

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**SOAR**  
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

# CONNECTION

WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER

## TIME FOR OUR NATION TO HEAL

USW and SOAR applaud President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on their victory in the 2020 U.S. presidential election.



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## Our Work Moving Forward



As a nation, we just witnessed what will be one of the most memorable elections in history. Americans endured a global economic crisis and health pandemic while selecting not just their next President, but their state and congressional representatives as well. This election produced the largest voter turnout in nearly 100 years. The winner of the Presidential election, Joe Biden, received more votes (just shy of 80 million votes) than anyone previously elected to the office. No matter how you voted, it seems reasonable to conclude that more Americans than ever felt it was their duty to participate in our political process.

## Finishing the Job

Over the last three months, Steelworker members and retirees [have worked tirelessly](#) to elect pro-worker, pro-union lawmakers at the state and federal level. In many regards we were successful, but the work is still unfinished. We were able to retain a pro-worker majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. We elected a President, Joe Biden, who has committed to supporting worker-first policies like the Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, and put an end to the anti-union tilt that has plagued federal agencies over the last four years.

We narrowed the margins in the U.S. Senate by working to reelect allies like Tina Smith (MN) and Gary Peters (MI), and to defeat Senators in Arizona and Colorado who sided with employers and corporate lobbyists. In fact, we might even be able to clinch a pro-worker majority in the Senate because the two elections in Georgia have been forced into a January 5 runoff after no candidate achieved the 50 percent vote threshold on November 3.

## Get Involved in the Georgia Runoff

In collaboration with the AFL-CIO, a number of unions, including the USW, have been assembling a campaign to elect Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff to be the next Senators to represent Georgia. Steelworkers from across the country are stepping up to help out with this effort from the comfort of their own home, and so can you! There are a growing number of ways to help, including making phone calls to union members, text banking, and writing postcards. To get more information about how you can get involved, go to [www.uswvoices.org](http://www.uswvoices.org)

*Julie Stein*, SOAR Director



## We Should Not Sit Back



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of SOAR who took part in any political action activity this past election cycle. Once again, we showed our value to our union by getting active and participating in phone banking, writing postcards, block walks, letters to the editor, and other activities. However, now is not the time to sit back and pat each other on the back. Now is the time to bring attention to issues that are important to our members.

A major issue for retirees is the constant threats to our earned benefits, like Social Security and Medicare. The recently announced 1.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase to Social Security brings the average benefit for recipients to \$1543 for 2021. Although this seems beneficial to retirees, when you deduct \$148.50 for the premium for Medicare Part B and the increase for the Part B deductible (which becomes \$205 in 2021) and then include the out-of-pocket co-pays and other deductibles there is not much left; especially if you have a premium for Part D - the prescription drug program. Social Security and Medicare are vital to the livelihood of most retirees and with the rising cost of Medicare and the cost-of-living we need our Social Security benefits to reflect that.

Another issue important to pensioners is a severe problem with multi-employer pension plans. Over 1.3 million people are members of, or recipients of, a benefit from these types of plans. The USW has thousands of members in these plans. Many of these plans are severely underfunded and will not have enough money to pay full benefits in the future without some type of assistance. We must fight for the earned retirement pensions of our retirees.

Members of the U.S. Senate oppose a proposal of economic relief passed in the U.S. House of Representatives because they claim it contains non-Covid related items, such as the Butch Lewis Act, which would address the multi-employer pension issue.

We must continue to bring retiree issues into the discussion with our elected officials, our union through our Rapid Response program, and our SOAR members, many of who may be unaware of the need to address these issues and how our involvement in offering ways to resolve them requires their involvement. SOAR can be pivotal in addressing the need to increase Social Security and to protect the standard of living for our present and future retirees. We should not sit back and expect someone else to fight for our retirement security.

Wishing you a safe and healthy holiday season.

*Bill Pienta*, SOAR President





### SOAR Chapter Connection

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of SOAR  
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### Season's Greetings from the SOAR Office



**During this holiday season,  
our thoughts turn gratefully to  
those that help us build SOAR.  
Simply and truly, we thank  
you.**

**On behalf of the entire SOAR  
organization, we wish you a  
bright holiday season and a  
new year filled with hope, good  
health and retirement security.  
May it also bring plenty of  
opportunities to stay active and  
involved with SOAR.**

**In solidarity; and in the spirit  
of the season,**

*Julie Stein and Alysse Rico*

### Elaine Says... Pandemic Pondering:

I have had this bottle of bubbly in my cupboard for four years. I wanted to open it on a special occasion. On Saturday, Nov. 7, the day Biden/Harris won the election, I popped the cork. I will pop open another bottle on Jan. 20 when they are sworn into office. What a ride 2020 has been. I am looking forward to a new year and a new beginning. Have a safe and blessed holiday season.



### We Want Articles and Photos

- The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be January 8, and should be emailed to the SOAR Director at [jstein@usw.org](mailto:jstein@usw.org)
- The deadline for the next publication of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is January 25 and items should be emailed to Charlie Averill at [soar3@icloud.com](mailto:soar3@icloud.com)
- Photos should have a short caption included.
- Thanks so much.

*Charlie*

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## Retirees are Grateful for What Went Right in 2020, but Hoping for a Better 2021

by Robert Roach, Jr.



This year will long be remembered for the Covid-19 pandemic that has taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of our loved ones. We are in a third wave of the pandemic, the number of cases is still rising, and we need to stay vigilant to protect our health as well as that of others.

With more than 250,000 American deaths, most of them among people over the age of 65, it is no surprise that the early exit polls show that about 2 out of 3 voters 65 and older said coronavirus was an important factor in their presidential vote. Ending the suffering, ensuring access to health care, and getting people back to work safely must be our top priority.

We are heartened that there will soon be a new team in the White House, in President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, who have a plan to tackle this health care and economic crisis.

Seniors played an important role in delivering those election results. The latest exit poll data show that two percent more voters over the age of 65 voted Democratic than in 2016. In Michigan, Biden won the 65+ vote by 8% and in Arizona he drew even, a significant shift from four years ago.

The AFL-CIO conducted a poll of 1,000 members on November 2 and 3 and found that they preferred Biden to Trump 58% to 37%, with retired members voting at a 69% to 30% margin. We must listen to the voters who said we need a national strategy to address the coronavirus.

In the coming months, we will need all retirees to help the Biden-Harris Administration by demanding that any coronavirus vaccine or treatment be affordable and available to all who need it.

This month two pharmaceutical corporations announced very promising vaccine trial results -- which should give us all hope for an end to this pandemic. However, there is no guarantee that these drugs will be affordable and available to all who need them. These powerful corporations have benefitted from billions in tax breaks since 2017 and the Moderna vaccine was developed with taxpayer dollars. We cannot allow these corporations to profiteer on these potentially lifesaving drugs.

The Alliance for Retired Americans looks forward to working with the Biden-Harris administration to end the pandemic and strengthen retirement security for all Americans. We wish retirees and workers across the country a bright holiday season and a 2021 filled with hope, good health and economic security as we all work toward that goal.

***Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).***

by Robert Roach, Jr.





Have you ever wondered how this SOAR Connection Newsletter is put together? Our newsletter guy is Charlie Averill, a longtime SOAR activist and emeritus member of the SOAR Executive Board, who resides in Knox, Indiana. For many years, Charlie and his wife Elaine have been the main contributors to this newsletter.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving and the holiday season, we extend a deep and heartfelt thank you to Charlie in appreciation of all his hard work in putting together this newsletter, and for all that he does to help build SOAR!

Truth be told, Charlie enjoys every minute he devotes to working on the bi-monthly newsletter. And...he does a great job! Thank you, Charlie!!



**Phone the Senior Flash Hotline for legislative updates at  
1-800-998-0180 sponsored by National Committee to Preserve  
Social Security and Medicare.**

## We Can Expect Bigger and Better Things



Whether or not Donald Trump concedes that he came out on the losing end of the November 3<sup>rd</sup> presidential election remains to be seen but our democracy ensures that Joe Biden will be sworn in as the 46<sup>th</sup> president of the United States on January 20, 2021.

Meanwhile, the future commander-in-chief is wasting little time making plans to advance his winning “Building Back Better” agenda to rebuild the nation’s struggling economy. The former Vice President and longtime Senator has been setting the table for his presidency by emphasizing the need to invest in America’s failing infrastructure which will create millions of jobs.

Clean energy policies are also at the top of the president-elect’s agenda. With major investments in electric vehicles (EV) by the world’s automobile manufacturers, Biden foresees the United States government taking the lead in building more than 500,000 EV charging stations across America.

He also plans to tackle America’s infrastructure woes by investing in the nation’s roads, bridges, ports, schools, high-speed broadband, digital infrastructure and even affordable housing. His policies include buying American-made products whenever federal funds are utilized.

“We can make sure our future is made here in America,” said Biden. “And that’s good for business and that’s good for American workers.

“These are the kinds of investments that are going to strengthen our economy and competitiveness and create millions of jobs, union jobs, and in doing so, respect the dignity of work and empower the voice of workers,” said Biden.

Biden has been conducting virtual pandemic-style meetings with both leaders of business and labor creating a consensus that it is necessary for both sides to work together to rebuild America’s economy which has suffered badly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Investing in infrastructure and clean energy is also an investment in steelworkers and the struggling American steel industry. Biden is aware that his progressive plans for our nation’s future will be a boon to America’s hard-working men and women.

Donald Trump promised a bright future for America’s workforce when campaigning in 2016 but his rhetoric was short-lived. We expect bigger and better things from the administration of soon-to-be President Joe Biden.

*Jeff Bonior*, Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing





## Trump's Refusal to Concede and Begin the Transition is Putting Lives at Risk

As the Connection Newsletter goes to print and while President-elect Joe Biden is moving forward with transition plans, President Donald Trump still refuses to accept that he has lost the election. Leaders of Biden's coronavirus advisory board are calling on Trump to share critical Covid-19 data with Biden's transition team as soon as possible. They and other public health experts stress that the federal government's delay in starting the transition will hurt efforts to manage and end the pandemic crisis.

The Biden coronavirus transition team is barred from consulting with any federal health officials. That means they do not have real-time data on available hospital beds or the status of the National Strategic Stockpile. This includes information about the availability of therapeutic treatment supplies and the amount of protective equipment (PPE). For now, they are simply relying on data from state and local officials and non-governmental information sources such as the Covid Tracking Project. On November 16, Biden warned that "more people may die" if the Trump Administration continues to obstruct the smooth transition of power.

"There is no doubt that President Trump's refusal to share key information with the Biden administration puts countless lives in harm's way," said Alliance Executive Director Richard Fieta. "Not sharing information about the crisis shows a disregard for the American people and is unacceptable." Despite President-elect Biden's victory, Government Services Administrator (GSA) Emily Murphy has refused to allow the transition to a Biden Administration to begin. The GSA supports the transitions for all new presidents. Her obstruction will hinder the administration's ability to hit the ground running and threaten the integrity of our national security.

Source: Alliance for Retired Americans Friday Alert - November 20, 2020





### District 12 SOAR Chapter Distributes 35-Year Commemorative Coins



When the 2020 SOAR Conference was canceled in August due to the Covid-19 virus there were a number of the SOAR 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary coins that were to be distributed to the delegates. When they came up for purchase (see below) we obtained a number of them to hand out to members who had stepped up to the plate for the last 10 years. All past and present Executive Board members for Albany SOAR Chapter 12-7 were given a coin along with members who have consistently driven long distances in

inclement weather to attend the monthly meetings and rallies to support the USW and other labor groups.

Coins were also given out to the USW District 12 Director, the Assistant Director and the Presidents of USW Locals 6163 and that we represent. The success of the chapter is largely due to the from these Sisters and Brothers. The chapter was the first chartered in Oregon be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. There won't be a party or cake but we will acknowledge this accomplishment from home. Stay safe everyone!



7150 support and will this year

*Garry Steffy*, SOAR Coordinator in Oregon, District 12

# SOAR 35-YEAR ANNIVERSARY COIN

**\$6<sup>50</sup>**  
EACH

**LIMITED SUPPLY!**

INCLUDES SHIPPING & HANDLING



Actual size:  
1.5 inch diameter

*Celebrating*  
**35 YEARS OF ACTIVISM**

STAYING ACTIVE. STAYING INVOLVED. STAYING CONNECTED.

Mail a check or money order to SOAR, 60 Blvd of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.  
Please allow 3-4 weeks for processing.

# of Coins \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY



November 11, 2020

## The Need for Action from the Senate is Critical.

[Contact your Senator TODAY! \(usw.to/HeroesAct\)](https://usw.to/HeroesAct)

*"We're paying with our lives. We're paying with our health . . . Cleveland Clinic Akron General is inundated with COVID patients right now, we don't see any kind of lull in the positive cases. They keep coming. We don't see any outside help."* - Tim O'Daniel, president of USW Local 1014L, who just days ago lost a colleague to COVID-19.

As COVID-19 continues to ravage our communities, we are counting on the Senate to pass the next much-needed stimulus bill, the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act. The HEROES Act ([H.R.6800](https://www.congress.gov/bills/116/6800)) ([usw.to/39M](https://usw.to/39M)) passed the House on May 15 and includes several of the provisions that we have been fighting for, like a temporary OSHA emergency standard and help paying for COBRA coverage for those out of work. The HEROES Act also:

- Provides needed assistance to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to ensure necessary public services continue;
- Expands paid sick days, family and medical leave, and unemployment compensation;
- Establishes a fund to award grants for employers to provide pandemic premium pay for essential workers;
- Provides COBRA subsidies to laid off workers;
- Provides funding and establishes requirements for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing;
- Eliminates cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatments;
- Extends and expands the moratorium on certain evictions and foreclosures; and
- Requires employers to develop and implement infectious disease exposure control plans.

*"They're holding the whole country hostage,"* observed Brad Greve, president of USW Local 105, which represents workers at Arconic's Davenport Works in Iowa. The company laid off more than 100 of his members in July and they are continuing to struggle.

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### We Need Quick Action!

**The Coronavirus Pandemic is showing no signs of stopping and our members' jobs, and in some cases lives, are on the line.**

[Click Here to tell your Senator to pass the HEROES act today. \(usw.to/HeroesAct\)](https://usw.to/HeroesAct)

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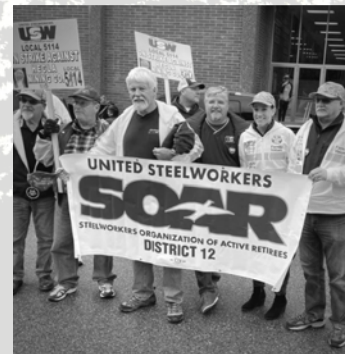
Our union has seen the impacts of COVID-19 on our industries and our members. We need meaningful legislation to protect the health and safety of workers who continue to go to work every day to provide us with our essential services, and to provide stability for those whose jobs have not yet returned. We need Congress to pass the HEROES Act! [Please take action today! \(usw.to/HeroesAct\)](https://usw.to/HeroesAct)

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USW Rapid Response • (412) 562-2291 • <http://www.uswr.org> • [www.facebook.com/USWRapidResponse](https://www.facebook.com/USWRapidResponse)



Our union is stronger when Steelworker retirees are involved as activists, advocates and volunteers; which is why the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) was established, in 1985.



# Celebrating 35 YEARS OF ACTIVISM

STAYING ACTIVE. STAYING INVOLVED. STAYING CONNECTED.





# 2021



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