

Westwood MUNC VIII

# SAG-AFTRA STRIKE



Delegates,

Since WestwoodMUNCVIII is being run as an entirely crisis-based conference, it is crucial for newcomers to be familiar with the rules of procedure, as it does diverge from some of the more traditional general assembly procedures. Please see below for a quick rundown of most of the rules we will be following for the duration of the conference:

I. Overview:

Crisis committees are run differently from “normal” Model UN committees. Because they run at a very fast pace, each committee is run in a series of moderated caucuses, designed to maintain a rapid flow of debate and help delegates adjust to crisis updates. The rest of the committee follows normal parliamentary procedure with a few notable exceptions.

II. Format:

As previously stated, the format of debate differs slightly from a general assembly in a crisis simulation. There is no speakers list and therefore, the default method of debate is a moderated caucus. Chairs will require the first motion to be a round robin to ascertain the positions of others in the committee. This will serve as a good jumping off point to see who delegates are most likely to work with and who is most likely to get in the way of achieving their goals. After that, delegates will be able to motion for the “traditional” (un)moderated caucuses, round robins, straw polls, voting procedure, etc. In order to make any of these motions, a delegate must be recognized by the chair after raising their placards. Points and motions may be made between speakers, though note that right of

replies are rarely granted and are only allowed when serious insult to national or personal integrity has occurred.

### III. Public Directives:

Delegates do not work to pass resolutions. Rather, they will pass a series of directives that are binding, take effect immediately and can potentially alter the course of events for the entire crisis simulation. A directive is a specific action that the committee wishes to take. Unlike resolutions, directives do not include preambulatory clauses; instead, delegates will directly state specific orders, similar to operative clauses, following the title and the sponsors and signatories list.

### IV. Personal Directives:

Additionally, individual members of the committee may pass personal directives depending on their particular position, potentially contributing to individual crisis arcs. These directives can range from allocating funds for renewable energy to carrying out assassinations. These actions do not need to be passed by the committee at large and their effectiveness is determined by their feasibility and the crisis staff. It is suggested that delegates refrain from sharing what personal directives they are planning as they should be used to achieve personal objectives that might not always align with the interests of the committee as a whole. These directives are sent to the crisis backroom, who determines whether or not the directive will change the course of the committee.

### V. Communication:

Communication is an essential part of any crisis simulation, and is especially a vital tool when delegates are required to respond to crisis updates. At the beginning of the conference, delegates will be provided with a pen and a pad of paper. They may use the paper to write notes to each other, write up directives, or organize thoughts. Regarding note passing: delegates may pass notes to each other during committee while other members are speaking, but this privilege may be revoked by the chair should it distract from the debate. Specifics about note passing will be addressed at the beginning of the first committee session by the chair. Technology, like computers and cell phones, are not allowed during debate.

#### VI. Conference Prep:

In order to prepare for this conference, it is *strongly* recommended that each delegate consolidate their thoughts and strategy by writing a position paper. Delegates that do not submit a paper by the deadline below will not be eligible for awards. Position papers should:

- Be 1-2 pages in length single spaced, 12 point font
- Describe your role's position and what they contribute to the issue
- Address specific questions from the Background Guide that are relevant to your role
- Outline your role's likely optimal resolution and steps you need to take to achieve it
- MLA or Chicago style citations along with a Works Cited or Bibliography

Please email your position paper to your chairs no later than ***11:59 pm on Saturday, April 5th*** so that they have adequate time to read them. To qualify for any awards you must submit a

position paper by emailing it to [27atheofilou@wpsstudents.org](mailto:27atheofilou@wpsstudents.org) or [25icitrin@wpsstudents.org](mailto:25icitrin@wpsstudents.org).

Once again, please feel free to email your chairs or crisis director with any questions you may have regarding conference policies or procedures.

Best,

WestwoodMUNCVIII Staff

Hello delegates!

Welcome to WestwoodMUNCVIII! My name is Anna Theofilou, and I am the chair for the SAG-AFTRA Strike Committee. I am a sophomore here at Westwood High School (WHS), and this is my second year doing MUN. Along with MUN, I participate in clubs such as Mock Trial and WHS a cappella group. For hobbies, I sing and play piano. I am also currently learning Greek and Mandarin. I started Model UN in freshman year and absolutely fell in love with it. I'm excited for a spirited discussion and to hear all of your innovative ideas. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Itai or me. My email is provided below. Best of luck!

[27atheofilou@wpsstudents.org](mailto:27atheofilou@wpsstudents.org)

Best,

Anna Theofilou

Dear Delegates,

My name is Itai Citrin, and I am excited to be your co-chair for the SAG-AFTRA Strike committee! I am a senior at Westwood High School, and this is my second year doing MUN. I have enjoyed participating in many local high school and college conferences as a member of the club. Outside of MUN, I run all three seasons and play the saxophone in WHS's wind ensemble and jazz band. I am also a member of both the NHS and Tri-M honor societies.

The themes touched on by this committee are especially relevant to our lives, as they include ongoing questions about emerging technology, labor relations, and the role of the media in society. While there are no easy answers to these questions, rigorous research, collaboration, and consensus-building will be necessary to produce creative and substantive solutions.

As always, Anna and I hope to facilitate a welcoming, respectful, and intriguing discourse. Everyone, regardless of experience and position, should feel comfortable speaking their minds and playing an active role in the committee. I look forward to a lively debate and hearing your creative ideas. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to Anna or me. My email is [25icitrin@wpsstudents.org](mailto:25icitrin@wpsstudents.org). Good luck!

Best,

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**Position papers are due April 5th. Position papers are required if you want to be eligible to win any award. Some individuals may hold different jobs or offices since the events of this committee. Please have research reflect that individual's status in the summer of 2023.**

## Committee Overview

In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, the entertainment industry has undergone significant changes. From the rise and popularization of streaming services to the new threat that AI poses to actors, important players in the industry and consumers alike have been grappling with uncertainty about the future of Hollywood. This uncertainty culminated in the Screen Actors Guild—American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA), the major union representing actors and other creative professionals, voting to strike in the summer of 2023. They were protesting what they described as an unfair and exploitative revenue-sharing system, technological encroachments, and subpar workplace conditions.<sup>1</sup>

This committee is set in October 2023, during negotiations between movie industry executives who comprise the Alliance of Motion Picture & Television Producers (AMPTP) and SAG-AFTRA representatives. The parties have been deadlocked for three months and with summer productions and release schedules at risk, time is of the essence for a comprehensive resolution. As both sides remain firmly entrenched in their positions, frustration among the public and within the industry is growing. The outcome of these negotiations will not only determine the future of Hollywood but could set a precedent for labor relations in creative industries worldwide. With billions of dollars and thousands of jobs on the line, the stakes could not be higher.

Beyond money, the strike has sparked debates over technology's role in entertainment, specifically, the ethics of AI-generated performances replacing creative professionals and studios using actors' digital likenesses without fair compensation. Streaming has also changed how

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<sup>1</sup> Zoe Phillips, "SAG-AFTRA and WGA Strikes: All the Major Dates to Know | Entertainment Tonight," [www.etonline.com](https://www.etonline.com), July 20, 2023, <https://www.etonline.com/sag-and-wga-strikes-all-the-major-dates-to-know-207915>.



profits are shared, leaving many actors and crew fighting over residuals while studios continue to make money from online content. Meanwhile, industry leaders warn that giving into actors' demands could lead to budget cuts, job losses, and fewer new productions.

Public opinion is also a major factor, with fans, the public, and advocacy groups pushing for fair wages and better labor conditions. Social media campaigns, celebrity support, and boycotts have put more pressure on studios, while some executives worry about lasting damage to their reputation as the strike drags on. As both sides head into more negotiations, they must find a way to balance financial stability, new technology, and fair treatment for these actors.

## Context

Pandemic era shutdowns from 2020-2023 caused massive financial losses to be incurred by the entertainment industry. Movie studios bore the brunt of these shutdowns as they stopped receiving profits from theaters. Before the pandemic, these studios had been receiving upwards of 60% of box office revenue.<sup>2</sup> Studios faced lackluster ticket sales even when they began in-person showings again, and a new threat to the industry was on the horizon: the rise of streaming services. Streaming was hailed as an innovative medium for consumers to access entertainment wherever and whenever they like via the internet. Streaming platforms used pandemic era shutdowns to break into the mainstream entertainment market, taking up much of the vacuum left by theater closures.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dina Zipin, "How Exactly Do Movies Make Money?," Investopedia, October 18, 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/093015/how-exactly-do-movies-make-money.asp>.

<sup>3</sup> Kait Fore, "The Impact of Streaming Services on the Movie Industry: Transforming Entertainment as We Know It," Social Cinema (Motion Picture Institute, June 19, 2023), <https://motionpicture.edu/socialcinema/2023/06/19/the-impact-of-streaming-services-on-the-movie-industry/>.

These platforms were also not bound to the same collective bargaining and legal protections for actors as traditional industry players. Because there were fewer requirements on them to collect and disclose ratings and viewership data, these companies were at liberty to devise their own revenue sharing systems. Platforms such as Disney+ and Peacock abandoned the traditional revenue sharing system with actors. This system had historically been comprised of union-negotiated commissions for creative professionals' time filming and significance of their role in the production as well as success-based royalties, which were calculated based on viewership data and box office ticket sales collected by a third-party such as Nielsen.<sup>4</sup> The revenue sharing system that these streaming services used instead operated on a flat-rate compensation. This meant that streamers paid actors, writers, and other creative professionals a single upfront commission (divided evenly if it was an episodic series) instead of a royalty determined by the success of the production. Although smaller residual payments were often negotiated with streamers based on viewership data, there were significant concerns from actors and labor leaders alike regarding the transparency of the metrics the companies collected internally. Payments were also considerably correlated to the actors' experience and the significance of their role in that production, meaning young, aspiring, and background actors were not able to earn a living wage from their work on streaming productions, especially in the face of rising costs of living. Furthermore, royalties were issued at a predetermined flat rate, unlike traditional royalties, which increased with success, length of time running, and reruns. This caused streaming royalties to almost always be lower than traditional studios. This system allowed streamers to maximize profits at the expense of actors.<sup>5</sup> These systemic shifts in revenue

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<sup>4</sup> Diep Tran, "How Much Do Actors Make? A Guide to Getting Paid to Perform," Backstage.com, March 27, 2024, <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/how-much-money-do-actors-make-75180/>.

<sup>5</sup> Kait Fore, "The Impact of Streaming Services on the Movie Industry: Transforming Entertainment as We Know It," Social Cinema (Motion Picture Institute, June 19, 2023), <https://motionpicture.edu/socialcinema/2023/06/19/the-impact-of-streaming-services-on-the-movie-industry/>.

sharing with actors have led to disputes over fair compensation in the streaming era. Despite the ongoing competition between traditional entertainment networks, cable companies, and studios, negotiating under the AMPTP has allowed the companies to wield their significant financial power during the strike to a greater extent.

A historical example of an actor strike that is good to refer back to for examples and precedent would be the 1980 SAG-AFTRA strike. The 1980 SAG-AFTRA strike was a 95-day strike in 1980 and was driven by actors demanding fair residuals for pay-TV and home video sales, which were becoming increasingly popular then. Studios initially offered actors a flat fee instead of a percentage of VHS sales, leading to a standoff (strike). The strike ended with a compromise, giving actors some share in home video profits, though many felt it was insufficient.<sup>6</sup> Much like the concerns in the 2023 strike, many felt it failed to account for how the industry was evolving. This dispute set a precedent for future battles over new distribution methods, similar to today's streaming conflicts.

## **Crisis Timeline**

On the morning of July 14, 2023, members of SAG-AFTRA, the union that represents about 160,000 actors and other entertainment professionals, unilaterally walked off the job. The strike followed multiple weeks of intense negotiations between SAG-AFTRA and the AMPTP to reach a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA), which was set to expire on July 12th at midnight. When the deadline passed and no new agreement was in place, SAG-AFTRA's negotiating committee recommended to their National Board to go on strike. In advance of the contract negotiations, SAG-AFTRA had already held a union-wide vote to authorize a strike if

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<sup>6</sup> "1980s," SAG-AFTRA, 2022, [https://www.sagaftra.org/about/our-history/1980s?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.sagaftra.org/about/our-history/1980s?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

no agreement could be reached, and 98% of voters approved the measure.<sup>7</sup> The following day, the National Board of SAG-AFTRA announced that the union would cease working at midnight.

Exacerbating this tumultuous period in Hollywood's history has been the ongoing Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike which started in May. The decision by SAG-AFTRA to simultaneously strike alongside the WGA, the first time this has happened in 60 years, has ground production and filming to a halt. As part of their protest, SAG-AFTRA has also barred actors from promoting or marketing their work during the strike, causing summer movie releases, normally a blockbuster season for Hollywood, to be postponed. In the meantime, actors, activists, and union organizers have been picketing outside of the grounds of Paramount and Sony Pictures Studios all summer, calling attention to their cause and demanding living wages.

The shutdown of productions has significantly impacted the local economy with the latest estimates putting losses at \$10 billion.<sup>8</sup> The Governor of California, Gavin Newsom, and LA Mayor Karen Bass, have both expressed concern about the widespread economic impact of the strikes, especially if they are prolonged beyond the summer. On a national level, President Biden has pushed for both parties to faithfully negotiate during collective bargaining negotiations. Because of the fraught nature of negotiations and the havoc the strikes have wrought on the economy and local residents' lives, government officials have been requested to help hammer out a deal. It is important to note that SAG-AFTRA and the WGA have been negotiating separately with the AMPTP.

While there have been attempts at negotiations, SAG-AFTRA and the AMPTP thus far have not been able to reach a comprehensive deal to end the strike. SAG-AFTRA has

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<sup>7</sup> A. B. C. News, "SAG-AFTRA Negotiating Committee Votes Unanimously to Recommend Strike as Hollywood Talks Stall," ABC News, accessed October 6, 2023, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/sag-aftra-strike-looms-union-studios-meet-federal/story?id=101181001>.

<sup>8</sup> Brooks Barnes, John Koblin, and Nicole Sperling, "SAG-AFTRA and Hollywood Studios Agree to Deal to End Actors' Strike," The New York Times, November 9, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/business/media/actors-strike-deal.html?searchResultPosition=10>.

overwhelmingly voted not to accept multiple offers made by the AMPTP. Both sides have traded blame for the failure to agree to a new contract. Four powerful streaming executives, Bob Iger, Ted Sarandos, Donna Langley, and David Zaslav, nicknamed the CEO Gang of Four, have helped spearhead the AMPTP negotiating team and unite streaming platforms and streaming services under one block. As media coverage of the strikes has grown, public opinion has increasingly been sympathetic to the actors' cause; however, widespread consumer frustration over the halted productions and the growing impact on entertainment availability has caused a newfound sense of urgency in negotiations.

## **Blocks Positions**

### **AMPTP:**

This block includes the heads of the largest studios, networks, and streaming companies in America. They are back with significant financial assets and corporate interests of the companies they represent and the entertainment industry at large. These individuals are seeking to reach a deal as soon as possible to have actors start working again while limiting costly financial guarantees for actors because this diminishes profits for the companies they represent. After many months of negotiations and multiple lucrative deals that have been voted down by the union, they are growing skeptical that the actors are negotiating in good faith.

### **SAG-AFTRA:**

This is a group of actors and negotiators that are representing the SAG-AFTRA union members. They are advocating for living wages, better working conditions, and guarantees against technological replacements that compromise their livelihoods. They are seeking a collective bargaining agreement that satisfies these lists of demands. Because of the size of the

union, the strike has significantly hurt companies' bottom lines. This, as well as the media and pop culture spotlight on A-list actors, who, despite not facing financial hardships, have walked out in solidarity with their colleagues, has given them added power during negotiations. They also have significant backing from consumers and activists.

### **Government Negotiators:**

This block consists of local, state, and federal government officials who have directly interacted with or are involved in the entertainment industry. Because of their proximity to the industry, they wield significant power to influence negotiations by shaping regulations, policies, and government funding. Since no federal laws outline regulations regarding AI and creative professionals, it will be important for the officials to establish a clear policy on this issue and work with both parties to enforce it.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What have previous collective bargaining agreements looked like and how can they be improved?
2. How can an agreement be reached that balances the actor's concerns regarding pay and working conditions with the executive's prioritization of finances?
3. Do streamers need to be regulated more, specifically regarding revenue sharing?
4. How should the use of AI in productions be regulated going forward, specifically regarding secondary and background roles?
5. What steps should be taken to limit disruptions to the release of future content for consumers because of the strikes?

6. How can young and aspiring actors, the future of the industry, who have found it harder than ever to make a living, be supported?
7. How can the industry create long-term protections to prevent future labor disputes while still allowing room for innovation and growth?

## Positions

### AMPTP Negotiators + Movie and TV Executives:

- **Carol Lombardini:** Lombardini has worked for the AMPTP since its foundation and has served as its chief negotiator since 2009. In this position, Lombardini negotiates for over 350 production companies, studios, and networks, working closely with their executives. She is widely regarded by the industry for her extensive understanding of Hollywood, including its labor relations history, but has frequently faced criticism from actors and their allies for her staunch public support for upholding the studio's interests. She has utilized her experience in previous negotiations, including with the WGA, using the relationships she has formed with actors and their union representatives over the years to arrive at a consensus while simultaneously standing firm in protecting the entertainment industry's interests. She is also a trustee of the National Film Preservation Foundation.<sup>9</sup><sup>10</sup>
- **Bob Iger:** Iger is the CEO of Walt Disney Studios. He had previously served in this same role from 2005-2020, stepping down briefly, before returning in 2022. His vision for the company since returning has included expanding the company's streaming platforms, Disney+ and Hulu, and utilizing emerging technologies such as AI in productions. Iger is

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<sup>9</sup> "AMPTP - Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers - Carol Lombardini," amptp.org, n.d., <https://amptp.org/calbio.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Gene Maddaus, "Carol Lombardini to Step down as President of AMPTP," Variety, November 2024, <https://variety.com/2024/biz/news/carol-lombardini-step-down-amptp-president-1236197126/>.

also a member of the CEO Gang of Four. He has vehemently blamed the actors' union for being unrealistic and necessarily disruptive to the industry during negotiations.<sup>1112</sup>

- **Brian Robbins:** Robbins is the President and CEO of Paramount Pictures, a major studio. He has been leading efforts to reignite the company's programming to better suit the widening variety of devices and platforms consumers, especially Gen Z and Gen Alpha, use to access their content. As a former actor and producer, including many roles in daytime television, Robbins has sought to bridge the gap between executives and creative professionals.<sup>13</sup>
- **Tony Vinciguerra:** Vinciguerra is the CEO and head of Sony Studio's global operations. An active member of the AMPTP negotiating team during both the current and previous strikes, he is concerned about the prolonged nature of talks, saying recently that "we want to go back to the table and get this settled quickly." Vinciguerra does not want productions to go abroad, which he sees as an increasing threat if the cost of producing and filming domestically goes up.<sup>14</sup>
- **Donna Langley:** Langley is the Chief Content Officer of NBCUniversal, having been recently promoted. This role gives Langley oversight over all programming, marketing, and the company's global creative strategy. She has positioned herself against the use of AI at the cost of individual actors/writers, which distinguishes her from some of her

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<sup>11</sup> Ellise Shafer, "Disney CEO Bob Iger Says Writers and Actors Are Not Being 'Realistic' with Strikes: 'It's Very Disturbing to Me,'" Variety, July 13, 2023, <https://variety.com/2023/tv/news/bob-iger-writers-actors-strike-disney-ceo-1235669169/>.

<sup>12</sup> The Walt Disney Company, "Robert A. Iger," The Walt Disney Company, 2022, <https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/leaders/robert-a-iger/>.

<sup>13</sup> "ContentKeeper Content Filtering," Paramount.com, 2025, <https://www.paramount.com/news/how-brian-robbins-and-team-are-building-nickelodeons-future>.

<sup>14</sup> Variety Staff, "Sony Chief Tony Vinciguerra Says He Hopes SAG Strike Is Settled Soon," Variety, July 21, 2023, <https://variety.com/2023/film/global/sony-pictures-ceo-tony-vinciguerra-sag-aftra-strike-we-want-to-go-back-to-the-table-1235676283/>.



colleagues who have been more receptive to it. A veteran studio executive, she has helped spearhead the AMPTP negotiations team as part of the CEO Gang of Four. Langley believes in formulating a holistic agreement so that future strikes can be averted, yet this can be more time-consuming. She is a voting member of both the British and American Academies of Motion Pictures as well as the Television Academy.<sup>1516</sup>

- **David Zaslav:** Zaslav is the President and CEO of Warner Bros. Discovery. The portfolio Zaslav oversees includes major streaming services such as MAX and Discovery + as well as cable channels, HBO, CNN, and TNT, amongst others. He previously held executive positions at NBCUniversal. Warner Bros. has been hit particularly hard by the actors' strike, reporting a 5% loss during the third quarter. He is one of the CEO Gang of Four key negotiators for the AMPTP.<sup>1718</sup>
- **George Cheeks:** Cheeks is the President and CEO of CBS, a major network, having joined the company after working for 30 years at NBC. Cheeks has expressed concern for artists in the streaming age and has acknowledged the challenge the rise of this new form of entertainment has posed on traditional network and cable channels. He has further acknowledged that while networks and streamers often do not share the same interests, they are negotiating as part of the same block being represented by the AMPTP. He has looked favorably upon creating a more open ecosystem to share entertainment across

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<sup>15</sup> Cynthia Littleton, "NBCUniversal's Donna Langley on the State of SAG-AFTRA Talks," *Variety*, October 12, 2023, <https://variety.com/2023/biz/news/donna-langley-sagaftra-actors-strike-1235752675/>.

<sup>16</sup> "Donna Langley | Universal Pictures | Leadership Team," Universal Pictures, n.d., <https://www.universalpictures.com/leadership-team/donna-langley>.

<sup>17</sup> Caitlin Huston, "David Zaslav: Studios Offer 'Met Virtually All of the Union's Goals,'" *The Hollywood Reporter*, November 8, 2023, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/business/business-news/david-zaslav-says-studios-final-offer-met-virtually-all-of-the-unions-goals-1235640371/>.

<sup>18</sup> "David Zaslav - Warner Bros. Discovery," Warner Bros. Discovery, 2022, <https://www.wbd.com/leadership/david-zaslav>.

both streaming services and traditional channels to allow for revenue to be shared more equitably.<sup>1920</sup>

- **Jennifer Salke:** Salke is the Head of Amazon Studios and MGM. These studios are well-known for their big-budget films. She manages all of Amazon Studios TV and film development and production globally. This includes the distribution and marketing of productions. A priority for Salke has been increasing parity in the entertainment industry. Amazon has also recently invested heavily in both their streaming service, Prime Video, and their other mainstream studio subsidiaries.<sup>21</sup>
- **Ted Sarandos:** Sarandos is the co-CEO of Netflix, a company recognized by the industry as a revolutionary in bringing streaming into the mainstream, having launched in 2007. It is the largest streaming service in the world. Peters previously headed the company's expansion into original content production, a move that put Netflix into direct competition with traditional studios and cable networks. Sarandos, who has been deeply involved in past collective bargaining negotiations, noting that his dad worked as an electrician and proud union member. He has been critical of SAG-AFTRA for not accepting previous proposals submitted by the AMPTP and introducing

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<sup>19</sup> Nellie Andreeva, "CBS Eyes Reality, Paramount+ Originals for Fall; George Cheeks Strike," Deadline, June 14, 2023, <https://deadline.com/2023/06/cbs-reality-paramount-plus-originals-fall-seal-team-george-cheeks-wga-strike-amtp-1235416608/>.

<sup>20</sup> Nellie Andreeva, "CBS Eyes Reality, Paramount+ Originals for Fall; George Cheeks Strike," Deadline, June 14, 2023, <https://deadline.com/2023/06/cbs-reality-paramount-plus-originals-fall-seal-team-george-cheeks-wga-strike-amtp-1235416608/>., "Paramount Press Express | CBS Entertainment | Executives | George Cheeks," [Paramountpressexpress.com](https://www.paramountpressexpress.com), 2015, <https://www.paramountpressexpress.com/cbs-entertainment/executives/?view=george-cheeks>.

<sup>21</sup> "Amazon Studios - Corporate," [press.amazonmgmstudios.com](https://press.amazonmgmstudios.com), n.d., <https://press.amazonmgmstudios.com/us/en/corporate>.

counter-proposals that would place too much financial burden on streaming services. He is a member of the group known as the CEO Gang of Four.<sup>2223</sup>

- **Zach Van Amburg:** Van Amburg co-Chief Programming Officer (CPO) of Apple TV + having previously served in executive roles at Sony Pictures. Regarded as one of the brightest minds in the entertainment industry, he was responsible for such hit shows as *Breaking Bad*, *Better Call Saul*, and *The Crown*. In his role at Apple TV + he worked to transition the company into an original content powerhouse. It is important to note that it has a different revenue structure than most of its streaming competitors as it offers almost exclusively original content, rather than a full catalog of movies and TV shows, but at a much more competitive price for consumers.<sup>24</sup>

### **Striking Actors + SAG-AFTRA Leadership:**

- **Duncan Crabtree-Ireland:** Duncan Crabtree-Ireland is the Executive Director and Chief Negotiator of SAG-AFTRA. Prior to this role, he served as the union’s Chief Operating Officer (COO) and General Counsel. He was at the forefront of the merger of SAG and AFTRA in 2012 and has led the union’s negotiation and strategy team since 2021. His areas of focus include the impact of AI on the entertainment industry and DEI.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Dominic Patten, “Ted Sarandos Blames SAG-AFTRA for Breaking ‘Momentum’ & Contract Talks Ending; ‘We Want ...to Get Everyone back to Work,’” *Deadline*, October 18, 2023, <https://deadline.com/2023/10/netflix-actors-strike-impact-earnings-1235577088/>.

<sup>23</sup> “Netflix - Environmental, Social & Governance - Leadership & Directors - Person Details,” *ir.netflix.net*, n.d., <https://ir.netflix.net/governance/Leadership-and-directors/person-details/default.aspx?ItemId=20b41d5b-2378-440d-821b-ae5ba3fa370b>.

<sup>24</sup> Cynthia Littleton, “Apple TV plus Chiefs Jamie Erlicht, Zack van Amburg on Their Strategy,” *Variety*, October 29, 2019, <https://variety.com/2019/tv/news/apple-tv-plus-jamie-erlicht-zack-van-amburg-interview-1203386227/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Duncan Crabtree-Ireland,” *Sagaftra.org*, 2023, <https://www.sagaftra.org/about/executive-staff/duncan-crabtree-ireland>.

- **Rebecca Damon:** Damon is a former actor and the Chief Labor Policy Officer of SAG-AFTRA based in New York, having begun her career in labor advocacy there. As a member of the executive leadership team, she helped lead the merger between SAG and AFTRA. Her policy priorities include protections for creative professionals from the rapid evolution of technological replacements and digital image and likeness rights.<sup>26</sup>
- **Fran Drescher:** Drescher is an actor and the SAG-AFTRA National Board President. She has experience lobbying Congress and diplomacy, serving as a public diplomacy envoy for both the Bush and Obama administrations. She has been vocal in her support of striking actors, including leading picketing efforts outside of studios in LA.<sup>27,28</sup>
- **Mark Ruffalo:** Ruffalo is an actor and labor rights activist. Ruffalo is well known for roles such as the Hulk in *The Avengers*. He has been highly critical of the unfair revenue sharing process that puts a disproportionate amount of money in the hands of a few industry executives, accusing them of creating “an empire of billionaires and believing that we are no longer of value,” referring to actors. He has proposed overhauling the current development and production system to give creative professionals more power in relation to industry executives.
- **Billy Porter:** Porter is an actor and SAG-AFTRA National Board Member. He won an Emmy for his role in *Pose*. The strike has impacted him personally as he was forced to

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<sup>26</sup> “Rebecca Damon | SAG-AFTRA,” Sagaaftra.org, 2023, <https://www.sagaaftra.org/rebecca-damon>.

<sup>27</sup> Sagaaftra.org, 2023, <https://www.sagaaftra.org/about/our-history/sag-aftra-presidents/fran-drescher>., Brian Welk, “SAG-AFTRA Strike Picket Lines: Fran Drescher, Sean Astin, and More,” IndieWire, July 14, 2023, <https://www.indiewire.com/news/business/sag-aftra-strike-scenes-picket-lines-fran-drescher-sean-astin-1234884682/>.

<sup>28</sup> Brian Welk, “SAG-AFTRA Strike Picket Lines: Fran Drescher, Sean Astin, and More,” IndieWire, July 14, 2023, <https://www.indiewire.com/news/business/sag-aftra-strike-scenes-picket-lines-fran-drescher-sean-astin-1234884682/>.

sell his New York City apartment to make ends meet, and he has focused his blame on executives for being unreasonable during negotiations.

- **Sean Astin:** Astin is an actor noted for his roles in *The Goonies* and *Rudy*. He serves on the SAG-AFTRA Executive Committee and is a member of the union’s negotiation committee. This role has let him gain more intimate knowledge and contacts with industry executives. As a union leader, he has led protests and given speeches explaining the reasoning behind the strike and articulating the actors’ demands.
- **Meryl Streep:** Streep is a famed actor, philanthropist, and activist. Because of her popularity, she has additional influence over the industry and media attention. Thus far she has signed onto a letter along with other A-list actors supporting the strike, urging union negotiators to hold firm to their demands. The letter encouraged SAG-AFTRA to seek “transformative” changes specifically so that the lowest earning actors can earn a living wage in the face of rising prices and costs of living.<sup>29</sup>
- **Sheryl Lee Ralph:** Ralph is an actor, singer and SAG-AFTRA Executive Committee Member. She is also the Vice President of LA Local, the regional chapter of SAG-AFTRA that advocates for the over 80,000 union members residing in the area which includes Hollywood. Ralph has called for guaranteed health insurance for union members and expressed concerns over studios' willingness to utilize AI as a substitute for creative professionals. She has called for movie stars to vocally support their colleagues

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<sup>29</sup> Anousha Sakoui, “Meryl Streep and Other Stars Urge Union to Seek ‘Transformative Deal,’” Los Angeles Times, June 28, 2023, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2023-06-27/sag-aftra-strike-meryl-streep-ben-stiller-glenn-close>.

who are not established in the industry or are working contract to contract, who make up the vast majority of SAG-AFTRA.<sup>30</sup>

- **Dwayne Johnson, also known as “The Rock”:** A former professional wrestler turned actor, celebrated for his roles in the Fast & Furious franchise and Jumanji series. While not physically present on the picket lines, Johnson showcased his support for the SAG-AFTRA strike through a substantial seven-figure donation to the SAG-AFTRA Foundation. This contribution provided financial aid to union members facing hardships due to the work stoppage.
- **Margot Robbie:** Known for her performances in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *I, Tonya*, and *Barbie*, has been an active supporter of the SAG-AFTRA strike. She publicly expressed her backing for the strike during the London premiere of *Barbie*, stating she was "absolutely" in support of the union's actions. Robbie further demonstrated her solidarity by joining fellow actors on the picket lines in Los Angeles, participating in rallies from Netflix Studios to Paramount Studios.

### Government Officials

- **Gavin Newsom:** Newsom is the Governor of California. As the governor of a state that heavily relies on the entertainment industry, Newsom has publicly acknowledged the economic toll of the strike while calling and supporting a swift and fair solution. He has worked to facilitate discussions between SAG-AFTRA and the studios and recognizes that a prolonged shutdown could seriously affect California's economy.
- **Karen Bass:** Bass is the Mayor of LA. Running a city at the heart of entertainment, she has voiced her support for the workers, recognizing the need for fair wages and

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<sup>30</sup> FOX 29 Philadelphia, “Sheryl Lee Ralph Sees the SAG-AFTRA and Writers Guild Strikes as the Seminal Moment in Entertainment,” YouTube, September 18, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9yeLQwX9oI>.

protections in the evolving industry. She has worked to facilitate deals that will benefit the workers as well as LA's economy. She is pushing for a resolution that ensures long-term stability for LA's creative workforce.

- **Eugene Scalia:** U.S. Secretary of Labor from 2019 to 2021 under Trump. Scalia is a pro-business advocate with a history of opposing unions. Before his government role, he worked at the law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, where he defended corporations in labor disputes with unions. Scalia has pushed for limiting union influence and reducing labor regulations. While he hasn't commented on the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike, he would likely support a resolution that protects studio profits and limits union demands.
- **Holly Saurer:** Saurer is the Media Bureau Chief of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Holly Saurer has taken a more regulatory stance, expressing concern over the strike's impact on media distribution and accessibility. She has not taken a direct side.
- **Marty Walsh:** Marty Walsh is the U.S. Secretary of Labor. Marty Walsh has consistently supported workers' rights, including those of SAG-AFTRA members. He emphasizes the importance of fair wages and strong labor protections, arguing that actors and crew members deserve a share of the profits their work generates. He has a pro-union stance and continues to influence discussions around labor policy and entertainment industry negotiations.
- **Virginia Foxx:** U.S. Representative from North Carolina's 5th district, and Chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. A strong conservative voice on labor issues, Virginia Foxx has been highly critical of the strike, arguing that unions like SAG-AFTRA place unnecessary burdens on businesses. Foxx has warned that excessive

labor demands could drive studios to cut jobs or outsource production, ultimately harming the industry more than helping workers.

- **Adam Schiff:** U.S. Representative from California's 28th district. a fierce advocate for SAG-AFTRA, standing with striking workers and calling for fair wages, AI protections, and better residuals from streaming services. He urges Congress often to view this issue and has expressed his views on the dangers of AI replacing actors.
- **Tim Scott:** U.S. Senator from South Carolina known for his conservative views on labor issues. During the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike, he emphasized the importance of maintaining economic stability and cautioned against labor actions that could disrupt industries and affect jobs. Scott advocates for policies that support business growth and believes that open dialogue between employers and employees is essential for resolving disputes without resorting to strikes.
- **Julie A. Su:** California Secretary of Labor. A longtime labor rights activist, Julie is a strong supporter of SAG-AFTRA and the striking actors. She has pushed for greater federal oversight of worker protections and has criticized studios for resisting fair revenue-sharing agreements. Su has also called attention to the potential exploitation of AI in entertainment, advocating for new legal safeguards to protect performers' rights.
- **Nikki Haley:** former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Governor of South Carolina. Haley has expressed conservative views on labor unions. Although she did not specifically address the 2023 SAG-AFTRA strike, Haley has historically supported right-to-work laws and policies that she believes enhance economic competitiveness by reducing union influence.



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