

USW@WORK

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Volume 15/2

A Powerful Voice for Workers



Celebrating
35
years of activism
1985 2020
UNITED STEELWORKERS
SOAR
PROUDLY ENDORSING OUR UNIONS BY ACTUAL OFFICE

Celebrating

35 YEARS OF ACTIVISM



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

Stimulate the Economy — but Not at the Cost of Our Earned Benefits

While most discussion taking place currently is about the COVID-19 virus, there are two other issues that seniors and retirees should be paying close attention to. The elimination of the payroll tax and the underfunding of multiemployer pension plans. During the ongoing discussions about ways to help make the economy stable, we cannot allow these two issues to go unaddressed.

Multiemployer pension plans are on the verge of collapse, and we must take action. According to a recent report by the actuarial consulting firm Cheiron: As many as 117 multiemployer pension plans, [including two that USW members and retirees have a stake in (PIUMPF and NIGPP)], covering 1.4 million participants are underfunded. Sponsors have told regulators and participants that they could fail within the next 20 years. In the past year, the amount of total underfunding has risen by 15.7 percent to \$56.5 billion.

Cheiron's analysis notes that 44 plans expect to fail by 2025 — the year when the biggest underfunded plan — the Central States, Southeast and Southwest Areas Pension Plan — runs dry. The multi-employer fund of the PBGC, which backstops the plans, would be exhausted in that year, as well. In 2025, the benefits of 639,400 workers could be at risk.

If our Government can provide billions for Wall Street, airlines, hotels and businesses, there should be money available to make sure retiree pensions remain intact.

Our union has supported the Butch Lewis Act (H.R. 397), which would address the crisis by extending long-term loans to troubled plans and would allow them to continue

paying full-benefits to plan participants. The measure was passed in the House and has been sent to the Senate for consideration. Make sure your Senators support us on this important matter.

The second issue relates to discussion pertaining to the elimination of the payroll tax to help stimulate the economy. Payroll tax is the money deducted from workers and matched by employers to fund Social Security and Medicare. If you are a retiree you must be aware of this issue and recognize the severe threat to the financial stability of Social Security and Medicare that this proposal would cause.

The Institution of Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) reported on the president's proposal to temporarily repeal payroll taxes that fund Social Security and Medicare through the end of the year. ITEP estimates that this would cost \$843 billion and 65 percent of the benefits would go to the richest 20 percent of taxpayers.

While the elimination of the payroll tax will temporarily benefit employees, eliminating the employer side of the tax doesn't guarantee trickle-down economics, and we all know that corporations, rarely, if ever, have employees' best interest in mind when it comes down to tax cuts and financial relief.

SOAR will be deeply involved in these issues, as well as others, important to retirees and the involvement of all chapters will be a valuable part of keeping these issues at the forefront.

Stay safe.

Sources:

https://cheiron.us/articles/Critical_and_declining_2019.pdf

<https://itep.org/trumps-proposed-payroll-tax-elimination/>





JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

Voting During COVID-19

Casting your ballot in-person on Election Day might be how you've always voted. However, we've also never seen a global health pandemic like the coronavirus which could in all likelihood be a real obstacle to in-person voting come to the November election. Luckily, that does not mean you should expect any difficulty in voting.

Did you know that in 36 states you don't even have to turn out to the polls on Election Day to cast your ballot? Instead, a growing number of states are going to great lengths to protect voters, expand access, and ensure everyone can vote regardless of who you are or what your barriers to in-person voting are.

Making voting easier for everyone isn't a partisan issue. Governors from both sides of the aisle have been elected in states that allow for no-excuse/ absentee mail balloting.

If anyone wants to make the false claim that "convenience voting" favors a particular political party, then they aren't being honest. "Convenience voting" favors voters. Period.

It can be confusing to think about all the different ways Americans vote. But, finding out how you can vote most easily isn't difficult at all! All you need to do is reach out to your state's Department of Elections, and inquire about what options are available to you.

To easily locate your state's Department of Elections, visit this website and select your state: www.usa.gov/election-office

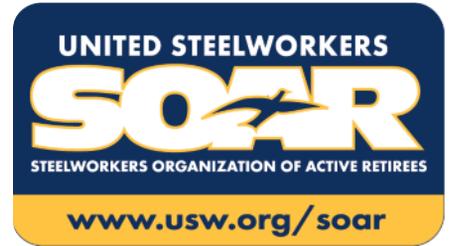
If you have any difficulty using the above link for any reason, you can call the Int'l SOAR Office toll-free at **800-208-4420**, and we would be happy to assist you to obtain the contact information you need for your state.

Join with us, as we continue the fight to protect and enhance the quality of life of our retirees and working families.

We are stronger together, but six feet apart!



facebook.com/groups/uswsoar



SOAR in ACTION

USW@Work

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Julie Stein, Editor
Alysse Rico, Copy Editor
Eric Russell, Copy Editor
Jay McMurrin, Copy Editor

Address editorial material to:
Editor, *USW@Work*, *SOAR in Action*
United Steelworkers
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



Send address changes only to:
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On May 23, 1985, at the Union's 30th International Convention, USW delegates voted unanimously to add an amendment to the USW Constitution recognizing SOAR as an affiliate organization of the USW.



Under normal circumstances, Jerry Porter would be spending his time helping the veterans he finds in tent camps and run-down housing.

But the escalating threat of COVID-19 forces the community activist and retired Steelworker to remain at home for now, even though vulnerable vets need him more than ever.



Homeless Vets Confront A New Enemy COVID-19

By Tom Conway

USW International President

Chairman of the Veterans of Steel Council

Sgt. USAF 1970-1974

As the coronavirus spreads across America, the poor bear the brunt of a pandemic that's exposed the deep class lines in U.S. society.

The rich have big savings accounts and quality health care. They'll emerge from the crisis just fine.

But Americans at the margins, including homeless vets who rely on a frayed safety net stretched to the breaking point by COVID-19, now face an even greater struggle to survive.

"I don't know where they end up," rued Porter, 75, a Vietnam veteran and longtime member of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 105 who worked more than 40 years at the aluminum plant in Davenport, Iowa, now owned by Arconic. Upon his retirement, Porter joined SOAR and quickly became an active member of Chapter 11-4. He currently serves as the chapter's vice president.

Porter and a group of friends work together to help veterans in the Quad Cities area of Iowa and Illinois.

But now, they're heeding the request of public health officials. They stay home to help their community slow the spread of COVID-19.

That prevents them from helping veterans like the one Porter found sleeping on a squalid mattress in a "junky" house. He got the man into a clean apartment and—thanks to a friend who owned a bedding store—a new mattress and box spring for just \$180.

Just as alarming, COVID-19 halted the fund-raising supporting that kind of intervention. Local veterans' groups just canceled a taco dinner and a poppy sale that together raise about \$6,000 each year.

For some veterans, that money is the difference between sleeping indoors or on the street.

Porter and his friends use some of the funds to provide life's basics to the homeless vets they move into government-subsidized housing with little but the clothes on their backs.

"There's nothing," Porter explained. "There's no bedding, silverware, dishes, glassware, towels, sheets."

Twice a year, advocates in the Quad Cities hold "stand down" events that serve as a one-stop-shop for veterans needing anything from counseling to jobs.

Porter already worries that the three-day event planned for September will be canceled because of COVID-19, leaving veterans to face a long winter without important services.

Porter's union job ensured good wages, a pension and affordable health care. He devotes his retirement to the less fortunate, feeling a duty to fellow vets with no one else to help them.

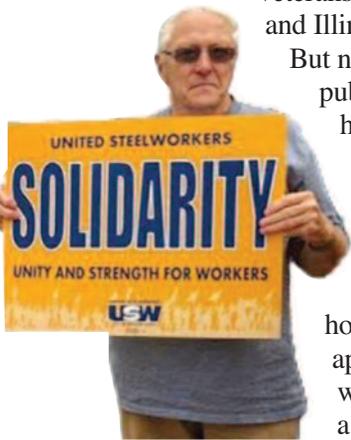
The federal government fails veterans who struggle to find adequate employment or wrestle with health problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

For example, the nation hasn't adequately addressed the challenges that doom many vets to unemployment or low-wage jobs. Among other problems, veterans have difficulty converting their skills to the private sector, finding purpose in civilian work and obtaining occupational licenses enabling them to apply skills learned in the military.

Raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, up from the current \$7.25, would benefit about 1.8 million vets, along with millions of other Americans, who barely scrape by. The House last year approved a bill to increase the minimum wage, but Senate Republicans refuse to act on it.

Although significant progress in combating veteran homelessness has been made in recent years, unemployment, low wages and health problems still force veterans onto the streets or into shelters. About 40,000 are homeless, and 1.4 million more are only a lost paycheck or other crisis away from losing the roof over their heads.

A collection of government agencies and nonprofits operates soup kitchens, shelters and other services to serve



Jerry Porter, SOAR Activist

America's homeless. But this underfunded system is strained to capacity even in ordinary times.

Volunteers like Porter provide crucial support, stepping in when government agencies don't know who else to call for help.

A veteran's hospital once contacted Porter and asked him to help a man who lived outdoors. His tent was broken, and rain kept getting inside.

Porter picked up the vet and drove him to see a friend who owned an awning company. The businessman fixed the tent for free.

In a crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, this patchwork system is easily overwhelmed.

Some service providers already reduced services or limited new admissions to slow the spread of the disease.

Agencies closed drop-in centers where homeless veterans can get out of the elements. Some now want to counsel clients remotely, even though homeless people may not have cell phones.

And in the Quad Cities, Porter and his crew are sidelined, too.

Homeless vets face even greater odds during the COVID-19 crisis even though they have a higher risk of contracting the disease than other Americans.

Many live in cramped quarters without the social distancing and sanitary measures vital to controlling the virus. The closing of libraries, malls and coffee shops deprived them of places to wash their hands. They have nowhere to isolate themselves if they get sick.

Some cities are scrambling to place homeless people in places such as unused motel rooms, vacant houses and recreational vehicles on public streets. The goal is to disperse the population and keep the disease from spreading like wildfire if someone contracts it.

While the COVID-19 crisis is unprecedented, the slapdash response underscores how fragile the safety net for America's homeless really is.

As cities struggle to adapt, the ranks of the homeless likely will grow because of the economic slowdown, putting more stress on the overtaxed system.

The government's response to COVID-19 must include injecting funds into programs that support homeless veterans and keep other vets from losing their homes.

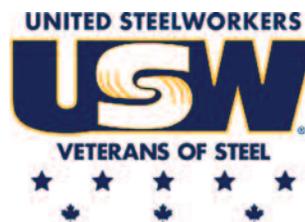
But federal officials also must think about what the economy and social-service network will look like after the pandemic.

That means better funding a system now overly reliant on fundraisers like taco dinners and poppy sales. It means comprehensively addressing the problems servicemen and servicewomen face when they leave the armed forces.

Thoughtful interventions will save lives, says Porter, who recently ran into the veteran he rescued from the "junky" house. "I'm on my feet," the man told him. "I'm doing OK."

Source:

<https://www.usw.org/blog/2020/homeless-vets-confront-a-new-enemy-covid-19>



Jerry Porter
US Army Spec 4
1966-1968



SOAR Solidarity During Pandemic



Pueblo, CO—Betty Spinuzzi, Trustee for SOAR Chapter 38-3, sewed masks in her home and organized the distribution of the masks for the 140 members of her chapter. She was assisted in the project by Frank Sandoval, Al Becco, Dave Kins and Joel Buchanan.

Betty is a retired Nurse Practitioner and a long-time Steelworker supporter and Activist.

Thank you, Betty, for your show of concern and Solidarity for members of District 12 SOAR Chapter 38-3. This is what Solidarity looks like!!!



SOAR Activist LENA SUTTON

Wins Women of Distinction Award

On March 5, SOAR activist Lena Sutton was awarded the 2020 YWCA Hamilton Women of Distinction Award for lifetime achievement. Lena is the president of SOAR Chapter 10, an International SOAR Executive Board member and a member of the Women of Steel in Hamilton. She is also a past recipient of the 2016 Lynn Williams Canadian National Award and the 2017 Jefferson International Award. Lena is a true feminist and community builder and was the first Canadian woman appointed to the International Executive Board of SOAR.

Lena was nominated for two categories of the YWCA Hamilton Women of Distinction program: community leadership and lifetime achievement. She was nominated by Greater Hamilton Food Share, an organization for which she raised thousands of dollars over many years.

Testimonials to Lena's incredible activism and community service also were provided by: Wesley Centre, which deals with hunger, poverty and homelessness; St. Matthew's House, which provides food security, children's services, seniors' support and mental health and street outreach; 3NDP member of federal parliament and former Steelworkers local president Scott Duvall; Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council President Darren Green; and from Canadian National SOAR Director and International SOAR Vice-President Doug MacPherson. While the nomination process limited the number of testimonials to five, there were numerous other agencies and individuals wanting to support Lena's nomination.

Before a crowd of over 1,000 guests, Lena described what it was like growing up in a small community in Newfoundland and Labrador, where her parents taught her to look out for the less fortunate in her community. She never forgot that lesson. She also recalled how in 1974 she was hired into the office of a phosphorous plant in her community and became a member of USW Local 7711. She saw that women were not treated fairly when it came to wages and promotions. Through union courses she learned that she could make a difference. She was successful in winning an important grievance which opened the door for women in the office to apply for higher-paying jobs in the plant.

Lena said her greatest accomplishments are getting more people, especially women, involved in the United Steelworkers, as well as helping those that need support in her community. For many years, Lena volunteered income tax preparation for seniors and low-income individuals.



Lena has always fought for those who have less and deserve more.

Lena likes to tell the story of how her mother once criticized her for becoming a union and NDP activist. When her mother asked where she went wrong with Lena—since her six siblings were not like her—Lena replied that her mother must have gone wrong with the other six children.

Lena always tells it like it is.



Tireless political action by SOAR members has led to a public policy victory in British Columbia: the elimination of paid hospital parking for staff and visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SOAR Action Leads to Free Hospital Parking During Pandemic

By Fred Girling, SOAR BC Coordinator

Ever since a resolution on eliminating hospital parking fees was adopted at the Canadian SOAR Conference in 2016, SOAR Chapter 3-14 has worked non-stop to get B.C.'s New Democratic government to implement this policy.

Health Minister Adrian Dix recently announced the elimination of paid hospital parking for staff and visitors until the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Public reaction to this development has been very favourable.

Hospital parking fees can be a real financial hardship for employees, seniors or anyone who visits long-term patients. Chapter 3-14 lobbied members of the provincial legislature in Victoria, participated in health board meetings, conducted letter-writing campaigns, circulated petitions and worked diligently to get other like-minded organizations involved.

Last year, at the urging of SOAR members, the NDP government agreed to study the issue with the aim of improving the current system. As well, the NDP's

Provincial Convention unanimously adopted a resolution to eliminate paid hospital parking.

The Chapter's mission now is to work towards the permanent elimination of paid hospital parking. The Chapter's PAC is made up of Kay Noonan, Lori Travis, Monty Bartlett and Fred



Fred Girling



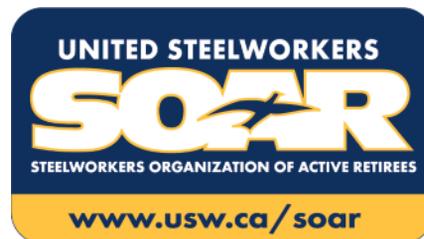
Kay Noonan

Girling. The PAC also acknowledges the support and encouragement of USW District 3 Director Steve Hunt, Assistant to the Director Scott Lunny and Communications staff representative Brad West.



In the Spirit of Solidarity

SOAR Vice President and Canadian National Coordinator, Doug MacPherson, wears a SOAR bandana to show his solidarity and support for the fight to stop COVID-19. STAY SAFE. STAY HOME.



With the establishment of SOAR, our union solidified its focus on the unique issues impacting USW retirees and their spouses. Since then, SOAR has been engaged in countless efforts to assure security for current and future generations of retirees regardless of whether they belong to a union.



Jack Golden

Retired Director and SOAR Board Member

Jack Golden, longtime union and SOAR activist, passed away March 4, 2020. He was 83.

As a director, Jack chaired bargaining with Asarco Copper Group, BHP Copper, and Reynold Aluminum.

Jack also led bargaining with CF&I Steel, a division of Oregon Steel Mills now known as Rocky Mountain Steel, in Pueblo, Colo., from 1997 to 1999—which included the start of one of the longest disputes in U.S. history.

It began in October 1997 when 1,100 USW members walked off the job to protest CF&I's unfair labor practices. The strike became a lockout in 1998 when USW members agreed to return to work but were refused reinstatement. The dispute ended in 2004, and led to one of the largest back pay orders in the history of the National Labor Relations Board.

Jack had a long and storied union career, first as an active member of the International Union of Electrical Workers Local 716, then as an organizer for the AFL-CIO and finally as USW staff.

He became director of District 37 in 1984 when his predecessor, Edgar Ball, was appointed International Secretary. After a 1995 restructuring consolidated 18 U.S. districts, Jack was named the first director of District 12.

As an International Executive Board member, Jack played a role in establishing the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), in 1985.

Jack retired in 1999 and had been an active member of SOAR ever since. In 2008, he was inducted into the Texas Labor Hall of Fame in 2008. That same year, he was elected to the SOAR Executive Board, representing District 13 and he worked diligently to build the organization throughout the district. He served in that position until his resignation in 2018.

Shortly thereafter, District 13 Director Ruben Garza appointed Jack to be the district's SOAR coordinator for the state of Texas, and he served in that role until his passing. Garza stated, "He was a strong, tireless advocate that improved the quality of life of our active and retired members. Jack will be sorely missed."



Jack Golden
1936-2020

Company to Pay \$1 Million Fine for False 'Made in USA' Labels

The Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM), an organization the USW founded in partnership with employers that produce American-made goods, was instrumental this week in the first-ever financial penalty issued against a company for wrongly labeling their products as "Made in the USA."

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said that it reached a settlement with Williams-Sonoma Inc. to pay a \$1 million fine to settle claims that its Goldtouch Bakeware, Rejuvenation products and some furniture sold by its Pottery Barn subsidiary were made entirely in the United States. In fact, the products were imported.

The AAM, founded in 2007, has consistently lobbied the FTC to investigate and punish companies that incorrectly label their products.

"Cheaters like Williams Sonoma don't want to do all the hard work that's behind a 'Made in USA' label," said AAM President Scott Paul. "But they know that 'Made in USA' is a good selling point. It can be good for business. It's a great ad campaign."

Paul said that the FTC, which investigates such claims, has found dozens of cases over the years of false or misleading labels claiming that products were American-made, but this was the first time the agency had issued a financial penalty.

The FTC warned Williams-Sonoma about its labels in 2018, but that the company continued the practice.

"This is a historic step forward," Paul said.

USW International President Tom Conway said, "AAM is an important partner in the USW's constant efforts to protect good manufacturing jobs."

"We will continue to support AAM as they keep up this good work," Conway said. "The FTC should always be tough on companies that try to break the rules."



Williams Sonoma advertised its Goldtouch Bakeware line as "made in the USA" when it was actually imported, according to a Federal Trade Commission investigation. Image courtesy FTC

TOGETHER

We Must Rebuild America After This Pandemic

By Jeff Bonior

During these frightening and uncertain times of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, the Alliance for American Manufacturing urges all SOAR members to reach out to their union brothers and sisters for moral support. Social distancing is essential, but retirees can always pick up the phone for a call or facetime with USW friends and colleagues.

Most of us are isolating at home but now would be a great time to touch base with your union colleagues. Along with staying safe from the potentially deadly consequences of the Coronavirus, mental health issues abound for many, especially those who feel helplessly trapped at home when they wish they could be doing something to join the fight against this horrific virus.

Many SOAR members are above the age of 60 and have underlying health conditions that make them more susceptible to catching the virus. As active working USW members, steelworkers formed strong bonds working as a team and there would be no better time than the present to reconnect with your former colleagues to offer emotional support. After all, steelworkers are the toughest of the tough.

When the stay-at-home, shelter-in-place requirements end, Americans are then going to be focused on the economic damage this pandemic has caused. Many jobs will be lost, and businesses will be forced to permanently close.

One way to get the American economy to prosper again is the implementation of a long-overdue infrastructure policy.

Congress, in a bipartisan effort, has expressed the need to repair and rebuild America's decaying infrastructure for many years. The main obstacle has always been how to pay for the work of rebuilding roads and bridges to public transit and airports to electric systems and water pipelines.

With trillions of dollars invested in the fight against COVID-19, additional substantial revenue should be provided by the federal government to get America back on its feet again. When the virus subsides, the economic fight will continue.

A major infrastructure package would get the steel mill blast furnaces back online producing steel for an array of infrastructure projects while putting furloughed steelworkers back on the job. A robust infrastructure investment package would create millions of jobs and provide direct economic benefits across the country to steelworkers and those in the supply chain.

The President and Congress have taken bold action to fight this unprecedented virus and when America gets back to a "new normal" these aggressive investments should continue.

Our country's leaders should be focused on mitigating the virus and providing support to Americans now facing economic ruin especially those essential workers in the steel industry.



During this time of crisis, there are special interest groups leading an effort to weaken trade enforcement measures that were put into place to address China's longtime trade cheating. Throughout this pandemic, state-owned steel mills in China have continued to manufacture steel and are just waiting to dump their overcapacity into America's infrastructure rebuilding.

That is why trade enforcement measures, such as the tariffs on imported steel and aluminum, must remain as America emerges from its manufacturing shutdown. These measures are America's leverage against China's trade cheating.

America's steelworkers have played a major role in making the United States the greatest country in the world and solidarity must continue after the current health concerns have passed.

So, call a union brother or sister or a member of your SOAR chapter. Lend each other moral support and remind each other that this pandemic will not bring down America's future as the leader of innovation in the free world.

Jeffrey Bonior is a staff writer for the Alliance for American Manufacturing.





SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurren, SOAR Legislative Director *

Throughout the 2016 presidential election, candidate Donald Trump cast himself as the champion of the American working class. Unfortunately, his populist message resonated with many workers, which enabled him to win traditionally blue states like Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. That tilted the electoral vote his way and he was elected 45th President of the United States.



Jay McMurren

Now fast forward three years into the middle of the COVID-19 crisis. They say that actions speak louder than words. If that is the case, the president is sending a real message to voters who fell for his schtick.

For example:

Trump to Unemployed Workers: Because I Said So!

As a record number of workers, 3.3 million in one week and 6.3 the following, were filing claims for unemployment insurance, members of the Trump administration thought they were going to help laid-off workers by offering a special enrollment period to allow the unemployed to sign up for Obamacare. In fact, they were preparing to make an announcement, but something happened on the way to the podium. The President changed his mind. There would be no enrollment in the program he has been trying to kill since his election. Instead, the government would pick up the cost for treatment of those infected by the coronavirus.

That leaves the unemployed with two undesirable options. The first is to convert to a COBRA plan, which runs as much as \$1,500.00 per month in some states. Or, they could hope for the best and go without coverage until the crisis is over.

According to Business Insider, an estimated 35 million Americans could lose health care as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds. While a good number of laid-off workers could be eligible for Medicaid, a large percentage would not. Allowing them to enroll in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), would give workers a cheaper alternative for coverage.

Donald Trump Union Buster:

The Trump era National Labor Relations Board has published proposed rule changes that will make it even more difficult for Organized Labor to win Union representation

elections. The first change calls for the elimination of the current, “Blocking Charge Policy.” The policy allows Unions to delay a Union election when an employer is charged with violating the law. The delay gives Unions time to inoculate workers against the employer’s illegal anti-Union tactics and to maintain its majority status.

The second change has to do with decertification elections following a successful Union vote. Under current law, the Union has one year to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with the new unit and its employer. After that time, anti-Union workers can petition the NLRB to hold a decertification election. Under the proposed change, a decert can be held if an agreement isn’t reached in just 45 days and with just 30% of the workforce asking for it. With the delay tactics employers use today, reaching an agreement in one year is difficult. The new 45-day deadline is really going to up the ante.

Coronavirus Stimulus Part IV

With the ink barely dry on the CARES Act, Congress’s third stimulus package to prop up the U.S. economy during the coronavirus crisis, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is forging ahead with a fourth bill to provide financial assistance to businesses and individuals. While, Senate Majority Leader and House Republicans are opposing the Speaker’s efforts, Pelosi says that the country can’t wait around to see what happens next. She said, “The government has to be proactive to support the most vulnerable through this crisis.”

The President has been asking Congress to include \$2 trillion in infrastructure spending in its next stimulus package, Pelosi thinks that should wait for a fifth investment in the economy. She believes more money should be made available to help weather the pandemic shutdown. Pelosi also thinks that additional payments to workers are needed.

As this publication goes to print, Congress is expected to return to Washington on April 20 if coronavirus conditions improve. Pelosi hopes to have the bill completed and voted on by the end of April. She and Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, are talking regularly to work out details of the next package.

SOAR will stay the course and keep our eyes on Washington, as we continue the fight to protect and enhance the quality of life of our retirees and working families.

* Jay McMurren continues to serve as SOAR Executive Board Member, District 2.



Expansion of Voting by Mail Requires Congressional Action

By Robert Roach, Jr.

Voting could be more difficult than ever this November due to the coronavirus pandemic, unless Congress takes action. Citizens should not have to choose

between their civic duty and their health because their elected leaders make voting absentee and by mail unnecessarily onerous.

In Wisconsin in April, thousands of poll workers understandably refused to put their health in danger, and the number of polling places was vastly reduced. In Milwaukee only 5 of 180 polling sites were open, leading to extremely long lines in bad weather, with voters trying to maintain 6-feet of space between each other.

The pandemic is an opportunity to make it easier to vote so that more citizens can participate in our democracy. Allowing more voters to mail in their ballots without onerous requirements would help solve the problem, breaking down barriers for seniors and working families while encouraging participation. States that have expanded absentee and vote by mail programs have seen a 15 percent increase in voter turnout. Even better, voting by mail is secure. Paper ballots can be recounted and audited by hand.

There are signs of hope this expansion could happen, such as when New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu (R)

announced that the state will allow mail-in ballots if the coronavirus is still a factor. That was in stark contrast to the governor's previous statements about absentee voting and the stance of many extremist Republicans who oppose it.

However, President Trump has continued to denounce mail-in voting, falsely claiming that it enables widespread voter fraud — although he and senior members of his staff and cabinet themselves cast absentee ballots by mail.

The Republican National Committee has pledged to spend millions to block any state efforts to expand voting by mail in November. The Alliance is on the front lines of this fight. We even filed suit in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin to tear down barriers to voting. Retirees are flooding elected officials' offices with calls demanding the right to vote safely and securely by mail. The pandemic has taken so much from us, we can't let it also take away our right to vote.



Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW.

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

Memorial Day Massacre ~ 1937

Few people think of unions when they think of Memorial Day, but 83 years ago, one of the most important events in American Labor History occurred.

Some 1,500 steelworkers, and miners in mines owned by steel companies, went on strike in seven states on May 26, 1937. The Memorial Day Massacre, in which



Archive photo—Illinois Labor History Society

ten strikers were killed by police at Republic Steel in Chicago, took place four days later, on May 30, 1937.

Those who were striking were associated with a new labor federation called the Committee for Industrial Organization, or CIO, which in the space of a year had managed to build unions in long-time anti-union strongholds like General Motors and US Steel.

The incident occurred after Republic Steel and several other smaller Steel Companies responded to the CIO's organizing efforts by firing, threatening, and assaulting hundreds of union supporters, and refusing to bargain with the union—all illegal under the Wagner Act.

Shortly after Memorial Day, the strike ended and the Union won its contract. Republic and the other Little Steel companies did eventually establish a collective bargaining relationship with the union involved in the 1937 strike. **We know it today as the United Steelworkers International Union.**



USW Membership Department
60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



UNION PLUS CAN HELP

COVID-19 has impacted all of us. Union Plus can help.

Our Union Plus program partners have accommodations for members struggling during this public health crisis. Participants in our Union Plus Mortgage, Credit Card, Personal Loan, or Supplemental Insurance programs may be eligible for additional hardship assistance through the Union Plus Mortgage Assistance Program and Union Plus Hardship Help.

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Be well and stay healthy,

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