

USW@WORK

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers

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"THIS RESCUE PLAN IS A GROUNDBREAKING SET OF MUCH-NEEDED RELIEF EFFORTS AND SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR SOCIAL CONTRACT, WHICH WILL QUICKLY PUT AMERICAN WORKERS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY. THIS IS TRULY A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION ACCOMPLISHMENT."

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT TOM CONWAY ON THE PASSAGE OF THE "AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN," MARCH 11, 2021

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Gratitude for Essential Workers

I was happy to see in the Winter 2021 edition of *USW@Work* the information about what USW members are doing to help with the coronavirus vaccine. I am a retiree from Local 105, I worked at Alcoa (now known as Arconic), in Bettendorf, Iowa, for 31 years, and am the president of my chapter of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

For myself and many of my fellow retirees, it's been a scary and frustrating time as we try to make sure we can all get vaccinated and get back to the lives we used to know. I'm proud to see that the USW is doing its part to help in that effort.

I've been reading the USW magazine for a long time, and it's pretty clear that we need the union now more than ever. Besides doing all of the work that members have done to fight the virus, the union is still the best way for us to fight for good pensions, health care, high wages and safe jobs. I honestly can't imagine how I'd be able to survive in retirement without everything that the union has fought for over the years.

Thank you to all the front-line workers and essential workers who are part of the USW – keep up the good work!

*Bonnie Carey
Port Byron, Ill.*

The Choice is Clear

I quickly renewed my subscription to *USW@Work* after reading the Winter 2021 edition. Your endorsement of President Biden's "Build Back Better" agenda to invest in infrastructure repair and modernization is indeed "hopeful," as the headline said. Your praise for Biden's Cabinet picks who support unions was equally inspiring.

Because Republicans in Congress vote against environmental improvement policies, more Democrats must be elected to protect humanity's future, promising more jobs and infrastructure investment. Public education, health care, working families, women's rights, minority rights and voting rights are also supported by Democrats more than by Republicans.

Organizing has already begun in some states, to prepare for the 2022

midterm elections, registering and motivating voters the way Stacey Abrams did in Georgia. We must elect more people to Congress in 2022 who support Biden-Harris policies. The choice is clear, and much is at stake.

*Nathaniel Batchelder
Director, The Peace House
Oklahoma City*

Thank Our Wastewater Workers

There is a group of first responders few ever think of, let alone thank, despite the fact that they are some of the most essential of all essential workers.

They are on the front lines before, during and after every disease and disaster, natural and manmade. These are heroes who very rarely if ever receive words of encouragement or praise for their work, without which our society wouldn't be able to function.

These brave people faced exposure before the first patient was identified. They were there before the disease was identified, or even given the name "Covid-19." They were there when other first responders began to fall ill.

These heroes are the men and women of your wastewater treatment plant.

Seldom are they thought of, or referred to in a positive manner unless as the butt of a joke because of their extremely essential and green work.

Remember, before the first patient knew why they felt off, their local wastewater treatment plant operators were exposed to the unknown.

So next time you are in your bathroom, whether for good or for ill, spare a thought for those working at the other end of the line. And, on behalf of all those who can't or won't see how invaluable your work is – thank you to the workers of American wastewater treatment.

*T. Casey-Wiles
Midland, Mich.*

Seeking Stories of 'Body Blanks'

We called them "body blanks." They began as a sheet of 36 and were sliced to size to create three-piece lidded cans. They were passed like stiff sheets of paper between union co-workers and state approval boards.

Who would have dreamed that a 5-inch by 7-inch sheet of steel could hold so much graphic beauty and be instructional at the same time? They were miniature metallic masterpieces of brand imagery, eye-catching graphics and most importantly, the fine print.

That's precisely why union employees held onto some of them during their careers, usually stacked in a manila envelope a few inches thick and kept for reference and proofs.

Why am I telling you all of this? Because I would love to know more. If you worked in a canning plant, were an inspector or proofed blanks, or held onto these steel sheets of history, I'd love to see and hear about it. I collect stories and items from those days, and yours would make my day. Let me know: oldbeer@gmail.com.

*Barry Travis
St. Paul, Minn.*

A Member in Memory

I am writing on behalf of my mother, Joyce Scott, who passed away in 2017. I should have written sooner but grief being as it is would not allow me to see through the tears.

Though she suffered dementia, she was a union girl to the end. When the new *USW@Work* magazine would arrive, I would read it to her and show her the pictures. She would then want to hold it and stare at the pictures for hours. She so enjoyed it.

*Wayne Scott
Akron, Ohio*

A Solid FOUNDATION

USW CEMENT WORKERS KEY PART
OF INFRASTRUCTURE PUSH

From his perch nearly 500 feet in the air, atop the preheater tower at Lehigh Cement, Jay Trankley can get a good look at all 2,500 acres of his employer's sprawling operation, as well as the small town of Union Bridge, Md., that many of its workers call home.

Trankley, a process utility person at the plant for the past 15 years, helps to maintain the massive kiln that is central to the cement-making process and to the production site. He is one of more than 110 members of Local 8-00031 who work at the state-of-the-art Union Bridge facility.

The basic recipe that Trankley and his USW co-workers follow to make their product is the same as it has been for hundreds of years, but the processes, technology and quality control at Lehigh are as modern as any in the industry.

"It's a better quality product," said lab automation tech Lorne Keefer, who oversees some of the high-tech equipment that monitors samples and flags imperfections to ensure a top-of-the-line end result.

'We Supply America'

Their commitment to excellence puts the workers at the Lehigh plant, along with the 160 other units in the USW cement council, on the front lines of a union-led campaign to secure trillions of dollars in federal infrastructure investments and ensure the growth of good union jobs for decades to come.

"We need it to happen," Local 8-00031 Grievance Chair and 10-year member Tom Eyler said of the USW's infrastructure push, dubbed "We Supply America."



Tom Eyler
Photos by Steve Dietz

Because cement is a key component of the materials used to construct buildings, build dams, pave roads and erect bridges, workers like those at Lehigh are a big part of making sure that the supplies needed for a comprehensive infrastructure overhaul will be made in the United States with union labor.

That would be good news for Local 8-00031 members, company management, and all of the residents of tiny Union Bridge, which, according to the most recent census data, is home to only about 250 families and fewer than 1,000 people.

“It’s critical for the local economy,” Eyler said.

That point was proven many years ago when the company, under scrutiny from a group of local residents who questioned whether the town truly needed an industrial plant to sustain its economy, conducted an experiment by paying the work force with stacks of \$2 bills. The notes began filling up the cash registers of every business in town.

“If this place didn’t exist, the town wouldn’t exist,” Eyler said.

‘To The Next Level’

A major infrastructure program is likely to be a shot in the arm for Lehigh’s business, which has already been steady even throughout the COVID-19 recession, said assistant plant manager Chad Mullican.

President Joe Biden’s “Build Back Better” jobs and infrastructure program, which includes a major push toward greener

technology, would also shine a light on the advances that the cement industry, and Lehigh in particular, has made over the years to control emissions and ensure that the production process has the smallest possible environmental footprint.

“The thing that sets us apart is our willingness to grow and adapt. This is going to take us to the next level,”



Mullican said of the infrastructure proposal. “It would be huge for both us and the environment.”

Lehigh’s current position is solid enough that the company recently opened a second quarry in nearby New Windsor, about six miles from the plant, and constructed an advanced conveyor system that carries stones from the quarry to a storage facility on the plant grounds in

Union Bridge. Between the new quarry and the original one, the company estimates that it has enough limestone available to last at least another 87 years.

Always in Motion

Some of the stones that USW members take out of the quarry are as large as compact cars, even after they are blasted loose from the earth. Workers then truck those boulders to a machine that crushes them into small enough pieces to be placed onto the closely monitored conveyor.

Once they reach the plant, they are ground down and precisely blended with a mix of sand, iron slag and ponded ash. That mixture is heated and formed into nuggets known as clinker, which then goes to a finishing mill where it is combined with other elements to optimize the quality and strength of the final product.

The cement-making process demands that there is always something in motion at the plant, and USW members are a key part in every step of the operation. Throughout the day, 10,000 points of data churn through the plant’s computerized



Renato Madera



Derek Weishaar



Lorne Keefer



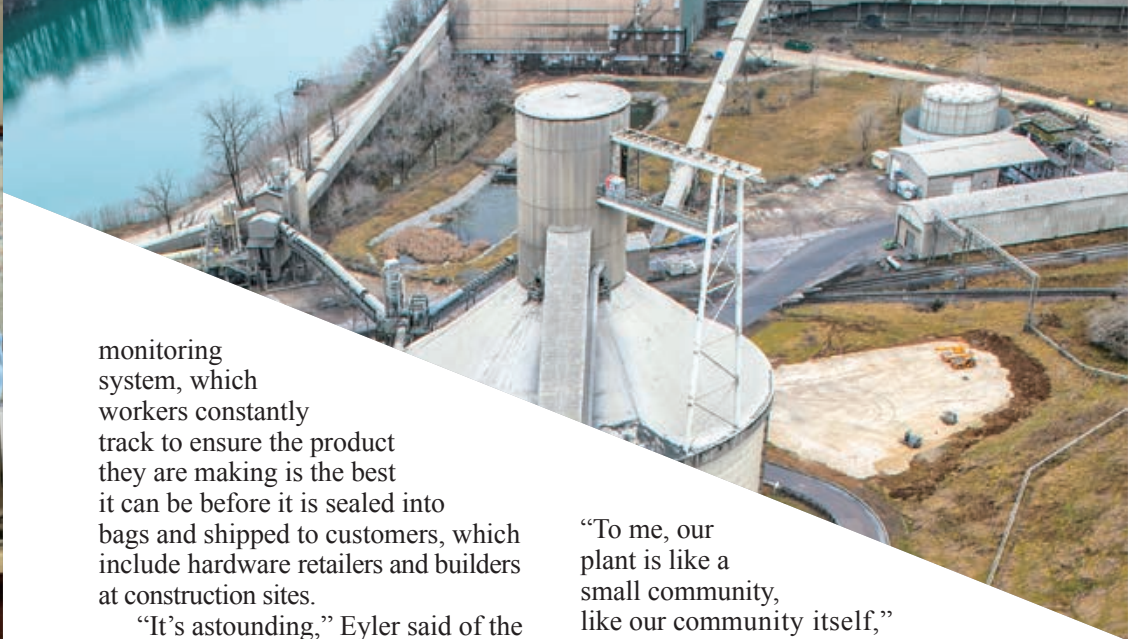
Andrew Bryant



Richard Fogle



Marty Hildebrand



monitoring system, which workers constantly track to ensure the product they are making is the best it can be before it is sealed into bags and shipped to customers, which include hardware retailers and builders at construction sites.

“It’s astounding,” Eyer said of the size and complexity of the operation. “You take it for granted.”

Generations of History

The original factory, known as Tidewater Portland Cement Co., was built in 1910. Lehigh purchased the facility in 1925 and invested in several major modernization efforts over the years. Today, the plant, which operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is able to produce more than 2.5 million metric tons of cement each year.

In the early days, most of the work now carried out by computers was done by hand, but the increased automation in recent years creates a more consistent, stable output, said Keefer, who has worked at the plant for 27 years.

He is one of many workers at the site who have lengthy terms of service. Mullican has been with the company for 25 years, the first 10 or so as a USW member before he joined management. It’s a common story at Lehigh for the company to promote union members through the ranks.

“We grow our talent from the inside,” Mullican said.

Family Atmosphere

Local 8-00031 President Brad Llewellyn works in a control room with more than a dozen screens of data on the Lehigh operation. He has been with the plant for 23 years and has known Mullican since the two were in elementary school.

That closeness makes for a family-like atmosphere that spreads throughout the factory and into the community, Llewellyn said.

“To me, our plant is like a small community, like our community itself,” he said. “To see this community be able to contribute the way that we do, to have that much of an impact, it makes you stick your chest out with pride.”

District 8 Director Ernest R. “Billy” Thompson, whose district includes the states of Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia and West Virginia, said he was proud of the work USW members perform in Union Bridge.

“The hard-working members of Local 8-00031 have spent decades working hand-in-hand with the company to continuously improve their product,” he said, “and working with each other to ensure a better quality of life for themselves and their families.”

That spirit of collaboration with the company extends to the bargaining table, Llewellyn said, noting that the relationship between labor and management in Union Bridge is productive, particularly in the all-important area of health, safety and environmental issues.

Eyer said that having a strong union committed to a safe workplace was essential as he pointed out the massive, constantly moving parts and intense heat involved in the various stages of the cement-making process.

Collaborative Efforts

In addition to working hard to prevent on-the-job incidents, the union and the company also collaborated through the coronavirus pandemic to implement a rigorous program of testing and other joint efforts that kept the facility running and kept the virus from spreading through the plant.

“The union and the company did a great job working together,” said electrician Marty Hildebrand.



Jason Harris



Jay Trankley

Local 8-00031 leaders also work closely with other union members in the industry, negotiating their collective bargaining agreements jointly with workers at two other Lehigh facilities.

That collaboration, both with management and within the union, has helped to deliver the good wages, strong benefits and a secure retirement that keep USW members on the job for the long haul. It has also helped the company become a leader in an industry that is positioning itself for a solid future.

“This is a place where you can grow and raise a family,” Eyler said.

The USW is committed to making sure that remains true for decades to come, said District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, who serves as chair of the USW cement council.

“The USW is proud of the relationship we have built with Lehigh and our other partners in the cement industry,” Ramirez said. “Our union’s push for long-term sustained investments in our national infrastructure will ensure that future generations of USW members continue to produce quality products while enjoying the security and benefits that the workers at Lehigh have earned.”

Making sure the future is secure for upcoming generations is something that is important to both management and USW members in Union Bridge. Mullican’s son recently started a USW-represented job at the plant, making his one of many multi-generational families working there.

“The sky’s the limit here,” said Eyler, who has lived in the area since he was 8 years old and is now a father himself. “We are providing a better life not just for ourselves and our families, but for generations of families. The future is bright.”

“Our union’s push for long-term sustained investments in our national infrastructure will ensure that future generations of USW members continue to produce quality products while enjoying the security and benefits that the workers at Lehigh have earned.”

Emil Ramirez, District 11 Director

★ WE ★
SUPPLY
AMERICA
#USWMADE #USWVOICES

USW LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE INFRASTRUCTURE CAMPAIGN

Like the USW's founders did nearly 80 years ago, Kameen Thompson works in a steel mill. But he knows that the \$2 trillion jobs and infrastructure program President Joe Biden proposed this spring will do as much to help union workers in other industries as it will for him and his fellow Local 9462 members.

"Everything goes hand in hand," said Thompson, the local president. "This is a great opportunity for everything to bounce back."

That's why he is a staunch supporter of the USW's plan, also launched this spring, to urge lawmakers to pass a massive infrastructure program like the one Biden is proposing. The USW initiative, known as "We Supply America," is aimed in part at reminding lawmakers that Steelworkers are a key part of every sector of the economy and every essential supply chain throughout the country.

"We're taking a broad, ambitious view that includes rebuilding not only our physical infrastructure – like roads, bridges, ports and waterways," said International President Tom Conway, "but also the social infrastructure of our schools, communications networks and public health services."

USW Member Survey

Conway and other USW leaders are asking rank-and-file members to play a major role in the effort. The USW launched a union-wide survey, similar to the pre-election questionnaire that thousands of workers answered in 2020. Members can learn more about the "We Supply America" program and answer the survey at www.uswvoices.org.

"A large-scale investment is certainly long overdue," Conway said. "But more importantly, President Biden has made it clear that he,



like our union, takes an expansive view of infrastructure.”

Biden’s proposal, the most ambitious such program since World War II, would rebuild 20,000 miles of roads and 10,000 bridges, upgrade water, utility and transportation systems, expand broadband internet access, modernize rail lines and ports and fund a host of other projects to create what the president said would be “the most resilient, innovative economy in the world.”

“This is not a plan that tinkers around the edges,” he said. “It is a once-in-a-generation investment in America.”

Making Corporations Pay

Biden is proposing corporate tax increases that will more than pay for the cost of the projects, particularly with levies on multinational companies that try to shelter their massive profits in offshore accounts.

It wasn’t a coincidence that Biden chose to announce the program in the USW’s hometown of Pittsburgh.

“This city and so many cities like it across our nation are the homes of not only the industries that will fuel this initiative but also the union members who stand ready to do the work,” Conway said.

Another one of those towns is on the other side of Pennsylvania in Conshohocken, where Thompson and his co-workers make high-quality steel at the Cleveland-Cliffs plant, which until recently was owned by ArcelorMittal.

The mill has struggled in recent years, in part because of federal inaction on infrastructure, Thompson said. Several parts of the facility are currently idled, including the bridge yard and the rolling mill.

Meanwhile, the USW membership has dwindled from more than 400 when Thompson started there in 2006 to less than 100 now.

Steel Industry Struggles

The story of the Conshohocken mill is one that’s been repeated all too often in an industry that continues to struggle, despite the 25 percent tariffs imposed in March 2018 and other recent measures to curb unfair foreign trade.

Last year, U.S. Steel idled its Great Lakes Works in Michigan, and Labor Department numbers at the end of 2020 showed that the steel industry as a whole employed about 8,000 fewer workers than it did four years earlier.

Thompson said he was hopeful that the president’s jobs and infrastructure plan would put his plant back on solid footing, a process that he said began when Cliffs purchased ArcelorMittal’s U.S. operations late last year.

“That was a ray of hope for us, and it’s been good since then,” Thompson said. “It’s going to take some time, but the process is in the works.”

Major infrastructure investments would also be good news for all of the people – from hospital workers and grocery clerks to teachers and truck drivers – who live and work in the area around the mill, northwest of Philadelphia, he said.

“We are a steel town. Even though there are other players in the game, we are one of the major players,” Thompson said. “That would be a huge benefit for Conshohocken.”

Rebuilding America

Thompson said that about 40 percent of the members of Local 9462 are veterans who take pride in the fact that their mill produces steel used in the construction of U.S. military vessels.

They would feel a similar sense of satisfaction knowing that they were contributing to roads, bridges, schools and other projects that are putting Americans back to work after a lengthy pandemic and recession, he said.

“Infrastructure is a promise kept,” he said. “You feel like you’re contributing to the rebuilding of America.”

‘REPORT CARD’ HIGHLIGHTS INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The recently released 2021 Report Card for America’s Infrastructure – an assessment made every four years by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) – gave America’s infrastructure an overall “C-” grade, further highlighting the urgency for a massive program that will help states and municipalities chip away at huge maintenance deficits.

The ASCE estimates that the United States is currently spending only half of what is needed on the country’s infrastructure projects.

This year’s mark is slightly up from 2017’s “D+” grade due to increased investment and support for infrastructure policies. Drinking water, inland waterways and airports have all seen incremental improvement over the past four years.

But the long-term investment gap continues to grow, and the ASCE estimates that \$2.59 trillion is needed to address huge backlogs, meet future needs and increase global competitiveness. If the nation fails to invest sufficiently in its infrastructure, the ASCE reports that by 2039 the U.S. economy will lose \$10 trillion in growth and more than 3 million jobs.

The lowest grade among the categories was transit with a “D-,” followed by “D” grades for levees, storm water, roads and dams. Rail was rated highest with a “B” grade.

Like the ASCE, the USW believes that crumbling infrastructure undermines our safety and prosperity. The union’s “We Supply America” campaign launched this spring aims to spotlight members across sectors who are ready to supply the components needed to modernize America’s infrastructure.

The ASCE concluded its report by recommending bold action and sustained investments to improve America’s infrastructure report card grade.

“As the nation recovers from the recession left behind by the COVID-19 crisis, infrastructure investment is a clear path forward to put millions of Americans to work in good jobs and restore the backbone of our economy,”

said International President Tom Conway.

TAKE THE
SURVEY



Visit www.uswvoices.org to hear USW members’ stories, learn more about the union’s “We Supply America” program and answer the related survey.

RIPPLE EFFECTS

USW SUPPORTS BIDEN EFFORT TO SHORE UP U.S. SUPPLY CHAINS



When the COVID-19 pandemic led to a shortage of computer chips, the auto industry was forced to cut back production, and Brad Greve knew that it was only a matter of time before he and his co-workers in Local 105 began to notice.

“It’s that ripple effect,” said Greve, who works at the Arconic aluminum plant in Davenport, Iowa. “If you shut down a car manufacturer – or they can’t get one part – you can affect a whole lot of jobs around the country.”

Local 105 members supply metal for automobiles like the Ford F-150 pickup. When Ford can’t make as many trucks, they don’t use as much aluminum and, suddenly, even more jobs are on the line.

“It affects everybody,” said Libbi Urban, vice president of USW Local 9231 at Cleveland-Cliffs’ New Carlisle, Ind., Works.

That’s why the USW threw its support behind a Biden administration effort to conduct an immediate review of supply chains for key industries, including semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, electric batteries and critical minerals, along with long-term reviews of other vital sectors of the U.S. economy.

Biden’s executive order is meant to preserve good jobs and protect national security, while also ensuring that the United States doesn’t experience dramatic shortages of crucial goods as it has during the coronavirus pandemic.

“President Biden recognizes that American manufacturing is a critical part of our nation’s safety and security,” said International President Tom

Conway. “If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it’s that when we are forced to rely on other nations to supply our day-to-day needs, we put American lives on the line.”

While Biden’s order will initially focus on health care and high-tech industries, the USW believes that the administration must ultimately shore up the entire U.S. manufacturing sector, said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees bargaining in the union’s health care sector.

“This must just be the first step in what needs to be a full-scale effort to restore U.S. manufacturing capacity across all industries,” said Redmond. “That effort must include large-scale investments in updating our infrastructure, along with a commitment to ensuring that these investments create long-term, good-paying jobs that can support families.”

If the review finds deficiencies in U.S. supply chains for key sectors of the economy, the administration intends to put pressure on U.S. companies in those sectors to relocate factories from nations like China back to the United States, Canada or other allied countries.

“While these four areas of focus are an important start, a similar effort will be necessary to strengthen our infrastructure supply chain when that work begins,” Conway said.

The shortages of household supplies, medical equipment and personal protective equipment that Americans saw during the first several months of the pandemic demonstrated the urgent need to revitalize U.S. manufacturing, Conway said.

WORKERS PUSH TO SAVE FORMER MYLAN PLANT

PLANNED CLOSURE WOULD POSE NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT, MEMBERS SAY

USW members in West Virginia are waging a campaign to save their workplace from closure after new owner Viatris announced in December that it would shutter the former Mylan pharmaceutical factory and lay off 1,500 people.

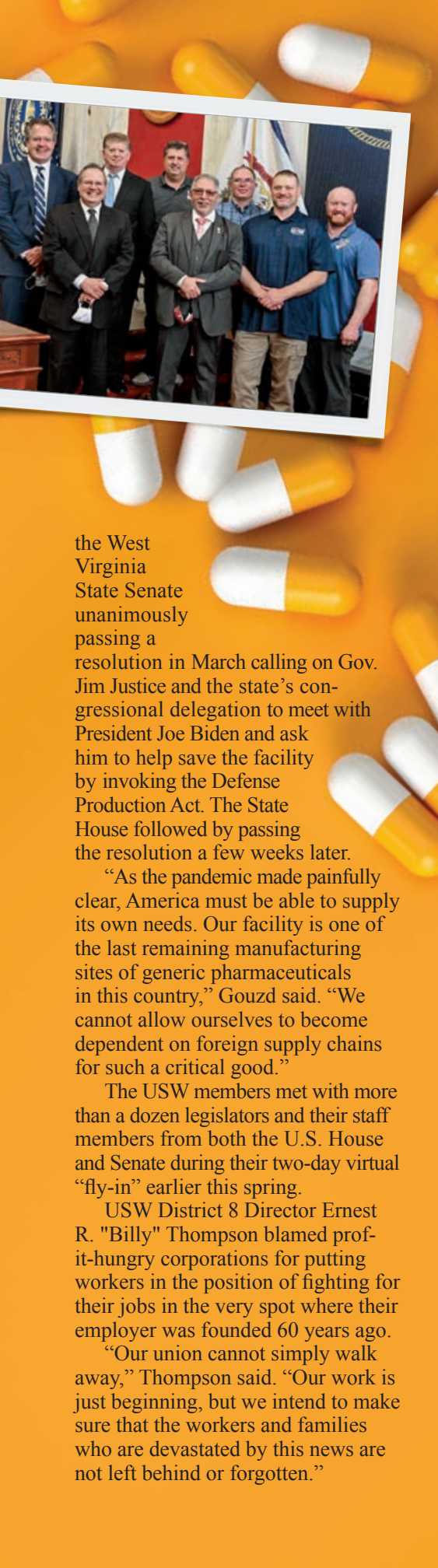
Members of Local 8-957 met virtually with Washington, D.C., lawmakers in March, calling on their elected officials to lend support to the union’s effort to save the Morgantown generic drug manufacturing facility.

Viatris is a new company established last November when Mylan, founded in West Virginia in 1961, merged with Upjohn, a business spinoff from Pfizer. Only a month later, Viatris announced it would permanently close the Morgantown facility at the end of July, putting 850 members of Local 8-957 out of work.

Besides being a vital part of the local economy, the factory is an essential part of the nation’s health care supply chain, particularly in the midst of a global pandemic. Without it, USW members say, the nation could be forced to rely on foreign suppliers to meet critical medical needs.

“Closing this facility will be devastating not only to the hard-working men and women who remain committed to making this company successful, but to our entire community,” said Joseph G. Gouzd, president of USW Local 8-957. “But even more than this, the plan to shutter this facility is a matter of national security that imperils our entire nation.”

The workers have had at least one success in their campaign already, with



USW LEADERS SEEK CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR MANUFACTURING

the West Virginia State Senate unanimously passing a resolution in March calling on Gov. Jim Justice and the state's congressional delegation to meet with President Joe Biden and ask him to help save the facility by invoking the Defense Production Act. The State House followed by passing the resolution a few weeks later.

"As the pandemic made painfully clear, America must be able to supply its own needs. Our facility is one of the last remaining manufacturing sites of generic pharmaceuticals in this country," Gouzd said. "We cannot allow ourselves to become dependent on foreign supply chains for such a critical good."

The USW members met with more than a dozen legislators and their staff members from both the U.S. House and Senate during their two-day virtual "fly-in" earlier this spring.

USW District 8 Director Ernest R. "Billy" Thompson blamed profit-hungry corporations for putting workers in the position of fighting for their jobs in the very spot where their employer was founded 60 years ago.

"Our union cannot simply walk away," Thompson said. "Our work is just beginning, but we intend to make sure that the workers and families who are devastated by this news are not left behind or forgotten."

Roxanne Brown,
International Vice President



Two USW officials testified before congressional committees this March to urge lawmakers to support the growth of domestic manufacturing.

Vice President Roxanne Brown spoke on March 17 to the U.S. House Committee on Appropriations at a hearing on "Domestic Manufacturing for a Clean Energy Future." Brown told the legislators that industrial workers must be at the forefront of any clean energy policy.

"Too often, manufacturing is overlooked in the development of clean energy policy," Brown said. "We have long believed that addressing climate change is not only necessary to meet our environmental principles, but can also drive massive job and production growth in the United States."

That growth, Brown said, if managed properly, will mean good jobs for USW members, particularly in the energy and manufacturing sectors. To make that happen, Congress must ensure funding streams are available in the form of grants and loans for the production of clean technology, research and development, building out of supply chains, modernization of the nation's electrical grid and other vital initiatives, and that workers are a priority as the economy transitions to a greener future.

The transition to a cleaner economy is necessary, Brown said, adding that industrial workers are rightly worried about what that future could mean for them if they are left behind as they have been during similar transitions in the past.

"American manufacturing workers have a great deal of skepticism about what this will mean for them, their jobs,

and their communities," Brown said.

"For those men and women, it is easy to draw a line between big economic change and people like them being the ones left behind."

That doesn't have to be the case, Brown said.

"For this transition to be successful," she said, "manufacturing workers and the communities in which they live must be the leaders of this transition, not the victims of it."

District 1 Director Donnie Blatt struck a similar tone when he testified on March 16 before the U.S. Senate Finance Committee during a hearing on "Made in America: Effect of the U.S. Tax Code on Domestic Manufacturing."

Blatt told the senators that in his 42 years as a union member, he has seen firsthand the economic devastation that comes when political leaders ignore the plight of manufacturing workers.

"We see the unraveling of supply chains when good manufacturing jobs are lost," Blatt said. "Congress and the Administration should use all of the tools available to retain and grow manufacturing jobs and domestic supply chains."

Lawmakers must enact tax policies that encourage investment in facility upgrades and new technology to foster job growth.

"Growing a globally competitive manufacturing base with mature strategic supply chains is critical to both our economic recovery and our national security," Blatt said. "Well-paid, union, American manufacturing workers are critical to our economy."



MASSIVE RELIEF EFFORT

*Once-in-a-Generation 'Rescue Plan'
Puts Nation on Path to Recovery*

President Joe Biden and Democrats in Congress worked together this March to enact the “American Rescue Plan,” a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package that contained once-in-a-generation reforms aimed directly at helping workers, retirees and communities recover from the devastation of the coronavirus pandemic.

“This rescue plan is a groundbreaking set of much-needed relief efforts and significant improvements to our social contract, which will quickly put American workers, families and communities on the road to recovery,” said International President Tom Conway. “This is truly a once-in-a-generation accomplishment for President Biden and Democrats in Congress.”

In addition to a massive effort to vaccinate Americans against the virus, the relief plan includes direct payments to American workers and retirees, tax credits to boost families and to combat child poverty, health care subsidies, and relief for cities and states whose budgets have suffered under the strain of a 14-month global pandemic and economic crisis.

Besides those provisions, the bill includes a measure to rein in out-of-control income inequality – and raise billions in new tax revenue – by controlling the amount of executive compensation that large corporations are permitted to write off or stash in overseas accounts.

Putting Workers First

Unlike previous relief efforts that funneled cash to corporations, the 2021 coronavirus relief effort puts working Americans at the forefront.

The plan includes funding to support front-line health care workers and their facilities, shore up endangered pension plans, speed up vaccine distribution, and expand COVID-19 testing. It will get the country on track to safely reopen schools, put unemployed Americans back on the job, aid financially strapped states and towns across the country, and help families cover the cost of utilities, transportation, college debt and other expenses.

“The American people elected Joe Biden and the Democrats in Congress last year because they wanted leaders who understood them and who were committed to doing everything in their power to help them succeed,” Conway said. “That is what this rescue plan does. This is a huge victory for workers and families, one that can’t be overstated.”

Boosting Supply Lines

The new law also shores up domestic production of essential goods to ensure that the shortages of much-needed supplies that Americans saw at the outset of the pandemic are not repeated.

“This law puts us back on solid footing and is a major first step toward a rebirth of the American Dream,” Conway said.

Rescue Plan Summary

The plan provides direct support for a huge number of worker-friendly initiatives, including:

Tax Cuts: Tax cuts for low-and moderate-income families, including a benefit of more than \$6,000 for families with children.

Retirement Protection: An \$86 billion fund to bolster struggling multiemployer pension plans, protecting the futures of 120,000 USW members and retirees.

Unemployment: Enhanced benefits for jobless Americans, including an extra \$300 per week on top of state-provided benefits and a waiver of taxes on the first \$10,200 in unemployment income.

Education: A \$130 billion fund to aid U.S. schools, allowing facilities to take necessary steps so that students, educators and employees, including USW members, can return safely to the classroom.

Health Care: A 100-percent subsidy to extend COBRA coverage for uninsured workers, which also applies to on strike or locked-out workers.

Local & State Governments: \$350 billion in aid for cash-strapped state, local, tribal and territorial governments that have been hit hard by the financial implications of the pandemic.

Veterans: Creation of a rapid-training program for veterans who’ve found themselves unemployed due to the pandemic.

RESCUE PLAN SAVES

Pension Funds



Before President Joe Biden signed the American Rescue Plan into law this March, hundreds of thousands of workers like USW Local 1-243 member Doug Kamerer were in danger of losing the secure retirements they'd worked their whole lives to earn.

In his 35 years as a die setter at Etched Metal Co. in Solon, Ohio, Kamerer and his co-workers agreed to numerous contracts with smaller raises so they could direct more money into their pension funds. But, like many multiemployer funds, their pension plan lost money and contributions through a wave of corporate bankruptcies, market losses and industry consolidation.

While the vast majority of the 1,400 multiemployer retirement plans in the United States were on solid financial footing, about 130 of them, including the one for Local 1-243 members and others holding the retirement savings of about 1.3 million Americans, were in trouble.

Member-Led Efforts

That crisis led USW members across the country to mobilize over the past several years and urge Congress to pass the Butch Lewis Act, which U.S. House members passed in a bipartisan vote in July 2019, but which languished in the then-Republican-controlled Senate.

The act would have ensured funding for multiemployer plans through a program of loans funded by Treasury-issued bonds.



Several months before the House vote, Steelworkers, along with members from the United Mine Workers, United Brotherhood of Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers, and other unions traveled to the U.S. Capitol from

locals around the country to lobby their legislators to make sure they and their co-workers would receive the pensions they had earned.

While that initial effort stalled, President Biden and congressional Democrats found a renewed path to success when they took office in January with the slimmest possible majority in the Senate and a priority list that put workers first.

1.3 Million Recipients

While the program they enacted isn't exactly the same as the original Butch Lewis Act, it includes \$86 billion to ensure that about 130 multiemployer pension funds have the cash to provide benefits for workers and retirees for years to come.

"This is huge," said Kamerer, who said he looks forward to retiring in about four years. "It's such good news. What a weight off my mind."

It's a worry that's now removed from the shoulders of about 1.3 million workers across the country who participate in multiemployer plans, including 120,000 Steelworkers.

Multiemployer pensions combine contributions from two or more employers in fields such as manufacturing, retail, truck driving and entertainment. Companies pay into these funds as part of their workers' wage and benefit packages and promise to pay retirees pensions based on their wages and years of service.

Urgency to Act

Because the recession brought on by the coronavirus pandemic put those pension plans into deeper trouble, the urgency to act quickly was heightened this year.

"This is our money," Kamerer said. "This is part of our compensation package. It's important that's understood."

If plans like Kamerer's collapsed, workers and retirees could stand to lose almost everything they earned.

Jim Allen, a retired Appleton Papers worker and USW Local 266 president, was another worker who watched as years of inaction by Republicans in Congress and a financial crisis put his retirement savings into deeper and deeper trouble.

"We had to not only hope but pray every day that they'd finally come to their senses and do something," Allen said.

Now, thanks to the rescue plan, workers like Allen and Kamerer and thousands of others can count on the retirements they've earned.

"People are hurting enough already," said Kamerer, who plans to travel with his wife and spend more time with family during retirement. "They don't need more worries about the future."

PANDEMIC ACCELERATES INCOME INEQUALITY

AS COVID-19 RAGED, THE RICH GOT RICHER AND WORKERS SUFFERED



As the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession devastated millions of Americans in 2020, the top 1 percent continued to hoard more wealth while working families lost more ground.

Rather than suffering during the pandemic, the richest Americans in fact profited from it. From March through September 2020, America's billionaires saw their wealth grow by \$845 billion, or nearly 30 percent, to a staggering \$3.79 trillion. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos alone saw his personal wealth grow by nearly \$190 billion in those six months, according to a study by Americans for Tax Fairness and the Institute for Policy Studies.

Over that same period, workers struggled just to pay their bills and stay in their homes. More than 32 million American workers were laid off, with millions of families losing their job-based medical insurance in the midst of a global health emergency.

As a result of insufficient oversight, even the U.S. government's efforts to provide pandemic relief last year led some wealthy corporations to game the system. The CARES Act provided \$175 billion in relief for health systems that scaled back opera-

tions to slow the spread of COVID-19.

But instead of rescuing cash-strapped hospitals, some of that money went to large, wealthy corporate health systems. HCA Healthcare, a Tennessee-based hospital chain, made more than \$7 billion in profits over two years but still got about \$1 billion in federal relief. Even then, the company threatened to lay off thousands of nurses unless the workers agreed to economic concessions.

Large companies in other industries also laid off workers even after receiving millions in federal loan dollars through the Paycheck Protection Program, intended to help businesses save jobs.

"We've got to stop corporations from exploiting our people," said Darryl Ford, president of USW Local 254, noting that one company in his home state of Georgia – Kumho Tire – received large government handouts during the pandemic and then fought workers who were trying to unionize.

Longstanding Problem

While the COVID-19 pandemic helped to accelerate the problem, income inequality has been hurting American workers for decades. Over the past 40 years, workers' wages

have been stagnant, while wealthy Americans have pocketed \$50 trillion.

In that time, the rich saw their earnings increase nearly 140 percent, while the bottom 90 percent of wage earners gained only about 12 percent, according to the Economic Policy Institute. After factoring in higher costs of health care and other benefits, many workers are actually pocketing less money than they would have made in 1980.

According to data from the Federal Reserve, as of July 2020, the top 1 percent of Americans had a combined net worth of \$34.2 trillion, while the poorest 50 percent — about 165 million people — had just \$2.08 trillion.

Changes in Law

The disproportionate growth of wealth at the top is a relatively new and largely American phenomenon. In the first three decades following World War II, wealth grew at similar rates across all income levels in the United States. Workers joined unions by the millions, wages increased and the middle class boomed.

In the late 1970s, that began to change as a result of two major factors. One was an all-out assault on organized labor by companies

and right-wing politicians that continues today, and the other was the effort by those same groups to institute supply-side or "trickle-down" economic policies that cut taxes on the wealthy, another policy that conservative politicians continue to embrace.

Together, these policies put billions more into the pockets of the already rich while delivering terrible results for workers. The number of U.S. workers represented by unions fell from about 27 percent in 1979 to less than 12 percent last year. And because union workers make, on average, about 25 percent higher wages than non-union workers, that decline has meant tens of billions of dollars in lost wages year after year going into the pockets of the already rich rather than workers.

"It's no accident that the assault on workers' rights has mirrored the growth in the wealth held by the super-rich," said International President Tom Conway. "Corporate America and the millionaires and billionaires who own it spent the past four decades trying to prevent workers from organizing for a very simple reason – so that they can keep the fruits of that labor for themselves – and it is working."

The remedy, Conway



USW MEMBERS PRODUCE COVID-19 VACCINES

Members of Local 10-00086 this spring joined the growing numbers of Steelworkers confronting the coronavirus pandemic head-on in their workplaces, this time by stepping up to help produce COVID-19 vaccines.

In March, the workers at pharmaceutical giant Merck & Co. in West Point, Pa., north of Philadelphia, began assisting in the production of rival Johnson & Johnson's COVID vaccine. By late May, the workers will be mixing the key drug component with other ingredients and filling vials with the vaccine.



"Our membership is very proud to be a part of the fight to put an end to this pandemic and save the country, and the world," said Local 10-00086 President Mike Gauger.

'Adjusting on the Fly'

A line in the facility was already set aside for a potential Merck vaccine, and changes will be made to that line to produce the Johnson & Johnson product.

"We're really good at adjusting on the fly and meeting a challenge like this," Gauger said.

Local 10-00086 is far from the only USW unit whose members are contributing to the work involved in overcoming the coronavirus pandemic. Not far from their facility, the members of Local 286 played a role in packaging and distributing vaccine doses.

In addition, members of Local 701-01 in New Jersey make glass tubes that are used to produce vaccine vials, and members of 2-432 in Wisconsin made special sleeves and inserts to protect vaccines during shipment.

Thanks to their work and that of thousands of others, as *USW@Work* went to press, Americans were receiving COVID-19 vaccines at a pace of more

than 3 million doses per day, bringing the total number of fully vaccinated people in the country to nearly 200 million by the end of April, well ahead of President Joe Biden's initial goal of vaccinating 100 million people in his first 100 days, which ended on April 30.

Preventing Virus Spread

Before they could begin their work to help vaccinate the American public, USW members first had to work with their employers to ensure that the virus did not spread through their workplaces.

Thanks to the cooperative, proactive measures members across the continent took to keep themselves and their co-workers safe, employers had thousands of healthy workers ready to contribute to vaccine production and delivery, as well as to manufacture other essential products that Americans needed to persevere through the pandemic.

"Combatting this virus requires a sustained commitment," said International President Tom Conway. "We've learned much during this pandemic, and one of the essential lessons is that America is nothing without its workers."

'We Can Get it Done'

The West Point facility, where members are producing Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses, employs a total of about 7,300 people, with roughly 4,000 in manufacturing, making it the largest employer in Montgomery County. It is also a major research site for Merck and serves as headquarters for its global vaccines business.

"We have a very experienced and devoted work force, and I truly believe when Merck is challenged, they know they can come here to West Point and we can get it done," Gauger said.

said, for workers to recover quickly from both the pandemic and from the decades of wage stagnation, is to make it easier for workers to organize unions.

"Besides higher wages, unions deliver quality health care, a secure retirement, safer workplaces, training and career advancement opportunities, a voice in workplace decision-making," Conway said. "Unions built the American middle class."

Minimum Wage

One remedy that could at least begin to reverse the trend of income flowing to the wealthiest Americans is a raise in the poverty-level federal minimum wage, which has been stuck at \$7.25 an hour since 2009. Raising the minimum to a living wage of \$15 per hour would lift millions out of poverty, including workers in many service jobs that were deemed "essential" during the coronavirus crisis.

Democrats in the U.S. House have passed a bill to raise the wage, but Republicans in the U.S. Senate refused to hold a vote on it.

"That minimum wage is a joke," said Eric Jarvis, president of USW Local 646 in Valdosta, Ga. "People should see that after this."



David McCall,
International
Vice President



ATI FORCES 1,300 WORKERS TO PICKET LINE

Members on ULP Strike Following Unreasonable Demands for Concessions

About 1,300 members at eight Allegheny Technologies Inc. (ATI) facilities in four states launched an unfair labor practice (ULP) strike in late March following the company's attempts to force them to accept major economic and contract language concessions.

The members, who have not had a wage increase since 2014, voted overwhelmingly to authorize the strike, which came about five years after the end of a bitter six-month lockout imposed by the specialty steel company.

"ATI has no excuse for committing unfair labor practices in its drive to force workers into accepting unnecessary concessions," said International Vice President David McCall, who chairs

the union's negotiations. "It is the utmost desire of the union to achieve a fair and equitable contract, and we are prepared to meet with management all day, every day if it helps us reach a fair agreement."

The strike includes members at nine locations: five facilities in Pennsylvania as well as sites in Massachusetts, New York and Ohio.

"We will continue to bargain in good faith, and we strongly urge ATI to start doing the same," McCall said.

The USW's collective bargaining agreement with ATI expired at the end of February after an agreed-upon one-year extension.

Demanding Concessions

The contract proposals that ATI presented to the



Photos by
Steve Dietz





union this time, members said, would represent roll-backs on decades of progress that members have fought for at the bargaining table and on picket lines.

“This is an attack on the union,” said Keith Beavers, president of Local 1138 in Western Pennsylvania.

Beavers pointed out that union workers at ATI have endured seven years without a wage increase, including the past 14 months laboring through a global pandemic without extra pay.

“It’s time for them to give us what we’ve earned,” he said. “We’re fighting for a better future.”

ATI’s proposals would impose higher health care costs that would absorb any wage increases and institute a lower-tier benefit plan for new hires.

Six-Month Lockout

In 2015, ATI made similar demands for deep concessions and ultimately chose to lock 2,200 members out of their jobs beginning in August. The company followed up with a well-funded campaign of intimidation and manipulation that included hiring scabs and security guards.

Eventually, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) filed a lengthy ULP complaint against ATI alleging that the lockout was illegal and that the company bargained in bad faith. Not long after that NLRB action, the company ended the lockout.

Beavers said he hopes that this time around, the strike is enough to convince the company to back off of its onerous demands and settle a fair contract.

“They want us to break, they want to divide us,” he said. “And when they do this, it’s done nothing but bring us closer together.”

Working at a Settlement

McCall said he continues to be in regular contact with the company’s lead negotiators in an effort to reach a fair and equitable settlement, but that, as they stand, ATI’s demands would threaten years of progress.

“Through generations of hard work and dedication, Steelworkers at ATI have earned and deserve the security of a union contract,” McCall said. “We cannot allow the company to use the global pandemic as an excuse to reverse decades of collective bargaining progress.”



ATI has no excuse for committing unfair labor practices in its drive to force workers into accepting unnecessary concessions.”

David McCall,
International Vice President

MEMBERS PRESS PIPELINE ISSUE

Members of Local 912 in Toledo helped their union gain a crucial victory this spring when the Ohio House of Representatives passed H.R. 13, urging Michigan's governor to allow a key pipeline to continue operating.

Four USW members, including Local 912 President Justin Donley, along with other USW allies and members of management, testified in favor of the resolution, seeking to preserve Enbridge Line 5, which runs through Michigan and moves more than a half-million barrels of crude oil and natural gas, as well as other vital utilities, back and forth through the upper Midwest and Canada.

The pipeline is an essential part of the economy of the region, particularly in Toledo, where Line 5 supplies a type of light, sweet crude that allows Donley and his co-workers at PBF Energy's Toledo Refining Co. to produce some of the cleanest end products of any petroleum company in the country.

"While we understand the concerns about the existing line, the fact is that it is not only safe to operate until the replacement line is built, but a necessary part of the fabric of our industry," Donley said.

Enbridge, which operates the pipe, needs approval from Michigan to build a utility tunnel and to replace and relocate parts of the

line that run under the Straits of Mackinac, waterways that connect Lake Huron and Lake Michigan between the state's upper and lower peninsulas.

"The replacement is a common-sense solution that will protect jobs, keep a steady energy supply, ensure a secure future, and maintain the economic viability of the region," Donley said.

**OHIO
LEGISLATURE**
**URGES MICHIGAN
TO ALLOW LINE 5
TO CONTINUE**

However, in November, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, citing environmental concerns, filed suit to terminate the 1953 easement that allows Enbridge to operate its pipelines under the straits.

While members acknowledge those concerns, they say that alternatives to the pipeline would present their own set of environmental issues, and that the economy of the entire region could suffer if the line were to be shut down.

"Our jobs are essential and create

over \$5 billion in economic activity in the region, which helps to support and grow our communities," Local

912 member Tira Houston said in her testimony to lawmakers. "Other options will lead to an increase in road and rail traffic of petroleum products, added risks of fleets of trucks on residential roadways, and the added risk of spills into the Great Lakes from product that would be acquired by cargo vessels."

The economic impact of a shutdown would be particularly stark for about 350 members of Local 912 at Toledo Refining Co., which currently has no viable alternatives to replace the supply it receives from Line 5.

"Hundreds of USW members and their communities in Ohio and across the Midwest depend on the good jobs Line 5 supports," said USW District 1 Director Donnie Blatt. "They're proud to help our country meet its energy needs in a safe, efficient manner. H.R. 13 recognizes that we must have uninterrupted operation of the existing Line 5 until a replacement can be completed if we want continued economic recovery and prosperity."

TAKE ACTION

HEAR MORE WORKERS' STORIES AND SIGN A PETITION TO HELP PRESERVE GOOD JOBS IN THE REGION BY VISITING

FUTUREONTHELINE.ORG

UNWAVERING UNITY

Member Solidarity, Community Support Lead to Victory at NLMK

This March, the members of Local 1016-03 voted to ratify a new, four-year contract with NLMK, ending a hard-fought, six-month, unfair labor practice strike by about 400 workers at the company's Farrell, Pa., steel plant.

"We want to thank everyone for their assistance and support," said Local 1016-03 President James Wells, Jr. "I'm proud that our membership stood strong and never wavered during the course of this very difficult strike forced by NLMK."

When negotiations began early last year, NLMK CEO Bob Miller made an ultimatum that the existing PPO health care plan would be eliminated and replaced with a high deductible health plan.

Miller has been trying to eliminate the PPO plan since 2008. Last year, he made clear that this "line in the sand" would not be crossed and that there would be no PPO plan in this agreement.

He was wrong.

"With support from the USW, our union brothers and sisters, local businesses and the community, we were able to keep our choice of insurance and handle a six-month strike without one member crossing the line," Wells said. "We stood against a company that was trying to take the health care that we have had for the past 20 years."

It certainly was not an easy fight, though.

From the very beginning, NLMK's proposals were designed to force USW members into a high deductible health plan that they did not want or trust and have consistently rejected over the years.

Most egregiously, NLMK took this action during the worst public health crisis in generations – the COVID-19 pandemic.

The USW filed unfair labor practice charges against NLMK with Region 6 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) based on the company's failure to provide information necessary to bargain on an informed basis, management's refusal to process grievances and unilateral changes to working conditions.

On Aug. 20, 2020, Local 1016-03 gave management a 48-hour notice of the union's intent to strike over unfair



state ruled that striking workers were entitled to compensation at least in part because the USW offered to work under existing terms and conditions before NLMK unilaterally changed the grievance and arbitration procedure.

The company spent a lot of money on a campaign to convince USW members to give up, including a slickly produced video selling management's high deductible plan that NLMK uploaded to Facebook and YouTube.

The company sent its propaganda directly to members via mail and tried to turn our community against workers, but at every turn, the USW kept the focus on NLMK's unfair proposals, broken promises and unlawful actions to keep the membership united.

International President Tom Conway praised the members and officers of Local

labor practices, and when the strike began, District 10 Director Bobby "Mac" McAuliffe vowed that the union would hold NLMK management accountable.

"We've stood together to survive during hard times in the past and know that we can accomplish great things through solidarity and collective action," McAuliffe said. "NLMK needs to stop breaking the law and negotiate in good faith with workers for a fair contract."

In October 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Office of Unemployment Compensation Benefits determined that members of Local 1016-03 were eligible for payments during the labor dispute. The

1016-03 and their families for their solidarity and dedication to stand together and fight for a fair contract.

"NLMK management picked a fight with the wrong union in the wrong place at the wrong time, trying to force radical, unnecessary health care concessions during a pandemic," Conway said. "The members of Local 1016-03 proved throughout this struggle that solidarity is stronger than steel."

In addition to maintaining their choice of PPO health insurance plan and a reasonable cost, the ratified contract includes yearly wage increases and other improvements.

PRO ACT *Would* REBUILD LABOR MOVEMENT

Biden, Democrats Breathe New Life into Legislation to Restore Workers' Rights

A new president and Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress have given new life to a bill that would restore union rights and level the playing field for workers more than at any time since the New Deal reforms that followed the Great Depression.

The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act would mean better wages, benefits and working conditions for all workers as many more Americans would have a fair shot at joining a union. The bill would remove unnecessary barriers to joining unions and would establish meaningful penalties against employers who illegally try to bully and intimidate workers into halting unionization efforts.

The U.S. House passed the legislation in February in a bipartisan vote. It faces a tougher battle in the U.S. Senate, where Republicans continue to employ the filibuster to thwart much of the majority's pro-worker agenda.

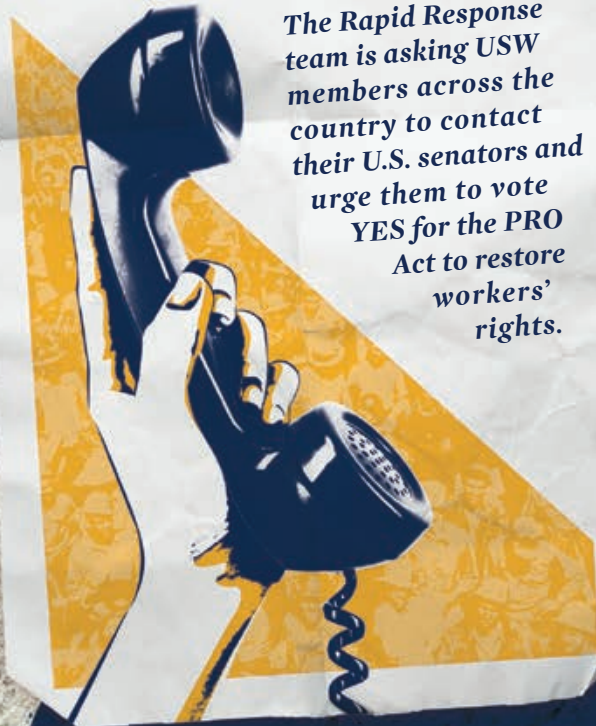
Unnecessary Delays

One employer that used a host of bullying and obstruction tactics in recent years was Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga. Though the workers were eventually successful in joining the USW, their efforts were met with a vicious union-busting campaign and years of delays. The company's behavior included repeated threats to workers, unwarranted dismissals, illegal interrogations and creating the impression of surveillance.

"For too long, corporations and their political cronies have been chipping away at workers' rights, making it harder for them to band together," said International President Tom Conway. "The PRO Act is a much-needed corrective to this assault on workers' power. It will pave the way for American workers to better advocate for themselves and their families."

The legislation also would set realistic deadlines for companies and union members to bargain first contracts following successful organizing drives. Under current rules, companies often employ high-priced union-busting lawyers

CALL YOUR SENATORS



The Rapid Response team is asking USW members across the country to contact their U.S. senators and urge them to vote YES for the PRO Act to restore workers' rights.

Please call your senators at:

877-607-0785

YOU HAVE TWO SENATORS. BE SURE TO MAKE TWO CALLS!

to drag the process out for years in an attempt to frustrate workers and stymie their efforts, even in cases where large majorities voted for representation.

Halting Union-Busting

In many cases, workers who want a union don't even get to the point where they begin to negotiate, because for decades labor laws have been written to favor union-busting employers rather than workers.

When Duane Forbes and his co-workers tried to form a union at Orchid Orthopedic Solutions in Bridgeport, Mich., the company hired five union-busters to harass workers. They badgered employees regularly on the shop floor, issuing veiled threats that the medical device factory would close or cut off workers' health care if they voted to join the union. The vote eventually fell short.

"Fear was their main tactic. Fear is the hardest thing to overcome," Forbes said. "There was nowhere to go. You

couldn't just go to work and do your job anymore."

Under current labor law, union-busting employers engage in such behavior regularly with few or no consequences. The PRO Act would change that and usher in a new era of union organizing not seen in decades.

Workers Want Unions

Polls show that more than 60 percent of U.S. workers would join a union if given the choice. Yet, unions in 2020 only represented 10.8 percent of the American work force, a number that has fallen by roughly half over the past 40 years.

President Joe Biden, both on the campaign trail and now in the Oval Office, has promised to reverse that trend and restore the voice of workers.

"The middle class built this country, and unions built the middle class," Biden said in March. Unions, he said, "increase wages, improve the quality of jobs and protect job security, protect

against racial and all other forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, and protect workers' health, safety, and benefits in the workplace."

"I urge Congress to send the PRO Act to my desk," he said.

The new law, the president said, would usher in an era of prosperity for working families like the nation saw in the decades that followed the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935.

Perhaps even more importantly, said Conway, the PRO Act will restore the voices of American workers so they can be equal partners in the decisions that affect their lives and communities.

"The opportunity to organize and bargain collectively is one of our most fundamental rights as workers," Conway said. "If we truly want to rebuild our nation's middle class and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to realize the American dream, we must enact pro-worker legislation, starting with the PRO Act."

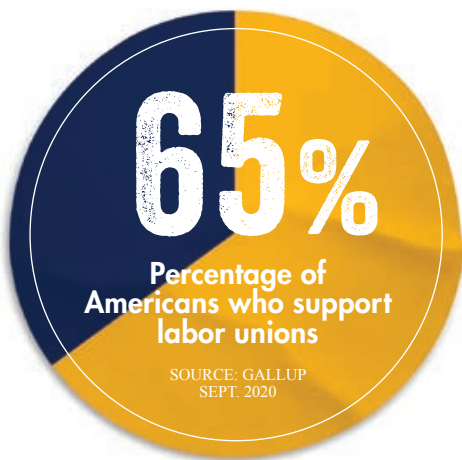
SUPPORT FOR UNIONS REACHES 18-YEAR HIGH

Fueled in part by the health and economic crisis of the coronavirus pandemic, American workers' support for unions last year reached its highest level since 2003.

"The fact is that sometimes it takes the worst circumstances for people to fully recognize the good that a union can do to make their workplaces better," said Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn, who has championed organizing throughout his tenure as the union's top financial officer, as well as during his prior service as District 4 director. "It's not surprising that this crisis has fueled new interest in the labor movement."

According to a Gallup poll released in September 2020, 65 percent of Americans support labor unions, a figure that has been steadily rising in Gallup's results since it fell to 48 percent during the depths of the Great Recession in 2009.

In the past, Gallup found labor organizations score their lowest ratings during economic downturns, including 2009.



The COVID-19 crisis did the opposite, however, as it has shown American workers the importance of coming together to fight for good wages and benefits, and especially for strong health and safety protections on and off the job.

Even celebrities were talking up unions in 2021, with Meghan Markle casually dropping this plug in front

of 17 million viewers during her and husband Prince Harry's interview with Oprah Winfrey in March: "At my old job, there was a union and they would protect me."

While Democrats and independent voters have maintained strong support for labor over time, Republicans have shown a recent surge in favor of unions, with their support rising to 45 percent last year, up from 29 percent in 2009, according to Gallup.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the longstanding unfairness in the American economy, a situation that has left far too many workers behind, and one that the labor movement fights each day to remedy.

"They know that without the power of a union, workers are helpless," Trumka said. "For years and years, people that we call essential workers were invisible. Now, people see those workers and the dignity that they represent."



As the Montana State Legislature was preparing to vote this March on House Bill 251, Andrew Racki was nervous.

The Local 11-443 member and Billings, Mont., resident had provided testimony to lawmakers, rallied his co-workers to the cause, and placed phone call after phone call to members of the state House in an effort to defeat the anti-union “right-to-work” bill. But, he admitted, he still wasn’t certain how the vote would go.

Ultimately, the efforts of Racki and other Montana workers were more than enough to ensure a resounding defeat for the anti-union legislation designed to destroy labor organizations. Despite intense pressure from out-of-state, corporate-backed anti-union groups, the Republican-dominated Legislature voted by a nearly 2-to-1 margin to prevent Montana from becoming the 28th “right-to-work” state in the United States.

Standing Together

Racki said the victory proved how strong the voices of working people are when they stand together against big-money interests.

“You kind of forget how powerful just speaking up can be sometimes,

especially in a smaller union,” he said. “You forget how powerful a message you can carry.”

The message Racki and his fellow union members carried in Montana was one of solidarity and how workers standing together have built better lives for the people of Montana for generations. Steelworkers were joined by nurses, teachers, plumbers, electricians and other union members in opposing the bill.

“The list went on and on,” Racki said.

Racki was joined by four members of Local 11-0001, who work for Sibanye-Stillwater mining company, in providing testimony to lawmakers about why “right-to-work” laws are wrong for workers.

“That’s the whole idea of a union. You have to stand strong, stand together and fight against anything that’s trying to push you out,” he said. “We realized we are all in this together. We are looking out for each other.”

In fact, a representative of Sibanye-Stillwater management even testified in Montana, telling lawmakers that the company’s partnership with the union over the years had led to a number of positive changes.

Generations of Labor

For Racki, who works at the CHS oil refinery in Laurel, Mont., the fight to

preserve workers’ voices was decades in the making. Racki’s father and grandfather both worked at the facility for years before he started, “on the union side, of course,” he emphasized.

“There’s been a Racki employee here consistently since right after World War II,” he said.

The years that have passed since then haven’t tempered the idea of solidarity for his family or for the 50,000 other union members in Montana. As the bill was being debated, rank-and-file workers filled the state house gallery and packed the halls of the state Capitol building in Helena as best they could under COVID-19 restrictions.

“It was a defining moment for the people that came to participate as citizen lobbyists,” said Al Ekblad, executive secretary of the Montana AFL-CIO.

It was the first time in three decades that so-called “right-to-work” legislation reached the floor of the Legislature, Ekblad said.

Falsely Named Laws

While such laws are falsely named to invoke an idea of “freedom,” what “right-to-work” laws actually do is outlaw closed-shop workplaces where every member must contribute equally to funding the work of the union. Under “right to work,” hourly workers can opt



out of paying dues even as the union is still bound by law to represent them. Thus, the laws starve unions of funds and cripple their ability to bargain contracts.

“It snowballs into not being able to represent people,” said Dave Dell Isola, vice president of Local 12012, which represents natural gas and propane industry workers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. “It’s un-American to expect people to work for you, bargain for you, and not pay them anything.”

As a result of such laws, hourly wages in “right-to-work” states are lower, health and retirement benefits are skimpier, and working conditions are more dangerous. A recent study from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that workers in Montana (both union and non-union) earn significantly more than workers in their anti-union neighboring states. According to the EPI, since 2007, wages in Montana have grown 12.9 percent, versus growth of 8.2 percent in neighboring states with anti-union laws on the books.

“This is why getting involved and raising our voices matters and is something we must continue to do,” said District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, who represents Steelworkers in Montana and across eight other western and mid-western states.

Rapid Response Activism

Ramirez credited the USW’s Rapid Response nationwide team of activists for the union’s strong leadership on the issue of “right to work.” He also reminded members that the battle against union-busting laws is not likely to go away without full-scale reforms like those contained in the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. (See Story, Page 20)

“The fight is indeed not over. But remember, if we were not relevant, they would not spend so much time trying to take us out,” Ramirez told the USW’s activists after the Montana victory. “Thanks for all you do every day to educate, empower, and engage.”

Montana is far from the only state where corporate interests are pushing union-busting measures. Members of the USW Rapid Response team are now focusing on stopping looming “right-to-work” threats in Missouri, New Hampshire and Tennessee.

In New Hampshire, the state Senate passed the measure by the slimmest of margins in February. The bill is now in the state House, where a similar effort failed in 2017.

In Missouri, anti-union lawmakers passed the legislation in 2017 and are considering reintroducing it, even

though voters overturned it by a landslide in a subsequent referendum. In Tennessee, Republican lawmakers want to go a step further and enshrine the anti-worker law in the state constitution to make it harder to later overturn.

In each of those states, and in others where “right to work” is a regular threat, the USW has a team of activists prepared to respond with testimony, member-to-member education, calls to lawmakers and other forms of outreach.

Continuing the Fight

If USW members in Montana, a historically conservative state, can prevail, Racki said, they can win the fight anywhere.

“We are capable of so much,” he said. “We’ve just got to get out of our own way sometimes.”

Today’s union members owe it to their predecessors – those who fought for the 40-hour week, pensions, health care, unemployment compensation, workplace safety standards and other benefits – to preserve those gains and keep fighting for future generations, Racki said.

“It’s the people who came before us who had to fight. It’s my grandfather. It’s my dad. It’s the union president who retired,” he said. “It’s humbling. Even if you have rough days, it reminds you why you do this stuff.”

Thousands of prospective USW members at the University of Pittsburgh are pushing ahead with their union organizing campaigns despite the administration's relentless union-busting efforts that have now cost the university more than \$2.1 million.

Two groups of workers at the school, commonly known as Pitt, have been vying for the past several years to become USW members through two simultaneous organizing drives – one involving about 4,700 faculty members and the other focusing on about 2,000 graduate student workers.

Another group of about 6,000 support staff members launched an organizing effort this spring, bringing the total potential USW membership at the university to nearly 13,000 if the three concurrent campaigns are successful.

Mounting Criticism

In January, Pitt's financial disclosures revealed that the university has paid, over the past five years, more than \$2.1 million to the law firm of Ballard Spahr, a Philadelphia-based group of attorneys well known for coordinating sustained union-busting campaigns on behalf of employers.

Pitt's 2020 expense reports brought sharp criticism from the university's work force and from Pennsylvania political leaders.

"It's unconscionable that Pitt accepts millions in Pennsylvania taxpayer dollars while in turn spending millions of dollars to prevent its own employees from having a voice on the job," said Melinda Ciccocioppo, a lecturer in the university's psychology department. "It's long past time for the university to end its union-busting efforts."

Pennsylvania House member Dan Miller, who represents several southern Pittsburgh suburbs, took to Twitter to call out Pitt for its unfair labor practices, saying, "Unions built our town. Let people vote!"

UNIVERSITY CAMPAIGNS PUSH FORWARD

THOUSANDS OF WORKERS CONTINUE ORGANIZING IN FACE OF RELENTLESS UNION-BUSTING



Melinda Ciccocioppo
Photos by Steve Dietz

GRADS CONTINUE FIGHT

Kim Garrett, a graduate student researcher in environmental and occupational health, and Alison Mahoney, a graduate in theater arts, are part of the ongoing unionization drive for grad student workers. The group is continuing to organize despite the administration's relentless union-busting campaign.



One area of disagreement that the Pitt administration has exploited to repeatedly delay the faculty's organizing efforts has been the size of the prospective bargaining unit.

In 2019, the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) determined that faculty organizers had not collected enough cards for an election, but a board hearing examiner later found that the administration had artificially inflated the size of the bargaining unit by including administrators, retirees and other non-bargaining-unit workers on its list. The examiner ruled that the election should move forward, but the administration appealed that decision.

Faculty members were hoping to resolve those issues and hold a union vote this spring.

Graduate Workers

The concurrent organizing drive involving about 2,000 graduate, teaching and research assistants and other workers is also under the jurisdiction of the PLRB. A hearing examiner ordered a new election for that group after the USW fell less than 40 votes short in an April 2019 tally that included blatant interference by the administration.

Earlier this spring, the PLRB upheld the results of that election following an appeal by Pitt, despite evidence that an email that a Pitt professor sent to a group of graduate workers while voting was still taking place could have substantially affected the outcome. The

USW is in the process of appealing that decision.

"The Pitt administration could have, years ago, simply allowed its workers the right to choose for themselves whether to join a union. Instead, it has waged an expensive, coordinated campaign to try to bully its way to the decision it wants," said International President Tom Conway. "Pitt's workers want and deserve a voice in the decisions that affect their students and their workplace, and they aren't going to be intimidated into giving up that fight."

A Voice on the Job

Ultimately, the university workers say, they are fighting for their colleagues – faculty members and graduate and research assistants – to have a strong voice in the administrative decisions that affect them, their students and their work. It's a simple goal, but one the Pitt administration seems intent on blocking every step of the way, even if it costs the school millions of dollars.

"Allowing the university's work force to have a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and the lives of students would be a win-win for everyone on campus," said Kim Garrett, a Ph.D. candidate in the department of environmental and occupational health. "It's shameful that the university is spending that \$2 million-plus to silence students and faculty instead of using it to improve their lives."

A USW member testified this spring before the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, calling on lawmakers to push for the removal of forced labor from U.S. industrial supply chains, both to protect human rights and to preserve good-paying American jobs.

“Connecting my life in Buffalo to global supply chains and forced labor is unfortunately, and surprisingly, too straightforward,” Joe Wrona, a member of USW Local 135L in Tonawanda, N.Y., told the senators. “Eliminating forced labor from our country’s supply chain should happen today, and companies who have benefited should be held accountable.”

In particular, Wrona, who now works for Sumitomo Rubber, told the committee about his prior experience at Ferroglobe’s Niagara Falls, N.Y., metal silicate plant, which closed in 2018 while facing intense competition from unfair imports.

The company, Wrona said, had been fighting illegal trade practices in metal silicate for nearly 30 years before closing its Niagara Falls facility. Because they produced a component used in the production of solar panels, they anticipated a boost from increased sales of that product, growth that instead went to Chinese-backed suppliers.

“While tariffs on metal silicate helped to defend our jobs,” he said, “they could not stop products further

USW MEMBER CALLS FOR END TO FORCED LABOR IN CHINA

Joe Wrona testifying remotely for the Senate Finance Committee on Fighting Forced Labor: Closing Loopholes and Improving Customs Enforcement to Mandate Clean Supply Chains and Protect Workers.



up the supply chain, like solar panels or those produced with forced labor.”

Forced labor and other illegal practices, particularly in China, have led to the destruction of U.S. jobs like the one Wrona had at Ferroglobe.

“About 45 percent of the world’s supply of solar-grade polysilicon comes from Xinjiang,” he said. “The news about human rights abuses there are unacceptable.”

Those abuses, he said, include millions of Muslims under lockdown control, as well as a million Uyghurs and others who have allegedly dis-

appeared into internment camps. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute estimates that more than 80,000 Uyghurs were transferred out of Xinjiang to work in factories across China between 2017 and 2019, Wrona said.

These abuses, he said, provide Chinese-backed companies with unfair advantages over their foreign competitors, destroying good-paying jobs.

“This has effectively locked the U.S. out of growing solar demand,” Wrona said. “The overcapacity in China destroys nearly any ability of U.S. companies to compete.”

BROWN TESTIFIES ON ALUMINUM IMPORTS



The U.S. Department of Commerce announced in March affirmative antidumping (AD) and countervailing (CV) duty decisions in its investigations of common alloy aluminum sheet imports from 18 countries.

The investigations were the widest AD/CVD enforcement action in two decades.

International Vice President Roxanne Brown provided testimony in support of the duties during a U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) hearing, where she called for a level playing field for U.S. producers.

The American aluminum industry faces intense pressure from unfairly traded imports of the products from the countries in question, Brown said.

“The surge in these low-priced imports has harmed the economic livelihood of thousands of American workers and their families,” Brown said. “Despite strong and increasing demand for common alloy sheet since 2017, employment in this industry has steadily declined, with workers losing jobs due to surging import volumes.”

Without relief, U.S. workers will continue to suffer, she said.

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USW: SECTION 232 TARIFFS SHOULD CONTINUE

The USW called for the continuation of Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum imports following a report this spring from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) arguing that ending the duties would harm U.S. manufacturing.

Removing the tariffs would squeeze vulnerable producers, increase greenhouse gas emissions, put good jobs in jeopardy and threaten U.S. national security, according to the report, entitled “Why Global Steel Surpluses Warrant U.S. Section 232 Import Measures.”

“The USW welcomes the EPI’s rigor-

ous research into the impacts of the steel 232 measures and the dire consequences of lifting them prematurely,” said International President Tom Conway. “Tens of thousands of USW members depend on a robust U.S. steel industry for good, family-sustaining jobs, doing vital work that helps ensure our national security.”

In March 2018, the White House imposed 25 percent tariffs on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports by invoking Section 232 of the Trade Act of 1962, which allows the president to restrict imports of goods critical to national security.

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) ruled in April that dumped mattress imports from seven countries are materially injuring the U.S. industry.

The decision, which applies to mattresses imported from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Serbia, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam, follows an investigation by the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) that found that the imports were dumped, or sold, in the United States at less than their fair market value. As a result, the DOC will apply antidumping duties to the imports.

The investigation came in response to petitions filed last spring by domestic mattress producers, the USW and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Dumping occurs when a manufacturer prices an exported product below its domestic market value or below production cost in order to gain market share.

USW representative Roy Houseman provided testimony in support of the petitions, telling the ITC that the union represents workers at mattress facilities in California, Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas.

No Effect on Consumers

The tariffs have had a negligible effect on consumers, the EPI report concluded.

Conway said that the national security element of the Section 232 measures is of particular importance for workers in the steel industry, especially during a global pandemic.

“Our members take pride that our steel is used in military vehicles such as tanks, ships and airplanes, as well as supplying the components that make up our nation’s critical infrastructure,” he said.

International Court Victory

Steelworkers won a victory in the U.S. Court of International Trade earlier this year when a three-member panel upheld the Section 232 tariffs on steel imports.

A steel importer, Universal Steel Products Inc., argued that the process to impose the duties was “deficient” because it did not specify an expiration date, that no threat to national security existed, and that the order exceeded the president’s authority.

Other industry groups, including the USW and the American Iron and Steel Institute, welcomed the decision and urged President Joe Biden to maintain them to protect the industry from a flood of excess capacity, largely due to China’s trade practices.

Biden has signaled repeatedly that he intends to keep the tariffs in place as long as necessary.

ITC FINDS IN FAVOR OF MATTRESS PRODUCERS



RICH LEGACY

VITAL FUTURE

RETIREES DOCUMENT LONG HISTORY
OF IRON RANGE MINING



Fresh out of high school and hungry for adventure, 18-year-old Ed Casey took a laborer's job at Erie Mining Co. in the spring of 1957 with plans to stay only a few months before moving on.

Instead, during 38 years at the company, he helped to build northeastern Minnesota's revolutionary taconite industry while fighting to establish union protections for thousands of miners who flooded into the region.

"I stepped right in and put my neck out," recalled Casey, a longtime Local 4108 officer, one of about 150 retirees who told their stories for a history of the company and its workers. "We were fighting like cats and dogs, the union against the company, when I first hired in."

The St. Louis County (Minn.) Historical Society published "Taconite: New Life for Minnesota's Iron Range"—nearly six years in the making—in 2019.

But that book by several retirees proved to be just the first of the group's efforts to shine a light on the Erie Min-

ing legacy and highlight the contributions that Iron Range miners continue to make to America's economy.

After mailing copies of the book to every library and high school in the state, the team of team of writers and researchers, led by onetime welder Ron Hein, wrote a content guide to help educators incorporate the material into their classes.

The retirees also planned a museum exhibit with the help of historical society staff, launched a scholarship program for Iron Range students and put a trove of resources, including interviews with Casey and other retirees, online to benefit future scholars.

"We wanted to make it an educational resource," explained Hein, who became a company manager and also served 37 years in the Army National Guard.

Hein, a member of the historical society's board of governors, said he's visited other parts of the country where residents seem to have little grasp of their past.

"I felt that should not hap-

pen to Erie Mining Co.," he said. "I just don't want to see that in the dustbin of history."

At a reunion of former Erie Mining workers in 2013, Hein and several others resolved to tell their story. The group scoured museums, archives and other sources for photographs and documents, lined up financial sponsors and tracked down dozens of former workers to collect oral histories.

One volunteer, Tom Michels, a retired millwright and Local 4108 officer who followed his father into the mine, found that his own appreciation for the workers' accomplishments grew as he learned about the hardscrabble early days from pioneers like Casey.

"I think the big thing was that people were just willing to work in an environment that wasn't real worker friendly," Michels said. "It wasn't that easy."

Erie Mining developed processes for extracting flakes of iron from the region's taconite rock and combining the particles into high-quality pellets.

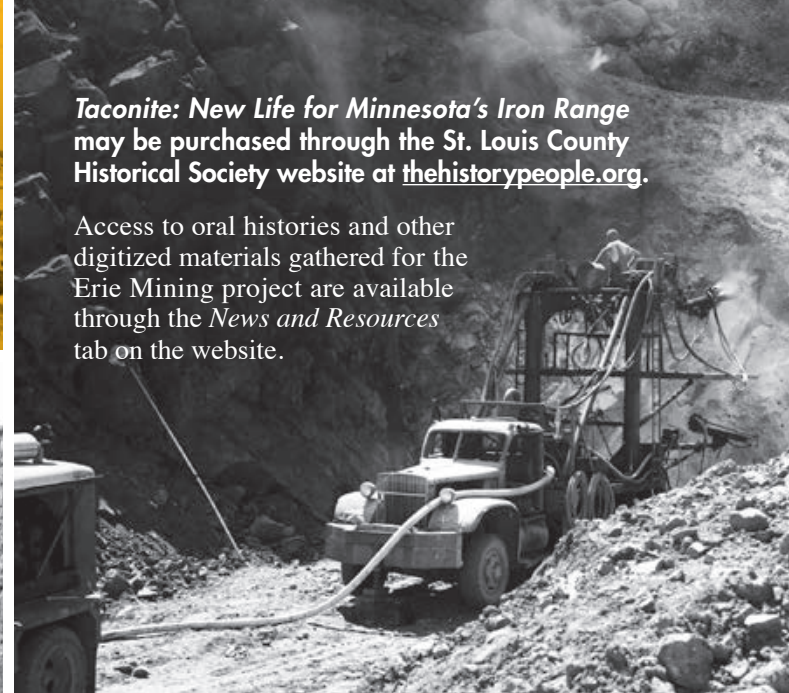
This product provided a much-needed alternative to dwindling supplies of naturally occurring high-grade ore and helped to feed the nation's enormous appetite for steel.

After a few years of experimental production, the company began constructing its commercial-capacity plant in 1954 and started large-scale mining in 1957. As workers forged a new industry, they came together in Local 4108 to battle favoritism and discrimination and fight for safe working conditions, seniority, decent pay and even lunchrooms.

"We really did a good job," remarked Casey, who spent much of his career working as a car repairman on the Erie Mining railroad. He retired in 1995, six years before the company ceased operations.

Often during the early years, Casey said, union leaders told workers to "put some extra potatoes aside and get some extra bills paid up" in case of a lengthy dispute.

"We were fighting for everything we got out there,"



Taconite: New Life for Minnesota's Iron Range may be purchased through the St. Louis County Historical Society website at thehistorypeople.org.

Access to oral histories and other digitized materials gathered for the Erie Mining project are available through the *News and Resources* tab on the website.

Casey said. “We took the strikes in stride.”

The company created two towns, Hoyt Lakes and Taconite Harbor, for workers to live with their families. Early residents—such as Casey and Michels’ parents, who arrived in 1959—were known as “mudders” because of the rudimentary conditions and “packsackers” because of their newcomer status.

“You’d come out here, and they would give you 20 keys,” Casey said of mining company officials. Workers went from house to house and picked one they liked.

The company and workers alike strived to make the towns vibrant places with amenities like a golf course, ski slopes and a beach at a man-made lake. Workers also had winter carnivals, picnics and bus trips.

Hein said visitors remarked on the dedication that managers and workers brought to their jobs. Looking back, he believes a spirit of community in Hoyt Lakes and Taconite Harbor helped to foster a mindset of “let’s make this work.”

Hein’s team brings this narrative to life in the 352-page book, filled with charts, diagrams, personal narratives and old photos, and in an exhibit planned for the Duluth Depot, a museum the historical society operates in a former train station.

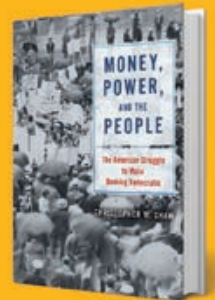
But the retirees didn’t set out merely to celebrate their accomplishments. They want to build public appreciation for the important role Iron Range mining still plays in America’s economy and showcase the industry’s vital future, despite environmental criticism.

“Mining is not a dirty word,” stressed JoAnne Coombe, historical society executive director, who’s worked closely with the retirees.

The book devotes an entire chapter to future mining potential, and the museum exhibit will include features like “Building the Mine of Tomorrow.” The retirees also offer scholarships each year to high school students who write essays on why Minnesota’s mineral industry remains “essential to modern life.”

“It’s good for these kids to know,” Casey said.

AUTHOR CALLS ON WORKERS TO CHALLENGE FINANCIAL POWER STRUCTURE



Labor unions are among the last institutions in the United States that give everyday Americans the power to directly challenge the financial and political power of corporations, big banks and Wall Street.

In his book, *Money, Power and the People*, historian Christopher Shaw reminds Americans that 100 years ago working people put that power to good use, standing up and demanding that the U.S. financial system pay attention to the interests of working people along with their own bottom lines.

That history, Shaw writes, provides a road map for workers in the 21st century can repeat their efforts to demand reforms to level the playing field for workers.

“In recent decades, working people took their eye off the ball, stopped being a watchdog on banking issues, and the cost has been very high,” Shaw told *USW@Work*.

Unions must once again play a key watchdog role on corporate and banking forces, Shaw said, to prevent a repeat of the financial crisis that crashed the global economy in 2008.

“How many USW members lost their jobs because bankers crashed the economy in 2008,” Shaw asked. “How many USW workplaces have shut down after a bank decided it was more profitable in the short-term to dismember and auction off a company? There are serious real life consequences when Americans don’t keep a watchful eye on Wall Street.”

Ensuring that there’s a powerful balance to out-of-control financial interests could provide workers with a path to restoring the status they enjoyed in the 1940s and 1950s when one-third of workers belonged to a labor union.

“Today, the importance of unions as a counterweight to predatory bankers is more important than ever,” Shaw said.

EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

USW
HONORS

CIVIL RIGHTS ICON
JOHN LEWIS

HOUSE CONSIDERS VOTER PROTECTION
MEASURES NAMED FOR LATE CONGRESSMAN



The USW celebrated Black History Month this February by honoring the enduring legacy of life-long civil rights activist and U.S. Rep. John Lewis, who died last July at the age of 80.

Lewis was a staunch supporter of labor rights and longtime friend of the USW who represented the Atlanta area in Congress from 1987 until his death in 2020.

“During Black History Month, we honor the too-often-neglected accomplishments and contributions of Black Americans,” said International President Tom Conway. “It is usually a time for celebration, but this year it is bittersweet as we spend it without the trailblazing civil rights icon John Lewis.”

The future congressman met the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a teen and eventually became part of King’s inner circle, helping to organize the Aug. 28, 1963, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech.

Lewis, who was just 23 at the time of the march, also delivered an impassioned speech that day, decrying starvation wages, police brutality, mass incarceration, attacks on voting rights and other injustices.

“By and large, American politics is dominated by politicians who build their careers on immoral compromises,” he said, “and ally themselves with open forms of political, economic, and social exploitation.”

The speech helped Lewis gain a national following and offered a glimpse of the causes he would champion

tirelessly throughout his life of activism and his years of service in Congress. Two years later, police brutally attacked Lewis and other demonstrators during a peaceful civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., an event that became known as “Bloody Sunday.” Lewis suffered a fractured skull and carried scars from the beating for the rest of his life.

This year, his former colleagues in the U.S. House are considering passage of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore and strengthen a number of voter protections contained in the Voting Rights Act of 1965, parts of which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down in a 2013 decision.

That decision paved the way for numerous state-level legislative assaults on voting rights, particularly in the South. This year, following a string of defeats at the ballot box, right-wing politicians stepped up their efforts to disenfranchise voters, directly attacking Lewis’ legacy of fighting for equal access to the polls for all Americans.

“The vote is precious. It is almost sacred,” Lewis said shortly before his death. “It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democracy.”

The best way to honor Lewis is to continue to fight for voters’ rights, said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the USW’s civil rights work.

“John Lewis was one of the greatest leaders ever produced by the civil

rights movement,” said Redmond. “Not only was he a crusader for civil and human rights, he was also a friend to labor, and dedicated his life to getting into ‘Good Trouble’ in the fight for justice and equality.”

Last year during the presidential election campaign, the USW dubbed its voter-to-voter outreach efforts “Good Trouble” as a tribute to Lewis’ famous call to action on civil rights.

In 2018, the USW also honored Lewis by presenting the congressman with the union’s Wellstone Award, which Steelworkers hand out each year to public figures who have shown a deep commitment to public service and to the well-being of USW members and their families.

The award is named for the late Minnesota Sen. Paul Wellstone, who, along with his wife, daughter and three campaign aides, died in a plane crash in 2002. Wellstone was a staunch supporter of workers and spent his life fighting for labor rights, wages, pensions, health care and safety for workers in the Iron Range and throughout Minnesota.

Lewis also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama in 2011, among countless other awards and honors through his life.

“This Black History Month, we honor our friend and brother, the late but never forgotten John Lewis. We are thankful for him and the legacy he left behind,” Redmond said. “May we commit to picking up his torch, and carrying it to light the path towards justice.”



The USW honored International Women's Day and Women's History Month in March by calling for ongoing COVID-19 relief, particularly for women, who have suffered disproportionately over the 14-month pandemic.

"We're truly in a state of national emergency with a high percentage of women out of traditional work due to the pandemic," said International Vice President Leeann Foster. "At the same time, women are more exhausted than ever as they continue shouldering the majority of the weight of school closures and other new household responsibilities. We must enact policies that aim to improve mental health and economic security."

Women accounted for all 140,000 job losses in December 2020, capping a dire economic year for women. Most of these jobs were previously held by Black, Latina and immigrant mothers.

"Our nation cannot turn away from the reality of inequity," said International Vice President Roxanne Brown. "The devastating impact of the pandemic continues to ripple outward, and we

must continue to address this through sound, bold legislation at the federal and state level. It also requires us as individuals to listen to those experiencing these struggles every day."

True economic recovery will also take sustained commitment, said International President Tom Conway.

"We need to make sure, as a country, that we don't make it harder for mothers to re-enter the workforce when this crisis ends," said Conway. "Investing wisely in our economy, in child-care, health care and infrastructure, will help pave the way for a more equitable environment."

International Women's Day is celebrated each year on March 8 and traditionally coincides with USW Women of Steel (WOS) events focused on activism

and education. This year, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, most of those events were held virtually.

As part of the celebration this year, the USW's Women of Steel program held a panel discussion focusing on the origins of the union's activist-arm built around leadership and empowerment.

The virtual conversation, moderated by WOS Director Ann Flener, high-

lighted historic events including the union's first Women of Steel resolution, introduced at the union's 1992 Constitutional Convention. Activists and union members also shared intimate, personal experiences they've endured and challenges they've overcome while navigating their workplaces and the labor movement as women.

Roberta Wood, one of thousands of women who went to work in the steel industry in the 1970s, spoke on her entrance into the male-dominated mill in the union's former District 31 in Gary, Ind.

"My thinking at the time was this was a real job, a job with real pay I could use to support myself," Wood said.

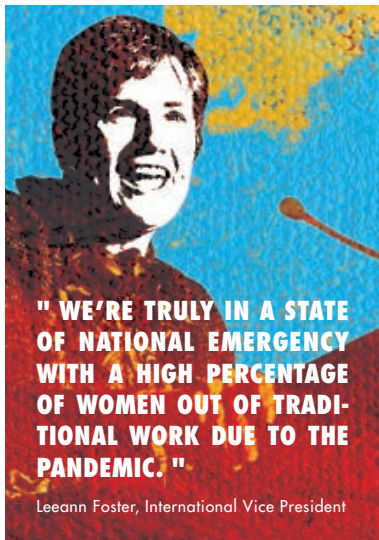
Of course, there were still challenges she and the other women faced every day. "Sometimes you had to walk a mile just to use the restroom," said Wood. "And we had to use hotels for our women's caucus to meet because we didn't have access to the union halls."

Wood and her co-workers eventually organized and ran for local election—and won.

The panel also featured labor leaders including the USW's Foster, former International Vice President at Large Carol Landry and Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) President Elise Bryant.

Foster, who oversees the union's paper sector, closed the conversation with a shout-out to fellow executive board member Brown.

"Roxy and I truly stand on the shoulders of the women who came before us," Foster said.



REDMOND TO LEAD

INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFEDERATION



International Vice President Fred Redmond won election this spring as president of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), a regional labor confederation representing 55 million workers in 21 countries, during the group's virtual congress in April.

Founded in Panama in 2008, the TUCA is the leading labor organization representing workers throughout North and South America. TUCA affiliates include the AFL-CIO, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), CUT Brazil and CGT Argentina, among dozens of others.

The TUCA is a regional unit of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the world's largest trade union alliance, representing 207 million workers in 163 nations and territories.

"International solidarity has never been more important than it is today, particularly given the increasing globalization of the economy and the continued exploitation of workers in so many countries around the world," Redmond said. "I'm honored and grateful that the TUCA has shown faith in me, and in the Steelworkers, for continued leadership on a global scale."

Redmond succeeds CLC leader Hassan Yussuff, who served as TUCA president since 2012. The organization's first president was Linda Chavez-Thompson, former executive vice president of the AFL-CIO. Redmond's term will last four years.

Among the missions of the TUCA and the ITUC are to maximize cooperation and cross-border solidarity among

labor organizations and to amplify the voices of workers in economic policy debates across the globe and to ensure that workers' voices and the fight for racial justice are represented throughout the Americas.

The ITUC also regularly monitors labor violations around the world, publishing the Global Rights Index, which ranks nations by how much respect they pay to worker freedom. According to the group's 2020 index, violations of workers' rights are on the rise around the world.

The association also fights on a

global scale for civil and human rights, racial justice and fair trade rules, mobilizing affiliates against free trade agreements that fail to prioritize the interests of workers.

In addition to Redmond's election, this year's TUCA Congress included remarks from Argentine President Alberto Ángel Fernández, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, and former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula, as he is known, is a champion of labor rights who recently saw his conviction on trumped-up corruption charges overturned by the Brazilian Supreme Court after he was imprisoned for nearly two years by his right-wing political opponents, including current Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

"The AFL-CIO along with this union, the United Steelworkers, will always stand with working people seeking fairness and justice, no matter where they are and no matter how difficult the fight may be," Redmond said. "I look forward to continuing that work alongside our many allies throughout the world."

In his remarks to the TUCA Congress following his election, Redmond called on working people around the world to unite against oppression.

"Time and again, whether the name is Trump, Bolsonaro, or any other enemy of democracy, working people have suffered repression and led the resistance," he said "That's why it is so critical that we build, strengthen and expand our base and our movement."



"I'M HONORED AND GRATEFUL THAT THE TUCA HAS SHOWN FAITH IN ME, AND IN THE STEELWORKERS, FOR CONTINUED LEADERSHIP ON A GLOBAL SCALE."

Fred Redmond
International Vice President





John DeFazio

District 10 Leader DeFazio Dies at 80

John DeFazio, who served as director of the USW's District 10 for 12 years and as a political leader in Western

Pennsylvania for two decades, died on Feb. 26, 2021, at the age of 80.

DeFazio followed in his father's footsteps to become a steelworker, starting his career as a member of USW Local 1843 at the former J&L Steel and winning election as president of the 5,000-member local union in 1970, when he was just 29 years old.

At the time, DeFazio was the youngest local union president in the steel industry.

"The spirit and solidarity of labor was in John DeFazio's blood, and he never forgot where he came from," said International President Tom Conway. "The members of this union – and all working people in Pennsylvania and around the country – owe John a debt of gratitude for his years of dedication and leadership."

DeFazio joined the staff of the USW in 1977, eventually serving as the District 10 civil rights coordinator and sub-district director.

As a staff representative, he skillfully helped workers navigate through what was a difficult time for the U.S. steel industry.

"John knew well what it was like to work for an hourly wage, and he always respected and honored the members of District 10, whether they were on the job, laid off or retired," said DeFazio's successor, District 10 Director Bobby "Mac" McAuliffe. "He devoted his life's work to the members of this union, and he will be missed."

DeFazio became USW District 10 director in 2001, representing about

50,000 Steelworkers across the state of Pennsylvania.

During his tenure working on behalf of the members of District 10, DeFazio served alongside local union leaders in the steel, aluminum, glass, health care, public and service sectors. He also served as vice president of the Allegheny County Labor Council.

"When he was speaking up on behalf of working people, John was a force to be reckoned with," Conway said. "But that fierce dedication to justice in some ways disguised the fact that he was also a gentle and generous soul."

In addition to his work with the union, DeFazio served for 20 years as a member and as president of the Allegheny County Council, the governing body for about 1.2 million residents of the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

In the 1960s and 1970s, DeFazio also made a name for himself as a professional wrestling champion, known by the moniker "Jumpin' Johnny," a nickname that continued to follow him long after his wrestling career was over.

New Contract for Wisconsin Health Care Workers

After months of delays, illnesses, and pandemic-related issues, nursing home workers at Maryhill Manor at Local 2138-4, in Niagara, Wis., ratified a new contract that included much-needed wage increases amidst the toll of the coronavirus.

"We tried to get what the workers deserved," said Local 2138 President Jennifer Goudreau. "Eventually we were able to come to an agreement

and everyone was happy this time around."

Those working as cooks, activity aides, and LPNs, as well as those in dietary, housekeeping, and laundry, will receive wage increases of 7 percent while CNAs and RNs will receive a 10 percent increase.

These increases include retroactivity back to Jan. 1, 2021, and replace the current "hero pay" workers have been receiving since the pandemic began.

Red Cross Workers Join USW

A group of 24 Red Cross blood collection technicians in Asheville, N.C., are officially members of the USW after completing a 100-percent online organizing campaign.

Local 254 President Darryl Ford said the workers reached out to the union in October 2020 and requested that the Steelworkers become their official bargaining representative.

"This was a very unique campaign in that it was all virtual," said Ford. "There were no house calls and no literature physically handed out."

Despite the new process, Ford said there were very few challenges in getting the members mobilized.

The election was held on December 21, 2020, via mail-in ballots due to COVID-19 restrictions. Ford is hopeful the local will begin bargaining the group's first contract in April.

This victory makes North Carolina the third state where the union represents Red Cross workers, along with Georgia and Alabama.

Rule Helps Protect Chemical Workers

A rule that promotes safety in chemical facilities and surrounding communities took effect March 15 under the Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Program.

Chemical facilities subject to the Risk Management Program must hold a public meeting within 90 days following an incident that affects the area surrounding their plants and causes offsite deaths, injuries, evacuations, sheltering-in-place, property damage or environmental damage.

USW members and their communities can use these meetings to push facilities and companies for action to prevent future incidents and to hold them accountable.

USW Condemns Plans for Olean Facility

The USW condemned a plan that Siemens Energy announced in February to stop production at the Dresser-Rand site in North Olean, N.Y., and lay off hundreds of workers, including more than 350 members of Local 4601.

USW District 4 Director Del Vitale called Siemens' decision disrespectful to generations of workers who dedicated their careers to the company and to the community which has supported it.

"With almost 110 years of manufacturing history at stake, Siemens unilaterally determined our jobs and our community are expendable without consulting workers or notifying the union," Vitale said.

Vitale said that the USW demanded to negotiate over the company's decision and was able to reach an agreement regarding the effects of the planned closure on workers.

"This plant supported our families and sustained this community for over 100 years," he said. "The men and women who built the company deserve respect and dignity."

USW International Secretary Treasurer John Shinn, who represents the union on the North American Siemens Labor Steering Committee, challenged the company for cutting employees' voices out of the decision-making process.

"We're outraged that the USW was neither notified in advance nor offered an opportunity to meet with Siemens to discuss alternatives in Olean," Shinn said.

Landmark Contract for Prison Chaplains

Chaplains in Canadian federal prisons voted overwhelmingly this spring to ratify their first union contract that will improve working conditions as well as spiritual care for thousands of inmates.

"This agreement comes at a critical time for Canada's prison chaplains and the inmates for whom they provide spiritual care," said Ken Neumann, USW National Director for Canada. The local represents approximately 180 chaplains working in the federal prison system.

"The pandemic has exacerbated precarious working conditions faced by chaplains and compromised the constitutional rights of prisoners to practice their religion, leading to undue suffering and tension within federal prisons. This agreement recognizes the important contribution chaplains make under difficult working conditions," Neumann said.

The new agreement includes significant wage increases, pension and extended health care benefits for full-time staff, protections around hours of work and anti-harassment and anti-discrimination provisions, among other improvements.

The new contract comes at the end of a full year of negotiations. Federal prison chaplains from a variety of faiths and spiritual practices joined the USW in 2018 with the goal of improving working conditions and reinvigorating chaplaincy within the correctional system.

Health, Safety & Environment Leader Retires

After 44 years fighting for the well-being of working people on and off the job, including 37 years leading the USW's Health, Safety and Environment Department, Mike Wright retired on April 1.

Wright, who joined the USW staff in 1977, challenged the status quo and championed cooperative approaches to solving workplace health problems, spearheading the formation of union-management committees, training initiatives and other collaborative efforts that have enhanced health and safety for all working people.

"It would be impossible to find a member of the USW, or any union, who hasn't benefited from the wide-ranging work Mike has done over the past 44 years," said International President Tom Conway. "It's not an exaggeration to say that his efforts have saved countless lives. He leaves behind a tremendous legacy of union building through his lifetime of dedication to keeping workers safe and healthy on the job."

Peg Seminario, former director of occupational safety and health for the AFL-CIO, has known Wright for 45 years and said that he has contributed more to advancing the safety and health of workers over that period than anyone else she has known.

"Mike dedicated his working life to improving the lives not only of USW members but workers around the globe," Seminario said.

Brad Greve, president of Local 105, which represents workers at Arconic's Davenport Works, said Wright brought an impressive level of expertise to every safety issue.

"When you came to him with a problem, he had the ability to understand how it affected people day to day," Greve said. "He could relate to people. The knowledge he had and the passion he had were amazing."

Greve said he was among many who benefitted from health and safety conferences Mike organized over the years with the help of a world-class team that included Jim Frederick, whom President Joe Biden named to one of the top positions at the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

David LeGrande, former occupational safety and health director for the Communications Workers of America (CWA), worked closely with Wright to plan those conferences, which regularly attracted about 1,600 participants.

LeGrande credited Wright with building coalitions of labor leaders to fight together for countless improvements.

"His efforts actually led to the improvement of working conditions for countless numbers of workers," LeGrande said.

SOAR member Nancy Lessin, a former USW local president who later served on the union staff, credited Wright with helping to implement the Women of Steel program.

"One thing has never, ever changed over these decades - when Mike Wright speaks, everybody listens," Lessin said.





Swifty Sanders

USW Member Competes on Tough as Nails

Swifty Sanders, a member of Local 1011 in East Chicago, Ind., this spring reached the final four on the competitive CBS television show “Tough as Nails,” a reality series that tests workers’ toughness on job sites.

The reality show, in its second season, features 12 contestants competing in team and individual trials that measure their strength, endurance, life skills and mental toughness. One participant is eliminated in each episode.

Sanders, who has worked at the former ArcelorMittal, now Cleveland Cliffs, plant in East Chicago for nine years, often wore USW gear during his TV competitions and said it was an honor to represent his union siblings.

“For me, the choice to compete was easy. I liked what the show stood for in showcasing the hard-working, blue-collar Americans out there,” Sanders said. “To have a life-changing opportunity along with being on a show that highlighted the importance of the dedicated hard working people like me, it was a total win-win.”

This year’s “Tough as Nails” champion, construction superintendent Scott Henry, took home a grand prize of \$200,000 and a Ford Super Duty truck.

Bill Addresses Workplace Violence in Health Care

USW members are renewing their call for the U.S. Senate to pass the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act after the House passed the legislation in April.

Thirty-eight Republicans joined the House Democrats to pass the bill, which would require health care and social service employers to implement workplace violence-prevention plans. Labor Department statistics show that health care workers are five times more likely than others to face violence on the job.

“It’s not something people should be desensitized to,” said Tuan Vu, a behavioral health technician at Essentia and unit president of Local 9460 in northern Minnesota.

At the USW Rapid Response conference in October 2019, members held a rally and a lobby day on Capitol Hill to promote the bill. Now, the union is asking members to urge their senators to support the legislation. Contact your senators at: <http://usw.to/3s2>.

Sumitomo to Invest \$122 Million in N.Y. Factory

Sumitomo Rubber plans to invest \$122 million over the next few years in its Tonawanda, N.Y., tire plant, home to about 1,000 members of Local 135L.

The investments will include new tire-building machines, curing presses and mixing and compounding equipment. The new equipment will nearly double the factory’s production capabilities to about 18,000 tires per day. The Tonawanda workers produce Falken passenger and truck tires as well as Dunlop motorcycle tires.

While the company expects to add as many as 60 jobs with the investment, Local 135L President Tom O’Shei said that the announcement provides additional job security for USW members and their families.

“As long as we stay the hard-working work force we are, it will give us the opportunity for the people that are just starting here to go ahead, live a good life, make a good living and retire,” he said.

O’Shei said the investment will help to keep the factory competitive.

“The rubber industry requires a lot of investment to stay relevant,” he said.

Members Fight for First Contract at HCL

USW members are still fighting for a first contract with Google contractor HCL Technologies nearly two years after voting to become Steelworkers.

The 80 tech workers, employed at the Google offices in Pittsburgh, are gathering hundreds of petition signatures from community members to deliver to management demanding that the company bargain a fair and equitable agreement. The workers are seeking a voice on the job and improvements in wages and working conditions.

The workers voted for USW representation despite a company-led anti-union campaign, which included mandatory meetings and the use of a controversial management consultant.

“We’ve been bargaining for a year and a half, with no end in sight. All we’re asking for is fair and equitable treatment in the workplace, but HCL continues to drag their feet at every opportunity. And why wouldn’t they?” said data analyst Sunday Mills. “U.S. labor law favors union-busting companies like HCL and empowers them to violate workers’ rights with near impunity. If we’d had the PRO Act to protect us from the start, I’m certain we’d be celebrating our first contract by now.”



Have You Moved?

Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

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

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

You may also email the information to membership@usw.org

IN MEMORIAM

In observance of Workers Memorial Day on April 28, the United Steelworkers remember those who lost their lives at USW workplaces during the past year.

NAME	AGE	DATE OF DEATH	COMPANY
Jonathan Schmidt	38	5/9/2020	Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations LLC
Timothy Poch	53	5/21/2020	Cleveland-Cliffs Weirton LLC
Edward Gallant	64	5/27/2020	Impala Canada
Beau Lowe	33	6/8/2020	Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations LLC
Lowell Duenweg	57	6/12/2020	Green Bay Packaging, Incorporated
Billy Ray Ritchie	50	7/5/2020	Crouse Corporation
George Salinas	71	7/21/2020	Cleveland-Cliffs Steel LLC (Indiana Harbor)
Ronald Skaggs	58	8/17/2020	Pixelle Specialty Solutions LLC
Jared Taul	35	8/23/2020	Aleris Rolled Products Inc.
Fraser MacMillan Cowan	51	9/2/2020	National Steel Car Ltd.
Brett Conrad Burgueno	48	9/21/2020	Blue Ridge Paper Prdts DBA Evergreen Packaging (Mill)
Curtis "Fudd" Butler, Jr.	44	9/21/2020	Blue Ridge Paper Prdts DBA Evergreen Packaging (Mill)
Earl Duncan McNair	78	10/5/2020	Westeel Canada Inc.
Wayne Loibl	54	10/8/2020	Berry Global, Inc.
Dennis Person	52	12/16/2020	International Paper Company
Norman R. Bullard, Jr.	33	1/13/2021	Twin Rivers Paper Company
Omar Pleasant	35	2/4/2021	PVS Steel Services
Philippe Cusson	38	2/10/2021	General Dynamics Ordnance & Tactical Systems (Canada Inc.)
Christopher Bohn	53	3/1/2021	Cypress Creek Logging Ltd. (Gold River)
JerMichale Collins, Jr.	37	4/2/2021	ABC Coke Division

NOTE: Countless USW members have died from occupational diseases during the past year, as well as from coronavirus during the ongoing pandemic. The USW mourns their loss.

