on the Standing Orders Committee who sit in a room all week working hard to keep everything on track. And of course, Barry - we wish you well as we wave goodbye to you.

Let's not forget thanks to the regional secretaries and the delegation leaders, especially mine in GMB Scotland, thanks to you Louise, and of course I can now say for anyone who does not know, thanks to my lovely husband Tam, who both keep us on track before and during Congress. (*Applause*)

Thank you to our lay members who volunteer to steward the doors, ensuring we are safe. They always brighten our day with their smiles and their humour and the two over there are now known as The Cheeky Boys. (*Applause*) Thank you to Malcolm for supporting Barbara and the CEC through the preparation for and vice chairing this year's Congress. Thank you, Malcolm. (*Applause*)

We have heard from the Potters and how precious their industry is and how we can help them protect their future. We have heard about the fights for equal pay, the struggles across all workplaces, public and private sector. Good luck to you all in your ongoing fight for what is right. We know what important roles we all play as lay members and now as a union we will look to better improve the support for our own mental health and well-being. If we cannot look after ourselves, we cannot look after those who need us most. (*Applause*)

Most of all, Congress, we would like to give thanks to you the lay members. It is you who are the union. We have and always will be a member-led union. It is your voices that drive the change we seek. Without you, there would be nothing, so thank you to you.

Finally, thank you to Gary and Barbara for all the hard work you do day in and day out as the parents, for all of us, your wonderful and amazing children and extended family. You stand side by side with members, you support them, you support us and enable us to be the best union, the union of choice, the union that is there for all. No matter the struggle, you face it head on without fear. You show care and compassion and, as has been said before and still applies, in the words of our founder Will Thorne: “There is a world freedom, beauty and equality to gain where everyone will have an opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all, making the world a better place, more to our heart’s desire and the better to dwell in.”

Keep organising, keep growing. Be the best version of yourselves. It is a time to look

forward, to move on from the past and be the very best we know we are and can be.  
Keep on fighting, agitating and creating change for the better.

Whilst I have lived in the beautiful country of Scotland for 22 years, my home town will always be my home town. So, I look forward to seeing you all next year in Blackpool and hope that we are blessed with sunshine and hopefully not just under a UK Labour Government, but also under a Scottish one. I wish you all a safe journey home. Solidarity to you all. Thank you. *(Applause)*

### **End of Congress Video**

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. We will now show the end of Congress video. Who knows what is in it. I don't. *(Video shown) (Applause)*

### **General Secretary's Closing Address**

THE PRESIDENT: A great little video that captured yesterday afternoon, thank you. I would now like to invite the General Secretary to the rostrum to give his closing address.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Everybody feeling a bit tired this morning maybe? Barbara says to me, "I don't know why you're tired, you've just got to sit here all week. It is me and Malcolm that does the work", and there is something in that!

Thank you for giving me the honour of being your General Secretary and Treasurer. I get rewarded very handsomely and it is a huge honour to do this job and basically, I do get paid to mingle this week and spend time with all of your fantastic shop stewards, and it is great to be amongst you.

It falls to me to say a number of thank yous, as well echoing what Linda said. So, on behalf of myself and the team, to the gluttons for punishment in the Standing Orders Committee, thank you so much for all your work. Karen Dudley, Darren James, David, Duncan, Bob, Mary Finn, Craig Jones and the fantastic Barry Smith who, as we said, is retiring this year. Barry, your service to this union and the support you have given me as National Officer (Barry also works in legal). Barry, you are going to be a huge miss, and from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of the whole of Congress have a fantastic, long and very happy retirement, and thank you, brother. *(Applause)*

To the CEC observers they really have the toughest of jobs, John Colbert and Lyndsay England. Thank you very much. To the team at T5, Gary and Phil, I presume you are up there, Gary. They have done us proud again this year so to the whole team, thank you T5. *(Applause)*

To the verbatim shorthand writer Mary Krelle, thank you very much. To our fantastic team of interpreters Helen Foulkes, Benjamin Gorman and Karen Green, we really, really appreciate everything you have done for us this week. *(Applause)*

Steve and Gary from U2 Events do a lot of the back stage support, they provide the



water coolers. Thanks team for your work and Mike Crofton and Glen from Exhibit world, you put up all the stands for us, and we really, really appreciate and thank you for what you have done for us.

In terms of the exhibitors, they play a big part in Congress and we are really grateful to those who make the time and effort. Hilary Perrin who was here at the start of the week. Hilary has retired. She has done the exhibits for the past few years and I think it is actually the third time Hilary has retired from the GMB. People just keep coming back, but Hilary has finally hung up this year. She worked for us previously and has done a great job. Very, very grateful to Hilary for all her efforts. Hilary has been succeeded by Steve Short. Some of you will remember Steve Short. He retired last year as executive officer and he is back this year running the exhibits. Steve, what a fantastic job you have done this week, pal, and we are grateful. (*Applause*)

To all the Conference Centre staff, thank you for making us feel so welcome and in particular to Michael who is the in-house events manager. Michael, you have dealt with us patiently and diligently for many, many years. We know that you are due to retire, so again have a very good, well deserved and very long retirement. Michael, thank you. (*Applause*) The catering team and in fact all the staff who have worked in the centre serving us drinks and food, we really appreciate the work that you have done on our behalf as well.

They have been mentioned already the Chuckle Brothers at the back there. Sam, I will see you when get back to Paisley, pal, and Ian, thank you for just being your usual

happy smiling self. And for the rest of the stewarding team, great job, thank you.

*(Applause)*

General Member Auditors Jayne, Kevin, Stephen, Karen, thank you so much for your time this week. Nipperbout creche staff, a great contribution from yourselves. Thank you. To the National Administration team, we have Alison Turtle, our Head of Finance. She has been throwing about tenners like they are going out of fashion, conceding stuff about expenses here at Congress, much to my concern. Alison, Michael, you have done a fantastic job on the finances. What a team you are. Thank you so much. And, Sam and John, the IT team, thanks for coming down from Scotland. Really appreciate your efforts.

To the national secretaries and Rhea, please pass on our best wishes and all our gratitude to the national officers who have come and done fringe meetings and who have supported the event here over the past week.

To the National Office staff, a huge thank you to John Callow and Peter Welsh. They have done some fantastic work in the lead-up to Congress and here this week as well. I do not like to single people out or individuals for their contribution, but I do have to say Anna Barnes and Ross Holden, they work on the stage, you are so patient and so tolerant of me, and honestly, they bring a calm to this top table. Thank you. I really, really appreciate all that you have done. And on the note of patience, Wendy who works with me at National Office, you deserve a medal or something for putting up with me, so thank you. *(Applause)* Sangeeta brilliant, what a shift you have put in this week. Thank you so much. I see you every morning and every night, never off your

feet. Thank you, Sangeeta, absolutely above and beyond what you are required to do. And our new Executive Officer Gavin Sibthorpe, he used to work in Politics for the GMB, he has changed role this week and looking a wee bit more stressed and fried but you have had a great first Congress, Gavin. I do not know where you are but thank you very much, pal. *(Applause)* The irrepressible Kevin Panton is here every year, year in, year out. Kevin will be here clearing up with the rest of the team afterwards. Great to see you, mate, and again we appreciate you so very much. Pat Gannon, who has been on reception for 11 consecutive Congresses now I think, Pat, great to see you every morning. Welcoming and supporting us.

And Lacey Turner, that was her first Congress this year. Lacey, great to have you on board with the team. Lauren Tinney, 12 years coming to Congress. Ever dependable, thank you to those long-serving staff. *(Applause)*

Eleanor, Lyndsey, Asha, Tracey, Rimil, Keiran, Mel, they are the people who have been doing the names, the lights, helping making sure things run smoothly. We again say a huge thanks from all of us. To the comms team Emma, Scott, JPD, absolutely put it out the park again this week. Some incredible coverage for the union. Seeing us been run live on the news when the Chancellor was here. It does not happen by accident. Thank you very much for your efforts. And my good pal Mark Betteridge, what a shift you have put again and we really, really appreciate it, mate, thank you.

It falls to me as well to say really well done to everybody who stood in the elections. It takes a lot of courage to stand up here and put yourself forward to be an office bearer in this union. You did yourselves proud and thank you for doing that. *(Applause)*

Barbara and Sonya, the Congress, this wonderful Congress has bestowed a great honour on you and I know that you appreciate it. You are well deserved winners. Well done and I really, really look forward to working with you over the next period. Thank you. (*Applause*)

And above all from me thank you to all of you. You make Congress what it is. And you are part of an army of thousands who put so much time and energy into building this fantastic union. We have come together, we have disagreed, we have had debate this week, but we have done it in a comradely way, and we have always put the interests of the members first. Let's never ever forget, the enemies are never in this hall. Our enemies are out there and let's not forget it. (*Applause*)

Look, disagreement and debate is part of being in a union. It is healthy and I do think it is appropriate to recognise those this week who have successfully overturned the CEC as we have gone through the debate. Enjoy the rest of the time in Brighton because you will be going Blackpool next year - and that includes the whole of North East, Yorkshire & Humber! There will be a big bloody gap when we get to Blackpool, trust me! Who knew Farzana was going to be such a problem, hey? I kind of suspected it. Anyway, look, the industrial campaigns they have been hearing about all those struggles, all those campaigns they are doing. It has just been so inspiring and believe me and believe in yourself what we are doing is working. Being back in workplaces, listening to members and building industrial campaigns. We are growing our union membership and we should celebrate that fact always. We are bringing through a new generation of activists, many of them who are in this hall today, and we are a financially much stronger union as a result. We have got much to do, folks, but this really is a better

union. The changes we have enacted over the past few years mean we are better, stronger and we will continue to improve as we go forward.

The Equal Pay demonstration yesterday says something about how far we have come as a union. It symbolises a union that is not inwardly looking but is facing outward, campaigning and organising, and, Congress, I promise you it will fall to us this generation who once and for all will end wage theft from working-class women. We secured commitments for labour over an enforcement body on equal pay and by goodness we are going to make sure that Labour Government delivers. That is going to be to our legacy. (*Applause*)

We are always saying we have to be focused and never, ever stray away, because we did that. We did that and it caused us a problem. Never stray away from the workplace and the industrial and the union. When I was the Scottish Secretary I got very frustrated when with the politics down south, it increasingly felt as though it was focused on Westminster and a million miles removed from the day-to-day experience of our people, but that does not mean we are not a political union and that we understand the importance of politics. For all our justifiable criticisms of Labour, we are delivering a New Deal for Working People that will give us rights that we have not had for generations to organise and collectively bargain in workplaces. It is our political voice and political campaigning that kept the four Harland & Wolff yards alive. It was our political voice and our political strength that allowed us to ensure that British Steel was nationalised. And never forget we were the first union to call for the nationalisation of British Steel at Scunthorpe.

You should be pleased and proud of the fact that the Labour Chancellor feels it is appropriate to come to this Congress and feels obliged to turn up to address you, and to make the announcements that she did; announcements that will mean thousands of jobs in defence manufacturing, and it will transform working-class communities across the UK. And on Sizewell, 10,000 jobs that project will create, including 1,200 apprentices and it would not have happened but for this union and but for you. (*Applause*) This union is and always will be about real jobs, real people and real communities.

Congress, this is a big wonderful organisation. We organise across the United Kingdom, the island of Ireland, we have had delegates here from the Channel Islands, delegates here from Orkney. We have membership in the Western Isles, on Shetland and everywhere in between. Never forget that. The wonderful diversity of this union. We should celebrate that and always commit to support each other.

And above all, Congress, let's never, ever take what we have for granted. What we have is precious. We are the temporary custodians of this great organisation, and it is our work and the work that you have done over the past few years, the difficult changes that we have embraced as an organisation that mean we are building a better and better and better and stronger union. Thank you for all that you do every day.

And as we leave here, what we will commit to do is kicking on and we are going to take this union to new levels the likes of which we have never seen before. (*Applause*)

And very finally from me, it is a huge privilege and an honour to recognise the wonderful contribution of a great friend and comrade to so many of us, someone who has given so many years' service to this union, has presided over Congress much to your frustration at times as delegates with his red light and getting you on and off. Malcolm, words fail me in terms of the contribution you have made. Please come up here, brother. It is right that we recognise you for the last time sitting in the chair here at Congress. You will continue to be a friend and comrade to many of us. Thank you, Malcolm. *(Applause and a standing ovation)*

THE CO-CHAIR: Can I just say thank you to each and every one of you. Will you do me a favour: please watch your red lights for Sonya.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you everyone. Recharge your batteries, rest up. Next week we go again. Fantastic job. Stay with it. Solidarity!

THE PRESIDENT: Please stand for the Red Flag.

*Congress sang the Red Flag*

THE PRESIDENT: President, Congress, I can now officially close Congress 2025. Thank you all, safe journeys home and I hope you all sleep well tonight. Thank you. *(Applause)*

*Congress concluded.*

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