Hi Lauren,

Last week, workers at a Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, TN made history by overwhelmingly voting to join the United Automobile Workers—making the shop the only unionized foreign-owned auto plant in the South.

This victory comes on the heels of the exciting progress at the Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Alabama, where a majority of workers signed cards in support of UAW, putting them on the path of unionization.

We’ll say it again: Don’t count out the South.

Jobs to Move America has been working in the South for years to reverse the trend of companies viewing the region as a source of cheap, non-union labor, which upholds the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. Poverty in the state is high, as well as other markers of poor quality of life, even as companies there are flush with billions in state tax subsidies.

But unionization—as well as community benefits agreements, like the one we signed with New Flyer—gives workers a voice and leverage on the job and tips the scales in favor of regular
The South keeps winning

people. And it’s contagious: if workers in Chattanooga get a great contract, a big raise, better health benefits, and then the same thing at Mercedes, there will be a lot more good opportunities to win good contracts in short order.

And, this continuing momentum—led by Black workers—could travel beyond the auto industry. As Jennifer Epps pointed out in Nonprofit Quarterly, workers of color made up 100 percent of union growth in 2022, with Black workers with the highest rates of unionization nationwide.

We’re seeing unprecedented investments in manufacturing across the country, leading to an electric vehicle boom. But too often, workers aren’t seeing their share of this wealth. It’s time to reverse that by ensuring this burgeoning industry creates good jobs that uplift families and communities.

Next, the work begins to win a good contract, which is the hard part. But workers in the South have done harder things. We know they won’t stop and we won’t either.

JMA spoke to the New York Times about this important victory. Read more here.

In solidarity,

Troy Washington
Communications Director

What We're Reading and Watching

- Nonprofit Quarterly published an essay about why philanthropists should support labor justice, citing JMA’s work in advancing community benefits agreements among “innovative tools that advance worker rights, good living wages, and green jobs” that “give an authentic voice to workers—especially Black workers.” Read it here.

- From D.C. to Chicago, we've been celebrating the White House Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) recent changes to the federal Uniform Grants Guidance, which contain many of our Local Opportunities Coalition’s pro-worker recommendations. Check out our Reel of JMA’s Deputy Director, Miranda Nelson, speaking at a White House event announcing the new guidance, and one of a press conference celebrating the win in Chicago.

Get to Know JMA!
Want to learn more about our work across the country? We're hosting two upcoming events for supporters new and old to learn about what we're doing to create good jobs in the cleantech sector:

- **California Sets the Path for the Country's Climate Future.** This virtual event will share how California is forging a path for the country's climate future. You'll hear from a worker who has participated in a training program at BYD as a result of JMA's Community Benefits Agreement with them, as well as from JMA team members. [RSVP here.](https://info.jobstomoveamerica.org/webmail/968783/1353239367/4a3da5fa7343cb7687f453b33a932f012a838c0cf2b6b4792a73f179be114dd)

- **Get to Know JMA D.C.** This in-person event in D.C. will feature Co-Executive Directors Madeline Janis and Erica Iheme presenting our national work and the impact of our work in the South. There will also be an opportunity for Q&A and conversation with key JMA staff. [RSVP here.](https://info.jobstomoveamerica.org/webmail/968783/1353239367/4a3da5fa7343cb7687f453b33a932f012a838c0cf2b6b4792a73f179be114dd)

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**Join us in the fight for good jobs and healthy communities.**

Donate Today
The South keeps winning