



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES, MOVING PICTURE TECHNICIANS,  
ARTISTS AND ALLIED CRAFTS OF THE UNITED STATES, ITS TERRITORIES AND CANADA

Affiliated with  
the AFL-CIO, CLC

207 West 25th Street  
4th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Tel: 212-730-1770  
Fax: 212-730-7809

MATTHEW D. LOEB  
INTERNATIONAL  
PRESIDENT

JAMES B. WOOD  
GENERAL SECRETARY-  
TREASURER

MICHAEL BARNES  
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

THOM DAVIS  
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

DAMIAN PETTI  
THIRD VICE PRESIDENT

MICHAEL F. MILLER, JR.  
FOURTH VICE PRESIDENT

DANIEL DI TOLLA  
FIFTH VICE PRESIDENT

JOHN FORD  
SIXTH VICE PRESIDENT

JOHN M. LEWIS  
SEVENTH VICE PRESIDENT

CRAIG P. CARLSON  
EIGHTH VICE PRESIDENT

PHIL S. LOCICERO  
NINTH VICE PRESIDENT

C. FAYE HARPER  
TENTH VICE PRESIDENT

COLLEEN A. GLYNN  
ELEVENTH VICE PRESIDENT

JAMES J. CLAFFEY, JR.  
TWELFTH VICE PRESIDENT

JOANNE M. SANDERS  
THIRTEENTH VICE PRESIDENT

January 28, 2019

Former First Lady Michelle Obama  
Office of the First Lady  
The Obama Foundation  
5235 S Harper Ct  
Chicago, IL 60615

Dear Mrs. Obama:

I am writing to you today to bring to your attention a dispute related to fairness and workers' rights that may become an issue at your upcoming February 8th appearance at the Tacoma Dome in Tacoma, Washington.

You may not be aware that a company, Rhino Staging Northwest, which has been engaged to staff your book talk in Washington State, has personnel policies and operations that are not consistent with the values you have represented throughout your career.

Rhino acts as a subcontractor to your promoter Live Nation and to the Tacoma Dome. The company pays substandard wages, its workers receive no healthcare or retirement benefits, and the riggers and stagehands employed by Rhino face serious safety concerns.

While your husband was still President, Rhino workers tried to improve their working conditions by voting to form a union. The company refused to bargain, but eventually was ordered by the National Labor Relations Board to sit down with the workers and negotiate in good faith. Yet today, years later, Rhino continues to stall, workers' health and safety issues persist, and compensation remains at a level below what it takes to support a family or even pay reasonable rent in the Seattle market.

Rhino workers have regularly conducted audience outreach and "bannering" outside the Tacoma Dome at recent concerts sponsored by Live Nation. We believe, with your help, we will avoid further bannering.

We would ask you to consider using your platform to assist the men and women represented by the IATSE. With your support, we hope to have the Becoming, Book Tour Production sign a nation-wide agreement with the IATSE. A national agreement is what President Obama's campaign signed with the IATSE in 2008 and 2012. We believe a nation-wide agreement could further protect workers at venues like the Houston Toyota Center. The agreement would cover all your venues and ensure all

workers for your events have pension contributions, health care, and the highest safety measures in place.

During his two terms in the White House, President Obama stood up for rigorous safety protections for workers and consumers. Your family will go down in history as the one that put all families first by extending health care coverage to millions of hardworking Americans.

We hope to work with you and your staff to use this as an opportunity to inform them how far short they are falling of the shining example set by you and your husband President Barack Obama, which should be an example for all of us.

When you use the stage to speak to the audience about your journey from Chicago to Washington and your fight for fairness and for health care for those who have gone without, my members will be backstage cheering you on. I intend to let them know that you are doing the same for them, fighting for the working men and women across this country.

Sincerely,



Matthew D Loeb  
International President

PS: If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the IATSE's Political & Legislative Director Erika Dinkel-Smith on her cellphone at [REDACTED] or by email ([REDACTED]).

PPS: I have attached links to a recent Seattle Weekly cover story about the Rhino workers and a second link to a story about the Rhino dispute that appeared in The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2018/oct/30/seattle-backstage-workers-urge-drake-to-speak-out-about-their-union-struggle>

<http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/the-backstage-blues-riggers-complain-of-unfair-labor-practices/>