

My brothers and sisters of the CLC:

I've really tried to refrain from commenting back to the group because I know how that goes - we all start slinging our opinions and perspectives and we lose sight of why we came together in the first place. So, I'll just give you all the accounting of what happened, and then if you want to talk about it some more, or ask questions, we can do that the next time a meeting is scheduled – or you can just contact me directly. I am definitely still in the group; I mean I certainly haven't withdrawn voluntarily.

I was told by Brother Charlie Miller that he and Brother Ricardo Guzman were putting together a group of people who wanted a change in the union's leadership. I was invited to join this group. We didn't even have a name for it at the time. The founding meeting was held in Jacksonville in conjunction with the COP on March 2nd. I asked Charlie if I should invite others as well, and he said that would be great – we wanted the group to grow. When I got to the meeting, it surprised me that half of the people in the room were people I invited. Immediately, Charlie asked us to elect officers. This was something he and Ricardo were prepared for, but nobody else was. We even elected one person that wasn't even there, but that wasn't a big deal to me. I had worked with Sister Rocky Acasio, and I liked her and found her to be very professional. I knew and liked all the other officers elected too – I still do. Yet, I had no idea why we were electing officers, what their duties would be, their responsibilities, etc.

We had no by-laws, no statement of principles, no agenda, no platform – we were just a bunch of people who wanted change within our union. However, we did have one thing and that was an assurance from the Chair that we would be a totally democratic organization and we would make decisions as a group.

After we left the meeting, I started to think of ways to build the group. I invited a bunch more people to join in, as did others. We were building it together. We were all asked to donate \$500, and I mailed in my check. I know other people who donated money as well. Nothing was ever presented to explain how the money would be spent, specifically how **decisions** to spend money would be made. Actually, we had no idea how **any** decision would be made.

It became clear to me that the group needed some direction and structure if we wanted to be successful. I thought the best way for us to move the group forward was to figure out who we wanted as our candidate for president of the NALC. I figured that person would be able to help develop the agenda, set up a workable structure, kick off fundraising, etc. I had stated to the group in Jacksonville that I was ready, willing, and able to serve as our candidate for president – if the group wanted me to. I've been calling for change within our union for some time now, and I also have a significant track record of success. Plus, I know how to win an election!

I was told that Brother James Henry, our current VP, was also interested in being our candidate for president. I know James, and I was definitely open to the idea of him being our candidate for president instead of me. He and I had a couple of lengthy

discussions, but we really weren't able to come to a consensus. At this time, I got a call from Brother Guzman, and all of a sudden James and I found ourselves on a call with all the CLC officers. We were told that they would now tell us who they thought our candidate for president should be. I was taken aback and communicated that making such a decision without contemplation, a little Q&A – anything – was not a good idea. But they persevered and decided they wanted James to be our candidate for president. I said – and this is where the precise words matter – that if that was the group's decision, I would support it. I told James the same thing in a text message that same day, and I told others as well – that a decision had been made, and that I was going to support that decision. I never said I agreed with the decision, but this definitely wasn't the first time I was willing to go along with a decision I disagreed with – I am and always will be a team player. My team is my union family.

However, when Brother Guzman sent out the email message to the group, he framed it as a recommendation, not a decision. At that point, I started to receive calls and messages asking me where this was coming from, and also I heard from some that disagreed with the decision, or recommendation. I called James and told him it didn't feel right to me. I called Ricardo and he assured me that it was simply a recommendation and that the body would make the decision. I told him that I would relay that to the people who had contacted me. I tried to get the word out that everyone should come to the next meeting with their questions and we would try to figure out what to do from there. I even sent a proposal to the Board via email that morning with an idea on how to conduct an election at the convention in Boston.

At the Zoom meeting that evening, the body decided to not select a candidate for president, but instead, they asked James and me to submit our platforms to the group for further consideration. I was excited to present my platform! I've been wanting to put some of these ideas on paper for years, and also I'm extremely proud of our group in Region 3. I relished the opportunity to see if the rest of the country wanted to adapt our ways too.

James and I had another meeting with the CLC Board. We decided to submit our platforms by May 31<sup>st</sup> to Brother Guzman, and he would send them out to the group that same day. Then James and I got the boot so the Board could come up with how the CLC would decide who their candidate for president would be. Except the Board never came up with anything. The other thing that happened was that Brother Henry started calling around for endorsements. Not invitations to join the CLC and participate in the election process, but endorsements for his candidacy before he had provided his platform to the group. I wanted my platform to be widely viewed so anyone who wanted to have their say could join the group and vote. James wanted people to sign on to his candidacy prior to the CLC endorsing him as our candidate. The whole thing started to leave a bad taste in my mouth, and so I decided to run, with or without the backing of this particular group.

So that's what happened, and now I'm running a campaign for president. After seeing this process play out, I'm even more convinced that I'm the right guy for the job. I'm not

a politician, I'm not trying to sell anyone on anything. I have a lot of support because of who I am, what I stand for, and my record of accomplishment. I'm not mad at anyone for supporting James Henry for president – if you think he's the answer for us then you should absolutely push for him to be a candidate for president and get elected. However, every person currently in the CLC doesn't feel that way, and that's ok too.

At this point, it's apparent we are never going to have a vote on who the CLC's candidate for president should be. Ricardo mentioned to me that he would be amenable to refunding me the money I put into the CLC, and giving back anyone's money that requests it. I think that's fair – this group hasn't turned out to be what I thought it was going to be and so I should probably move on. For others, it may be exactly what you are looking for, and you should stay in and build it.

Ricardo, please confirm that anyone can get their funds returned to them. This way, we can all have an amicable split, and keep our fight against the current union administration going for the next two years. We can always reassess where we are before nominations in 2026. We all have many things we agree on, and I look forward to working with all of you on some of the upcoming votes in Boston!