



IATSE LOCAL 871

Script Supervisors/Continuity, Coordinators,
Accountants & Allied Production Specialists Guild

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We understand that the Head of Production at one Production Company sent the following e-mail to their Production Staff. Our response is below each paragraph in red.

The union promises "free/premium healthcare as a union member."

As employees of the union plan, these employees may be able to qualify for MPIP insurance after six hundred qualifying hours during a time period specified by MPIP if they meet qualifications. However, they would no longer be able to participate in PHBP, which currently is designed to cover all non-union production employees working for participating employers. Under PHBP, an employee may qualify and receive benefits as soon as 30 days after earning \$30,000. If in the future the employee moves beyond one of these would-be union positions back into a non-union management position, they would have to requalify for PHBP and adhere to the PHBP waiting periods, which under current rules could create a gap in coverage of up to a year. Besides being a hindrance to those on the normal upward trajectory of production, this flies in the face of the very structure of the PHBP, which is designed to cover production employees continuously from the time they enter the industry, and as they move up the ladder in production ranks as either staff or freelance. The only employees that may benefit in the long term are those who aspire to stay in their current position.

PHBP was initially offered in response to an attempt to gain union representation and benefits for production staff. The qualification for PHBP is similar to the qualification for MPI benefits. As stated, under PHBP, you qualify as soon as 30-days after earning \$30,000. For those of you earning \$600 per day, you would need to work 50 days to earn \$30,000. For those of you earning \$400 per day, you would need to work 75 days. Qualification for MPI is based on hours, and not wages. As an on-call position, you earn 12-hours for each day worked. This means that you qualify after working the same 50-days that the higher earners need to qualify for PHBP.

If after being in MPI while working in a covered classification, you moved to a non-union position, your MPI benefits would continue for some period of time (depending on how much you worked during your time in the plan.) The same thing will happen when you transition from PHBP to MPI. Because both plans are set up for a freelance industry, they are set up to cover periods of unemployment and transition. Most likely, during the transition there would be some period during which you are covered by a two plans.

The union promises a pension.

The union pension benefits are available to coordinators who work at least 400 credited hours each year for five years under the IA contract. The union quotes a potential range



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of benefits from \$74.58 per month upon retirement to \$1755.12 per month upon retirement – these rates are based on a person working 2000 credited hours per year each year and the total is dependent upon the number of years worked (on the high end, 20 or more years).

If you are covered by the MPI benefit plans, there are two retirement benefits that you would earn towards. One is the traditional defined benefit plan, or pension, which is described above, although it is incorrect that you can only earn 20-years towards your pension benefit. For more accurate information about what this pension would look like, you can go to the MPI website at mpiphp.org. It is correct that you need 5-years in the plan to vest in this pension benefit. In addition, there is a defined contribution plan, or Individual Account Plan. The employer pays 6% of earnings into this account and you vest in this money after one year.

If you are not in the MPI benefit plans, your employers don't provide any retirement benefit whatsoever. It's interesting that Ms. Bowen seems to be criticizing the MPI retirement benefit, when the production companies offer you absolutely nothing, not even a 401(k) plan to save your own money.

Employees should also know that union members are required to pay membership dues at a flat rate based on the job classification – for a Production Office Coordinator that would be approximately \$150 per calendar quarter. Assuming the union does not charge the normal initiation fee (a promise that is also being made to entice election), this \$600 per year will be annual.

We are not hiding the fact that our members pay union dues. This is what pays for the cost of negotiating on your behalf and enforcing our agreements. It is correct that we are waiving the initiation fee.

In addition, employees should know that as union members, they may be subject to rules that permit work for union signatories only.

This is not an accurate statement. IATSE members are not prohibited from working on non-union productions.