

Dear Members,

With AFTRA and SAG working hard to develop a plan to become one union, SAG National President Ken Howard and I would like to take this opportunity to address the members of both unions. Our move toward this fundamental goal began more than a year and a half ago, when leaders of AFTRA and SAG published letters in our respective magazines indicating a strong desire to find a path to a combined successor union.

We've made remarkable progress since then. Once a comprehensive merger plan has been completed, it will be presented to the AFTRA and SAG National Boards for review. If our boards approve the plan, we fully expect that members of both unions will make the final decision about forming one union by voting in a referendum this coming spring.

After more than six months of hearing directly from members during the Presidents' Forum for One Union Listening Tour, we believe you will greet this news with excitement. The input we gathered from across the country gave us invaluable insights into the ways members' work is changing and the challenges we're facing. More than anything, it became absolutely clear that members nationwide need and support the move to one union.

There is wide recognition among members that uniting AFTRA and SAG is essential to increasing our bargaining strength. Members in all categories routinely work for the same handful of multinational corporations that control the entertainment and media industries. By dividing our work in several areas, our employers make it difficult for us to negotiate from a position of maximum strength. This also leaves us vulnerable to the dangerous possibility of competitive negotiations. Forming a single union ensures that we cannot be divided in our work or negotiations and that employers have just one place to get the skilled union talent they need.

Uniting AFTRA and SAG will also improve our ability to organize. This is especially important in the areas of commercials, new media, interactive games, industrials and music, but also in cable news, and local and national radio and television broadcasting, where non-union work is a growing threat. An improved capacity for organizing is especially vital for broadcasters who, like actors, also need more union-covered work opportunities, and for strengthening our bargaining leverage in individual shops and across markets and employer groups. By focusing our resources and implementing a unified strategy, we can be more effective at turning non-union work into union jobs for members.

Merger is vital to protecting our Health & Retirement / Pension & Health benefits. There are more than sixty AFTRA and SAG members involved in the work of the Group for One Union (G1), and every one of us knows how crucial those benefits are because we depend on them ourselves. As AFTRA and

SAG have remained separate, our benefit plans have been forced to make painful changes; medical out-of-pocket costs have gone up while coverage has been reduced, pension accrual rates have come down and eligibility requirements have risen significantly. While world economic forces are beyond the control of any benefits plan, increasing our bargaining strength by uniting AFTRA and SAG is critical to maintaining and improving our benefit levels in the future.

Forming one union will provide another tremendous advantage. Technology isn't just changing the way we work; it's also changing the way our employers make money. This is a golden opportunity to evaluate how we're addressing those changes and to systematically identify the areas where new approaches are needed. Doing that together, in one house, is the only practical way to create a unified strategy to capture our fair share of the profits that flow through our employers' evolving revenue streams.

These are some of the most important reasons why AFTRA and SAG have chosen to work toward building a new union together. There are other reasons as well, tracing directly to the interests and concerns expressed so clearly during the Presidents' Forum Listening Tour. Naturally, members are eager to know specifics, but uniting AFTRA and SAG requires a comprehensive approach to many inter-related details. As any one aspect of the plan takes shape, others may change; therefore, we haven't reached conclusions we can share yet. But we continue making steady progress.

Once the G1 has arrived at a plan it can recommend, our national boards will examine it carefully to determine if it meets the needs of AFTRA and SAG members. If they approve the plan, full details will be provided to every member and there will be ongoing opportunities to have questions answered. An issue of this magnitude requires that each member be able to cast a fully informed and well-considered vote.

Working together, we have the rare chance to create something greater than the sum of its parts. Once we reach our goal, we trust our work will show a clear reflection of the hopes and expectations that so many members have shared, and we believe they will decide accordingly. Above all, we are excited about the future because we are confident that AFTRA and SAG are on a path that will make us all stronger.

In unity,



Roberta Reardon
National President
AFTRA



Ken Howard
National President
Screen Actors Guild