

**WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST LATE NIGHT WRITERS
DISCUSS STATE OF THE 'UNION' WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS
- WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23 -**

WHAT:

Writers from *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart* and *The Colbert Report* are heading to Congress to meet with key Congressional leaders to discuss "The State of The Union." The writers have written and will present a comedic mock debate about the issues at the center of the Writers Guild of America (WGA) negotiations with the AMPTP. The visit is aimed at helping lawmakers understand the issues at the center of the current WGA strike, which is in its 12th week. The debate will be moderated by DeeDee Myers and hosted by Representatives Jerrold Nadler, Jan Schakowsky, and Anthony Weiner. After the debate, the Emmy Award-winning writers and other WGAE representatives will meet with Congressional leaders privately.

WHEN:

Wednesday, January 23, 2008 at 1:00 PM

WHERE:

U.S. House of Representatives, House Judiciary Room, 2237 Rayburn House Office Building

WHO:

Congressional Leaders include: Jerrold Nadler (NY); Jan Schakowsky (IL); and Anthony Weiner (NY)

Late night writers include: Kevin Bleyer, Tim Carvell, Rob Kutner, Jason Ross (*The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*); Michael Brumm, Peter Grosz, Peter Gwinn, Tom Purcell (*The Colbert Report*); Allison Abner (*The West Wing*).

DeeDee Myers will moderate the debate.

WGAE President Michael Winship, Executive Director Mona Mangan, and Assistant Executive Director Ann Toback will also be on hand.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Writers Guilds of America, East and West (WGAE and WGAW) strike began on November 5, 2007. Approximately 10,500 WGA members work under the MBA Contract (Minimum Basic Agreement) with the media conglomerates, studios and networks, which expired at midnight October 31, 2007. The key issue in the negotiations is new media. Writers want compensation for their work used in and/or written for new media, such as the Internet, downloads, webisodes and mobisodes. Formal negotiations broke down on December 7, 2007. On January 23 2008, the two sides began informal discussions to determine if there is a basis for both parties to return to formal negotiations.

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST (WGAE) FACTS

ABOUT THE WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST:

The Writers Guild of America, East (WGAE) is a labor union representing writers in motion pictures, broadcast, cable, new, and news media. The WGAE is active in legislative activities on the state, federal and international levels with a special focus on globalization, communications, labor, and copyrights. It also conducts a number of programs, seminars, and events on issues of interest to, and on behalf of writers. The WGAE has a sister guild – the Writers Guild of America, West (WGAW).

Michael Winship, a television writer and producer, is WGAE President. Bob Schneider, a television and screen writer, is Vice President. Gail Lee, a CBS News writer, is Secretary-Treasurer. Mona Mangan is Executive Director. Ann Toback is Assistant Executive Director.

WGAE MEMBERSHIP:

The WGAE represents approximately 4,000 writers, located in the United States east of the Mississippi and also in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Approximately 2,500 WGAE members work under the MBA contract and are on strike. In total, approximately 10,500 writers in the WGAE and WGAW work under this contract and are on strike.

THE MBA CONTRACT:

The MBA Contract (Minimum Basic Agreement) is the contract covering television and screen writing for signatory companies. It sets the minimums that companies must pay writers for the use and reuse of their work.

WHO IS NEGOTIATING THE MBA:

The WGAE and WGAW are separate, affiliated unions and are together joint signatories to the MBA contract. The two unions are negotiating this contract as a unified Writers Guild of America, as members of both the WGAE and WGAW work under the same MBA and rules. The AMPTP represents the companies and the networks.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES:

The Writers Guild wants to ensure writers keep up with industry growth. The central issue in these negotiations is new media. We believe writers should be compensated wherever and however their work is used. New media and digital technologies – Internet channels, downloads such as iTunes, webisodes, mobisodes, etc. – are emerging as growth distribution platforms; writers must share in this growth. Our basic proposal is flexible and success-neutral: “If they get

-OVER-



paid, we must get paid.” This allows the companies to experiment with new distribution platforms, and writers will only be paid if the platform generates revenue.

KEY FACTS ABOUT THE CURRENT STRIKE AND THE STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS:

The strike began on November 5, 2007 after negotiations broke down shortly after midnight. The MBA contract had expired on October 31, 2007, and this is the negotiation for a successor contract. Negotiations had resumed on November 26, but broke down again on December 7, 2007. Most recently, informal talks between the two sides began on Wednesday, January 23, 2008 to determine if there is a basis for both parties to return to formal negotiations.

WHEN WAS THE LAST WRITERS GUILD STRIKE:

The last Writers Guild strike was in 1988. It lasted 22 weeks.