

# USW@WORK

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



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**"AT THIS POINT, THE PROBLEM WE HAVE IS KIND OF SIMPLE. NO MATTER HOW GOOD THE LANGUAGE OF NAFTA 2.0 WOULD BE, UNLESS THERE ARE STRONG ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS IT WILL AMOUNT TO NOTHING."**

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT LEO W. GERARD, APRIL 2019,  
ON THE REPLACEMENT TO THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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USW member Hanya Al Taher works at American Roots, a fledgling clothing company in Maine. 04

Photo by Steve Dietz.

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**COMMUNICATIONS STAFF**

JIM MCKAY Editor JESS KAMM BROOMELL Director of Communications

AARON HUDSON AND GREG COLE Graphic Designers

CHELSEY ENGEL, LYNNE HANCOCK, R.J. HUFNAGEL, TONY MONTANA, BARBARA WHITE STACK

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EMAIL: editor@usw.org  
MAIL: USW@Work  
60 Blvd of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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## Remembering Boyd Young

Boyd D. Young - what words could I use to describe such a great man? I can start with just a few: Honorable, noble, brave, committed, dedicated.

I was privileged to meet him in 1991 as a young woman just getting started as recording secretary of United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 801 in Evadale, Texas, where he was a faithful dues-paying member.

When I met him, I knew I wanted to be close to him. He was all business. He was serious about the position he held as the international president of UPIU. He was committed to improving the lives of workers.

From UPIU to PACE and to the USW as president emeritus, he always made me proud to be a union sister. We had much in common. We were both members of Local 801. We both served on the local executive board. We both graduated from Silsbee High School.

When he built his home in Silsbee, where I now live, I was most proud. I would see him regularly until his health began to fail. I'll never forget that smile and I'll never forget that giant of a man.

I'm proud that our new union hall in Evadale will be named after Boyd Young. We are proud to be union sisters and brothers of such a noble union activist. In our hearts he will always stay loved and remembered.

*JoAnn Renfro Johnson, Local 801  
Evadale, Texas*

*See Page 30 for a tribute to the life of Boyd D. Young.*

## Protect Our Jobs

Moderate protectionism returns jobs. Unrestricted free trade exports American jobs to the cheapest, slave-wage labor markets. Tariffs are less risky if negotiated, but a better way would be a law requiring makers and suppliers of imported goods to pay foreign workers wages and benefits equivalent to what their American counterparts make, or used to make, and enforce this with a value-added tax to make up the difference. It could be called the Foreign Workers Protection Act and would eliminate the reason for exporting our moveable jobs to cheap labor countries.

*Edward Flores, Local 164B  
Oakland, Calif.*

## Support America's Unions

How well we unite and support Steelworkers, Auto Workers and Teamsters is important for our future. We have to speak up, stand and rally for American-made products.

We are not supporting America or solidarity when we are silent. Now is the time. Let's meet, rally and take back our plants, health care and pensions.

We need to have not a Million Man March but a Million Union March to Washington. Wear T-shirts and sweat shirts saying, "United We Stand with Our Unions."

*William Walden, Jr.  
Detroit*

## Proud to be Union

My father, Cedomir Bojovic, is a retired USW member from Reynolds Metals in McCook, Ill. He is 92 years old. When I went over recently to see him, he gave me the magazine *USW@Work*. He was so proud to read it. Thank you to all. You are the backbone of the United States.

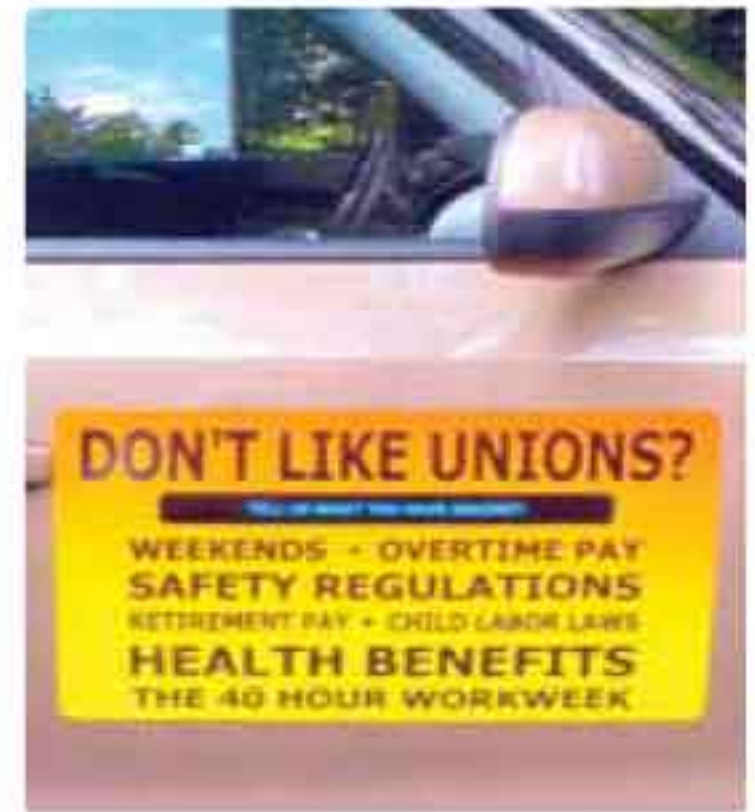
*Mike Bojovic  
Village of LaGrange, Ill.*

## Union Pride

In the winter 2019 edition of *USW@Work*, Jim Atkinson suggested reviving the "Live Better – Work Union" bumper stickers. It's a great idea.

Enclosed is a picture of a car magnet I had made using information from the AFL-CIO. In the South, many people are anti-union but they really can't say why. The car magnet, which many middle-aged men in particular have carefully read, gives them food for thought!

*Joan Farrell  
Hixson, Tenn.*



## Corporate Handout

We all know that the old NAFTA was no more than a corporate handout that killed good American jobs, kept our wages low and fed a 25-year race to the bottom. The new NAFTA - the United States Canada Mexico Agreement - may be an improvement but it's not good enough, not by a long shot.

To me, the new NAFTA looks like another corporate handout that won't prevent big corporations from outsourcing jobs to places like Mexico. It won't stop the destruction of unions and the environment. Even if some of the rules are better, without a way to enforce them, trying to would be futile.

On top of that, the new NAFTA will keep prescription drug prices high by handing pharmaceutical companies a guaranteed international monopoly period over and above drug patent rights.

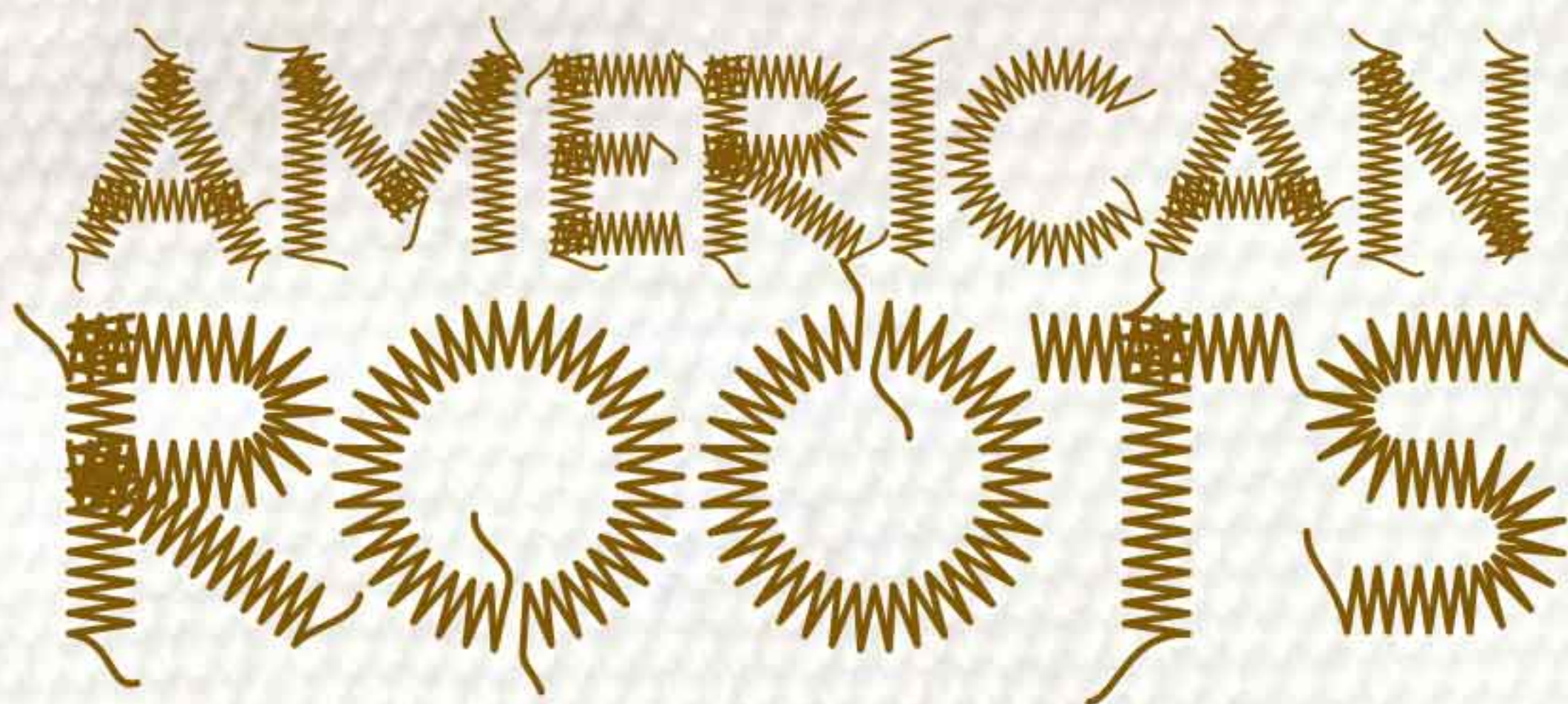
Make your voice heard and tell your elected leaders that the new NAFTA isn't good enough. Tell the administration in Washington to go back to the table and keep on negotiating until they get it right, until they get an agreement that is good for all of America.

*David Shelley, Local 9-508 Rapid Response Coordinator  
Hanahan, S.C.*

EMAIL: editor@usw.org  
MAIL: USW@Work  
60 Blvd of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

USW active, retired members and their families are invited to "speak out." Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length.





## USW Members Create High-Quality Clothing in Maine

In 2008, Anaam Jabbir was making ends meet by altering garments for neighbors on a small machine in her home in Iraq. Today, she is a proud

Woman of Steel, making clothing for a living and serving as unit chair for Local 366 in Portland, Maine.

Jabbir is one of about two dozen USW members who produce American Roots Wear (AR), a 100 percent U.S.-sourced, union-made line of customized fleece sweatshirts, jackets and blankets.

"I'm proud to be USW," said Jabbir, who was one of the first four hourly workers at the startup company, part of the group that heard appeals from representatives of a handful of unions before

deciding to join the USW in 2015.

"We chose the Steelworkers," she said. "We saw what they could offer to us, what they could do for the workers."

One thing the USW has done for the workers at AR has been to help create a sense of community for a small but growing work force largely comprised of female immigrants, while providing them with family-supporting wages and benefits.

"We take enormous pride in our work force," said AR co-owner Ben



Muna Mohammed

Waxman, who founded the company with his wife, Whitney Reynolds. "We are all immigrants. That's what makes our country great."



## New Americans

Reynolds said she and Waxman did not deliberately set out to hire a staff filled with new Americans, but they are happy that it worked out that way. The loyal workers, they say, are the foundation of their fledgling company.

“We were able to gain a work force, and they were able to gain an opportunity,” Reynolds said. “They’re not just our employees. They are our friends and our family.”

That doesn’t mean that there aren’t some of the usual labor-management disagreements at AR. But when disputes arise, they’re handled quickly and professionally, Jabbir said.

“They are always close to us, always asking if there are any problems,” Jabbir said of the company’s owners and managers. “The relationship is good for us, and it is good for the company.”

With workers on the shop floor from countries including Iraq, Ethiopia, Angola and elsewhere, the company’s challenges have included breaking through cultural and language barriers, Waxman said.

Through partnerships with local organizations such as Goodwill Industries and Portland Adult Education, AR developed a training program for its employees and worked hard to help them adapt to a new home and to a new industry.

## Overcoming setbacks

Another significant challenge, Waxman said, has been health care costs, which he described as “devastating.” Also, in 2018, the company was forced to deal with a cotton recall that resulted in a \$250,000 loss and significant setbacks to AR’s production schedule. Customers understood the situation, Waxman said, and

Photos by Steve Dietz



Hanya Al Taher, Nahla Ghanwan, Anaam Jabbir,  
Whitney Reynolds, Ben Waxman, Maria Lutina

*“We are all immigrants.  
That’s what makes our  
country great.”* AR co-owner,  
Ben Waxman



Zita Madzou

the workers pulled together to help the company recover.

Despite having to shut down for several weeks, AR continued to issue paychecks to its workers.

“Our clients have stood by us, and our workers have stood by us,” Waxman said. “Our lifeblood is our labor.”

Labor also happens to be in Waxman’s blood. Before founding AR in 2015, he spent 12 years working for the AFL-CIO. He met the exhausting demands of union organizing drives and progressive political campaigns throughout the United States, but running his own company has been his biggest hurdle yet.

He and Reynolds believed that an all-American-sourced, union-made clothing factory could thrive. Others were skeptical.

“We spent a year and a half listening to people telling us, ‘you’re insane,’” Waxman said.

“One of our greatest challenges has been keeping

up with demand,” he said.

Demand has been strong since day one. Waxman and Reynolds used their extensive list of contacts to solicit customers for their new company, which resulted in AR being sold out for six months after being in business for only two days.

Another challenge has been finding U.S. suppliers for items such as zippers and buttons to ensure that every product is 100 percent American made.

Nearly all of AR’s customers, so far, have been labor organizations and companies looking for high-quality, customized, branded clothing. Waxman and Reynolds are hopeful that, as the company grows, they can expand to more individual retail offerings.

“I’d like for us to be a household name someday,” Reynolds said. “We believe we are at the forefront of a movement here.”

*“We are Americans, and we make our products in America. It’s not just our job. It’s our dream.”* *Khalid Al Kinani*



Ragad Ado Aljazz



Hasen Buseyr



### Looking long term

Still, after paying its workers and covering its costs, AR thus far has put nearly every penny of profit back into the company to ensure its long-term survival.

AR, which started in a one-room factory of 900 square feet, has already outgrown two workspaces in four years. After first moving to a 4,000-square-foot facility, the company now occupies 15,000 square feet in a former 19th century textile plant along the Presumpscot River. Waxman and Reynolds hope to add another 3,000 square feet by knocking out a wall to an adjacent room within the next few months.

The work force has grown along with the company. After starting with four employees, AR now has about two dozen, with plans to continue hiring through the summer.

“It just keeps getting bigger and bigger,” Jabbir said with a smile.

Jabbir and other AR workers said they were persuaded to come to Maine by friends who told them it was a quiet, friendly and affordable place to raise a family.

Nahla Ghanwan and her husband, Khalid Al Kinani, both originally from Iraq, help to carry that

family feeling from the community into the workplace. Ghanwan has worked at the AR factory for three years, while Al Kinani has been working there for about eight months.

“It’s not hard to find a job,” Al Kinani said. “But it is hard to find a job that makes you feel proud.”

### A big dream

Al Kinani said he always admired companies whose products had a “Made in the USA” label, and that it is gratifying to now be producing such products for a living.

“American Roots is not like a regular place to work. It represents a big dream,” Al Kinani said. “When we come to work every day, we all feel proud. We feel we are part of restoring the great name of American industry.”

Ghanwan agreed that she takes pride in producing American Roots products and in making sure the quality of the clothes they make is second to none.

“The first and most important thing is the quality of our products. It is hard work, but we want to do it, because we all want this company to grow,” Ghanwan said. “I’m proud for everyone here, for myself and for

Photos by Steve Dietz





Hanya Al Taher



Debra Calume,  
Buato Da Silva (background)



Khalid Al Kinani

Ben and Whitney. I can't imagine working anywhere else."

Maria Lutina, originally from Angola, came to the United States in 2015. She had experience sewing in Africa but spoke very little English. After spending some time in New York, she eventually found her way to Maine and into the AR training program through some friends. Now she calls herself a proud member of the USW.

"I was so happy," she said of finding her job at AR. "It was difficult at first to adjust, but I learned from my friends. Now I feel so comfortable here."

Clothing inspector David Butler is one of only a handful of workers at AR who was born and raised in Portland. He's worked at the AR factory since September 2018 and says he is excited to see the company continue to grow.

"They have a goal here, and the goal is to become something great," Butler said. "It inspires me to want to help them."

### Working as a team

Butler said that despite the cultural differences and language barriers for workers at the factory, they

feel like part of a big family. The workers learn from each other, eat lunch together, celebrate each other's holidays and try to always have each other's backs.

"There is a sense of team here. We're all part of the same team," he said. "We are all humans, no matter where we come from originally."

Butler, whose position at AR is his first union job, said the USW helps to foster that sense of belonging among the AR staff.

"Everybody has a voice here, and that voice is heard," he said. "I'm just beginning to learn what a union is, but we take care of each other. Communication is the key."

The common thread that runs through both the AR work force and the products that they make is the idea that, in the end, everything has its roots in America.

"We are Americans, and we make our products in America," Al Kinani said. "It's not just our job. It's our dream."

### How to Buy American Roots Wear

USW members who are interested in purchasing American Roots products can visit [www.americanrootswear.com](http://www.americanrootswear.com), send an email to [info@americanrootswear.com](mailto:info@americanrootswear.com) or call 207-854-4098.

# NEW CONTRACT AT HARLEY-DAVIDSON

**AGREEMENT PROVIDES SIGNING BONUS, 14% RAISES, IMPROVED PENSION**

**M**embers of Local 2-209 and Local 460 in Wisconsin approved a new five-year contract with Harley-Davidson that will provide the workers with 14 percent raises over the life of the agreement, along with other improvements.

The contract, ratified on April 15, covers more than 900 USW members who work at factories in the Milwaukee area and in Tomahawk in central Wisconsin. It includes a signing bonus and pension improvements and makes no changes to current health care coverage. The wage increases are the first for the two locals in seven years.

"It's certainly a positive step to see a pay increase, but this contract was always about more than just economic issues," said District 2 Director Michael Bolton, who led the negotiations. "It was also about making sure that these hard-working union members continue to have a strong voice in their workplaces."

The two sides reached a tentative agreement on April 10 after extending the previous contract through April 14 while bargaining continued. Members had voted overwhelmingly on April 1 to reject an earlier offer from the company.

For USW members, one of the most important issues was long-term job security. The new contract includes a commitment from the company to invest \$65 million in its Milwaukee facility and \$10 million in its Tomahawk operation.

"These investments should ensure the long-term viability of our facilities," Local 2-209 President Mark Eilers said. "We look forward to working with Harley over the next five years to continue our shared success."

## **Restructuring manufacturing**

The negotiations were held as Harley, the most iconic motorcycle brand in America, is restructuring its manufacturing operations. The company is closing an 800-employee assembly plant in Kansas City, Mo., this year and moving work to York, Pa., where workers are represented by the International Association of Machinists (IAM).

The IAM also agreed to a five-year contract with Harley that includes similar economic provisions.

USW members are hopeful that the company's financial commitments can help to stem the recent tide of declining employment





at its Wisconsin operations. The company is based in Milwaukee, where it was founded in 1903.

“Our Wisconsin employees play an essential role in ensuring the strength of our manufacturing operations and our ability to be responsive to our customers around the world,” Harley-Davidson Chief Operating Officer Michelle Kumbier said. “We believe the new contracts will enable us to compete in a challenging business environment and advance our strategy to build the next generation of riders globally.”

While struggling to revive demand in the United States, the company’s biggest market, Harley has cut hundreds of jobs at U.S. plants, including Wisconsin, while opening a plant in Thailand to build bikes for the Asian and European markets. It also has a factory in India.

The previous contract included a wage freeze and allowed for the use of seasonal or casual employees who were paid less than regular employees and not entitled to medical or retirement benefits. Some temporary workers have been on the job for several years.

“Another concern that was brought up was the amount of work that is being moved out of the plants,” Eilers said.

### Workers deserve dignity

In 2010, the work force in Milwaukee was 1,250, while Tomahawk employed 370. Regular employment has since fallen to some 637 in Milwaukee and to about 270 in Tomahawk.

USW members accused Harley of being out of touch with Wisconsin members who worked for seven years under a difficult contract that was negotiated during the Great Recession. Employees reluctantly ratified that agreement after then CEO Keith Wandell threatened to close the two factories in Wisconsin and move production out



of state unless costs were drastically cut.

“These workers deserve what all workers deserve – a contract that ensures fair wages, secure benefits and dignity on the job,” Bolton said.

The two USW locals bargained together for the Wisconsin operations. Local 460 represents

employees at Tomahawk, where Harley manufactures windshields, sidecars, and other items including composite and plastic parts. Local 2-209 represents workers in Menomonee Falls near Milwaukee, where they produce engines and transmissions for final motorcycle assembly in York.

The USW was determined to work for as long and as hard as necessary during this round of bargaining to make sure that good, family-supporting jobs remained in their communities, Local 460 President Darrin Ernst said.

“This contract isn’t just about us,” he said. “We will always fight for a better life, not just for ourselves, but for our families and for our neighbors throughout Wisconsin.”

# OIL LOCALS MOVE FORWARD ON CONTRACT RATIFICATION

**U**SW-represented local unions in the oil industry this spring continued the sometimes slow task of ratifying a national pattern agreement achieved in late January and bargaining local or site-specific agreements to go with it.

International Vice President Tom Conway led the USW negotiations for an industry pattern against Shell Oil, the U.S. arm of Royal Dutch Shell, which has represented the oil industry in national talks since 1997.

Conway praised the USW membership and the negotiating committee for their solidarity. “We’re strongest when we stand together,” he said. “Employers will respect us only as long as our members are united in

**“EMPLOYERS WILL RESPECT US ONLY AS LONG AS OUR MEMBERS ARE UNITED IN SOLIDARITY FOR FAIR CONTRACTS.”**

Tom Conway



solidarity for fair contracts.”

The national pattern, reached a few hours before the Jan. 31 expiration of the previous agreement, raised wages, maintained quality health care coverage, and improved health and safety, fatigue manage-

ment and training.

After main table talks ended, the next step was for local unions to ratify the pattern and negotiate separate agreements with individual employers over local issues, said Kim Nibarger, a former oil refinery operator who oversees the union’s National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP).

“Most have gone fairly well. A few had agreements rejected and continued discussions,” said Nibarger, adding that only one on-date location had

not achieved a local agreement as *USW@Work* went to press.

Overall, the pattern agreement covers more than 30,000 union workers at some 220 locations across the United States, mostly refineries, oil terminals, pipelines and petrochemi-

cal facilities. The approximately 65 covered refineries include some of the industry's largest and most productive, and, in total, account for two-thirds of domestic refinery capacity.

Conway was pleased that the national deal included wage increases of 11 percent over three years and maintained health insurance with employers continuing to pay 80 percent of the coverage costs and workers 20 percent.

Hourly wages increased by 3.5 percent beginning Feb. 1. Another 3.5 percent raise occurs in the second year of the agreement. Wages go up again by 4 percent in the third and final year.

When negotiations opened in mid-January, domestic oil refiners were experiencing strong profits, near-maximum utilization rates of their facilities and record exports.

The pattern agreement went into effect on Feb. 1 and continues through Jan. 31, 2022. The majority of local contracts in the industry follow the same dates as the national pattern, but some have "off-date" expirations.

"There are always local issues to be addressed," Nibarger said. "The hope is you get them done or mostly done prior to the national package being settled, but that's not always the case."

In some locations, the companies proposed drastic changes in job consolidations or reorganizations, Nibarger said. "The locals pushed back on those."

### **Contracts checked**

Once local issues are resolved, Nibarger reviews the combined tentative agreements to ensure they include the national pattern. After that, contracts are submitted to rank-and-file members for review and ratification.

The union's national contract proposals were developed at a two-day conference held in September 2018 and attended by more than 375 USW delegates.

The agreement specifies no regression on contract items gained over past years. No retrogression language was maintained in letters of agreement on layoff notices, plant closure, rate retention, national health insurance, health and safety, successorship and job security.

This round of bargaining established a full-time health and safety representative for refineries and



chemical plants with less than 150 bargaining unit employees. The new role combines duties associated with process safety management and general health and safety.

Smaller refineries and chemical companies have 60 days from ratification to work with local unions to create and finalize the responsibilities and duties of the new combined role.

A mandatory review is required for larger refineries and chemical plants that already have a process safety management (PSM) representative. This review by the local union and management is meant to ensure that each facility has the resources necessary to optimize employee in-

volvement in process safety management.

Language on preventing fatigue advanced in the pattern negotiations. Being fatigued can impair judgment and cause people to make errors that can negatively impact workers and surrounding communities.

### **Fatigue risk management**

It's important for every unit at every facility to have a Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS) and to create it with employee involvement. Help in doing this available from the NOBP office in Pittsburgh.

While some locations have systems in place to address fatigue, others do not. Those sites are expected to implement a fatigue program meeting the principles and intent of the American Petroleum Institute's Recommend Practice 755, including provisions from the 2012 and 2015 NOBP letters of agreement.

The union and the company have 90 days from contract ratification to develop such a program, and one year to implement it. The time frame was delayed in anticipation of a revised API RP 755 this spring.

To have a safe, efficient and productive facility, workers must be experienced, up to date on technological advances and possess critical facility knowledge. Training and curriculum development are key.

Locally, management and the union shall select one operations and one maintenance representative who are knowledgeable about training in the oil and petrochemical industries. They are expected to meet quarterly to discuss training and curriculum development.

A letter of agreement solidifies the rights of USW-represented members to do routine maintenance. Represented employees know the facilities better than temporary contract workers.

Members wanting more details about the 2019 NOBP pattern agreement should contact their local union officers.

# Akron Factory Planned

## ***FIRESTONE RACE TIRE BUILDERS GETTING NEW HOME***

**C**onstruction starts this summer on a new state-of-the-art factory for Firestone race car tires in Akron, Ohio, an investment that skilled USW-represented tire builders hope will solidify their future.

“It’s really great news. We’re happy that the long tradition of producing Firestone race tires stays here in Akron,” Local 7 President Jack Rocco said after Bridgestone Americas announced that it would build the factory, named the Advanced Tire Production Center (ATPC), to produce Firestone’s Firehawk race tires.

“It’s a win-win situation and you don’t hear about those too often. Our hard-working members get job security. The company gets an experienced work force and showcases their cutting-edge technology at the race track,” Rocco added.



Kayla McCrady



### Contract extended

On Feb. 6, Bridgestone-owned Firestone extended its exclusive contract to build race tires for the NTT IndyCar Series through the 2025 racing season. The new factory in Akron was announced on the same day to support the extension.

Firestone is the sole tire supplier to the IndyCar series and its premier event, the Indianapolis 500. This year, more than 26,000 Firehawk race tires built in Akron by Local 7 will be leased to IndyCar race teams.

More than 6,000 tires will be used in track activities related to the 103rd Indianapolis 500 on May 26. Sleek, low-profile, open-wheel Indy cars with driver exposed cockpits will cover 200 laps around a 2.5-mile oval track.

Firestone's tire builders are aware

their products are used at speeds approaching 240 miles per hour and pay keen attention to every detail.

"We make the best race tires in the world here," Local 7 member John Larkins said as he carefully inspected a finished product. "We can't afford to have something go wrong. This is our livelihood."

Harvey Firestone, who began his namesake company in Akron in 1900, was a pioneer in using auto racing to promote his brand. The inaugural run in 1911 of the Indianapolis 500 was won on Firestone tires by driver Ray Harroun, who averaged 74.6 miles per hour.

### Production center

Still under design, the new ATPC will be located down the street from

where Firestone race tires have been produced since the brand returned to the IndyCar Series in the mid-90's. Plans for the ATPC include new construction and the full renovation of an existing structure.

"Everybody involved made good decisions, from the company to the workers, to the political leadership here in Akron. We were all pretty much on the same page, trying to keep jobs here," Rocco said.

"Our retirees really set the table for us to succeed. Now we have to take the baton and make good decisions going forward. We also look forward to passing our knowledge onto a younger crew recently hired."

Once the rubber capital of the world, Akron was home to the former United Rubber Workers (URW) union, and

corporate headquarters of several major tire companies including Firestone, General Tire, Goodrich and Goodyear. Only Goodyear maintains a headquarters in Akron today.

Japan's Bridgestone Corp. merged with Firestone in 1988. Its U.S. subsidiary, Bridgestone Americas, is based in Nashville, Tenn. Both Firestone and Goodyear do research and development in Akron and make race tires there.

The last full-scale tire factory in Akron, General Tire's Plant 1, shut down in 1982. Goodrich stopped making passenger tires in Akron in 1975; Goodyear in 1978. Firestone ended passenger tire production in Akron in 1981.

Local 7, once 7,000 members strong, traces its roots to 1935 when the URW was formed with the goal of improving wages and working conditions for a growing industry. The URW merged with the USW in 1995.

### Move in four years

Today the local represents 68 USW members, including 50 who manufacture race tires in two shifts at the current production facility. They will move to the new location over four years. The remaining members staff a warehouse and work in maintenance at other Firestone buildings.

Larkins, 59, said there had been talk about closing the old factory since he was hired on 21 years ago. It's a relief for him to see Firestone starting to build a new facility and investing in machinery.

"Plus you want a job that has union protection," he said. "We have good benefits, good pay and a good place to work. If it wasn't for the union, we wouldn't have all those things."

Irma Finnerty, an experimental technician who tests and produces parts, said the new factory is "absolutely good news" for a work force that had been unsure of its future.

"It lets us know we're doing a good job," said Finnerty, a 21-year veteran interviewed as she was sampling wire. "It sets us up for retirement."

Motorsports are a key part of research and development in the highly

competitive tire industry. Even though rubber tires have been built for more than a century, technology continues to evolve. What is learned in building race tires eventually ends up on passenger cars and vans and commercial trucks.

"For 100 years racing has been a proving ground for our tire technologies," said Dan Peterman, manager of race tire production and building services for Bridgestone Americas in Akron. "We use the race tire to drive innovations. Every (consumer) tire has some in it. They share more than people realize."



Greg Dunn





JaJuan Martin



John Larkins



Irma Finnerty



## Best way to go

In planning the new project, Peterman said the decision was made to keep race tire production close to corporate research and development at the Bridgestone Americas Technical Center in Akron. “We quickly realized that keeping everything here was the best way to go,” he said.

The tire building process starts with mixing natural rubber with various compounds and chemicals in a large machine called a Banbury, which grinds and heats the rubber to make it workable.

Several other machines are used to extrude parts and make tire components such as belts, beads and sidewalls. Tread is made for Firestone rain tires although most of the tires built in Akron are racing slicks.

The components come together on a tire machine, which was off limits to a *USW@Work* photographer for competitive reasons. A skilled tire builder assembles an uncured or green tire, which is placed in a mold and hardened or vulcanized.

Firestone supplies 60 different tires to IndyCar, each designed to cope with different weather and track conditions on the circuit. Softer compounds yield a better grip and harder compounds run longer.

Harold Hutchens II, a third-generation Firestone employee, compares the process of building a race car tire to buying a custom-made suit. Race tires are tailor made for individual races and tracks in a process that requires more hands-on work than mass-produced passenger tires.

Race tire engineers are concerned about issues like reducing rolling resistance, increasing road grip and improving durability. On certain tracks, like the Indy 500, a different tire is designed for each of the four wheels. “Each side takes a different load at that 240-mile-per-hour speed,” Peterman said.

With so much technology in each race tire, it’s no surprise that the major manufacturers carefully track and guard them. The tires are leased to race teams and collected after racing. The used tires are analyzed for wear and then responsibly converted into fuel for energy.

“Every tire is tracked from cradle to grave,” Peterman said.



# USW, WORKERS UNITING HONOR FALLEN MEMBERS IN MEXICO

Napoleón Gómez Urrutia Pledges Justice for Workers Killed in 2006 Strike

**M**ore than 100 members of the United Steelworkers and Unite the Union joined thousands of members of the Mexican mine and steel workers' union, known as Los Mineros, in Mexico on April 17 to commemorate two workers murdered by police during a strike on April 20, 2006, in the town of Lázaro Cárdenas.

For the first time, the annual march to honor the fallen workers, Mario Alberto Castillo and Héctor Álvarez Gómez, was led by Los Mineros President and General Secretary Napoleón Gómez Urrutia and his wife Oralia, who formed an honor guard with Unite the Union and USW leaders at the memorial erected outside the plant gate.

Gómez Urrutia returned to Mexico last year following his election to the Mexican Senate after 12 years of exile in Canada due to the false criminal charges laid against him by the previous right-wing government. He now chairs the Labor Committee of the Mexican Senate and has founded a new national labor center, the International Workers Confederation (CIT).

Gómez and his family were forced to leave Mexico and seek refuge in Canada in 2006 after the government of

Mexican President Vicente Fox stripped him of his legal certification as leader of the union and filed bogus criminal charges when he protested the deaths of 65 workers in an explosion at Grupo Mexico's Pasta de Conchos mine.

The Mexican Supreme Court ordered the certification to be restored in 2012, and all of the criminal charges were dismissed in 2014. In 2011, Gómez received the AFL-CIO's George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award.

## Solidarity remembered

In his speech to the workers, Gómez thanked the Steelworkers and Unite – partners with Los Mineros in the global union Workers Uniting – for their solidarity during the Mineros' long fight for justice.

"We will never forget your solidarity," he declared.

Gómez recalled that the 2006 strike, which lasted 141 days, ended with a victory for the workers who won a 42 percent wage increase and full back pay, and a defeat for the company which was forced to sell the mill to its current owner, ArcelorMittal.

"This is why our new confederation must work to build a new model that ends the concentration of power in the

hands of big corporations and promotes democracy in the workplace," he said.

Gómez pledged support to the ArcelorMittal workers in Calvert, Ala., whose plant receives slabs from the Mexican mill and who are organizing with the USW. "We will not stop until every worker in Mexico, the U.S., and Canada can join a democratic union," he said.

Rick Bucher, assistant to District 7 Director Mike Millsap, coordinated the USW delegation, which included District 3 Director Steve Hunt, District 4 Director John Shinn, and District 12 Director Bob LaVenture. The Unite delegation was led by Jayne Taylor, vice-chair of the executive council, and Assistant General Secretary Tony Burke.

Prior to the march, the international delegation participated in joint workshops with Los Mineros locals that represent 3,000 workers at the mill in Lázaro Cárdenas. Workshop topics included health and safety, contract campaigns, and the history of labor solidarity in North America from the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago, in which police killed 10 steelworkers, to today's campaign against Grupo Mexico/Asarco.

**L**abor Day has traditionally been when the starting gun goes off for participation in upcoming November elections and for the following year's primary season.

Local 8888 at Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia didn't wait that long this year to get involved. The largest local in the union with nearly 10,000 members kicked off a two-year voter registration drive on April 9.

"The seeds of electoral success must be planted early to bloom on Election Day," Local 8888 President Charles Spivey said in announcing the campaign. "We simply cannot leave any votes behind, not in 2019 or 2020."

Trained and certified union registrars hit several gates at the massive shipyard, the nation's largest military shipbuilding company, with clipboards and forms to register new voters and to help other local union members update their voting status.

The voter outreach is intended to

be non-partisan. The Virginia Department of Elections trained a group of Local 8888 members on the how to help people register to vote.

Local 8888 represents one of the potentially largest blocs of union voters in Virginia, and member households could have significant impact on closely contested races up and down the election ballot, Spivey said.

"We want to be a voice to be reckoned with every day of the year," said Spivey, who is in his second year as president. "Local 8888 intends to expand the Steelworkers' political influence by registering and mobilizing more shipbuilders to vote in state and federal elections."

### Engaging members

The local has scheduled teams of registrars to regularly engage members at the shipyard gates, the union hall and at special events throughout the 2019-2020 election cycles.

"We intend to make carrying a voter

card as common as carrying a union card," Spivey added.

With announced plans to hire 2,500 union and salaried employees over 2019, the shipyard is seeing both retirements and new hiring. Spivey sees an opportunity to get more young Steelworkers involved in the local's political efforts.

"We are going through an important transition," Spivey said. "New folks are coming into the yard every day, while many of our seasoned political activists are near retirement. They will take a lot of political knowledge and campaign experience with them. So we want to begin now to recruit and train a new generation of Local 8888 activists who can impact future elections."

Connecting with young workers is key to boosting Local 8888's political influence. To grab the attention of millennials, the local participated in a get-out-the-vote video featuring Los Angeles-based hip hop artist Xela.

# Local 8888

## LAUNCHES VOTER REGISTRATION, TURNOUT DRIVE





# USW TO CONGRESS:

## Members Lobby for Bill to Aid Multiemployer Retirement Funds

**A**t 26, Ben Trusnik is likely several decades away from retirement. But that didn't stop him from hitting the road before dawn on a cold March morning to join other USW members urging Congress to help retirees in danger of losing their pensions.

"No worker should wonder, after 30 or 40 years on the job, whether they will get the money that is owed to them," said Trusnik, a member of Local 1-243. "Pensions are a promise that must be kept."

Trusnik and two dozen other Rapid Response activists worked to protect those promises when they visited Capitol Hill to attend a House subcommittee hearing on the crisis facing multiemployer pension plans and to lobby hundreds of members of Congress to take action to protect those funds.

In particular, the members urged the House to pass HR 397, a bipartisan measure that would help to protect distressed multiemployer plans by selling bonds and using the funds to bolster pensions through a long-term, low-interest loan program.

"This bill would provide critical funding to troubled plans and provide much-needed security for millions of American workers, retirees and their families," said District 1 Director David McCall.

A large majority – more than 90 percent – of single-employer and multiemployer pensions are not in danger. However, actuaries project that 130 multiemployer pensions covering benefits for about 1.3 million workers and retirees will run out of money within the next 20 years.



From left to right:  
Amber Miller, James Hall, Kim Miller, Ronnie Watson, Randie Pearson, Alan Jones, Rep. Frederica Wilson, FL-24  
Travis Burchfield, Keith Jenkins, Tyrone Friend, Mike Fischer, George Piasecki, Del Vitale, Ben Trusnik



Ed Long, James Hall,  
George Piasecki,  
Tyrone Friend, Rep.  
Susan Wild, PA-7



Ben Trusnik, Mark Minor, Travis  
Burchfield, Keith Jenkins

That is the crisis that HR 397 is intended to address. The House subcommittee, in its first hearing since the new Democratic House majority took office in January, heard testimony from workers, business owners, accountants and others who all agreed on at least one point: Congress must take action, or workers and retirees will suffer.

### Important issue

This is one of the most important is-

...sues in our jurisdiction," said U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson, D-Fla., who chairs the committee. "We need to protect these pensions before it's too late."

If endangered multiemployer plans fail, some workers could see their retirement funds cut to pennies on the dollar, Wilson said. The ripple effect of those losses would harm businesses, kill jobs and ultimately cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, she said.

"The question is not how much it will cost to fix the multiemployer sys-

# PROTECT OUR PENSIONS



tem, but how much it will cost if we do not act on it," Wilson said.

Among those testifying at the hearing in March was James Morgan, 67, who spent decades working as a baker for Wonder Bread and as a member of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers union before his workplace closed.

Morgan noted that he and other workers had routinely given up raises during contract talks to invest more money into their pension plans. Mor-

gan's pension is part of a fund that is in danger of collapse.

"Our pension is part of our earnings," he told members of Congress. "We are not asking for a handout. All we are asking for is fairness."

## Promises made

The idea of fairness is what led Mark Minor, president of Local 1-243 in Ohio, to spend hours on the road to make sure he attended the hearing and

met with lawmakers on behalf of his USW brothers and sisters.

"These funds are promises made to workers when they negotiate their contracts," Minor said. "When our members have something promised to them, we will move heaven and earth to make sure that they get what they deserve. That's our job. That's what being in a union is all about."

Minor and Trusnik's local includes a number of workers and retirees who are part of a struggling multiemployer pension plan.

"We want everyone to know that we will always be a part of this fight, and we will not back down," Trusnik said.

Struggling pension plans are not the fault of workers or retirees, said International President Leo W. Gerard.

"A number of multiemployer plans are in financial distress, but their problems have nothing to do with these workers and their families," Gerard said. "Retirees shouldn't suffer because of bad trade policy, or poor business decisions, or because of lingering fallout from the Great Recession. This bill would make sure that American workers get the secure retirements they deserve."

Keith Jenkins, president of Local 507 in Canton, N.C., a third-generation papermaker, represents about 500 active members and hundreds more retirees who are depending on pensions from a struggling multiemployer fund, the result of a number of closures and consolidations in the paper industry due to unfair trade and changing demand.

Jenkins said it's crucial that Congress take action to protect workers.

"When you are close to retirement age, and you have worked your whole life for that benefit, you might not be able to retire with dignity if that benefit is denied," he said.

# RETIREE HELPS FELLOW NUCLEAR WORKERS APPLY FOR CANCER ASSISTANCE

**G**arry Steffy typically starts his day with a cup of coffee and a quick look through the newspaper for obituaries of people who once worked for ATI Specialty Alloys and Components in the small town of Millersburg near Albany, Ore.

This daily routine is more than a retiree's curiosity. Steffy has made a mission of searching for USW members and former co-workers who qualify for a special government compensation program for those exposed to radiation while working on the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

"We have a rare opportunity here to assist our brothers and sisters," Steffy, a District 12 coordinator for the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), said during an interview also attended by Albany Chapter 12-7 Trustee Eugene Jack. "Me and Jack, we're old Steelworkers. We'll go to the end to help."

Over several years, Steffy and his fellow SOAR members led the charge in spreading the word about the compensation program. They have helped hundreds of ATI retirees, employees and their families receive more than \$42 million in federal compensation and medical benefits. And that number will most likely continue to grow.

"I love when people get the money," said Steffy, who started Oregon's first SOAR chapter after he retired from ATI in 2010 with 36 years of service. "But I hate that they had to suffer to get it."

Congress passed the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Act (EEOICPA) in 2000 to provide benefits to nuclear weapons project employees who were sickened by exposure to radiation and/or other toxic substances. Survivors of deceased workers were also eligible to file claims.

The metals refinery in Millersburg can trace its ownership to a company that began operations in the 1900s as the Wah Chang Trading Co. In 1956, the Atomic Energy Commission, now the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), contracted with Wah Chang to develop and produce a high-purity zirconium for the U.S. Navy. Zirconium is used to contain radioactive uranium spent in nuclear reactors and on the Navy's nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers.

The facility, now owned by Pittsburgh-based ATI, a global manufacturer of technically advanced specialty materials, remains a major refiner of zirconium as well as other exotic metals such as hafnium, niobium, tantalum, and vanadium. It is one of the largest producers of rare earth metals and alloys in the United States.

## Melting uranium

In the 1970s, Wah Chang was contracted by Union Carbide Corp. to melt uranium-bearing material from the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tenn. Union Carbide operated Y-12 from 1947 to 1984 for the Atomic Energy Commission and the DOE.

A special furnace called S-6 was used to melt the material, which

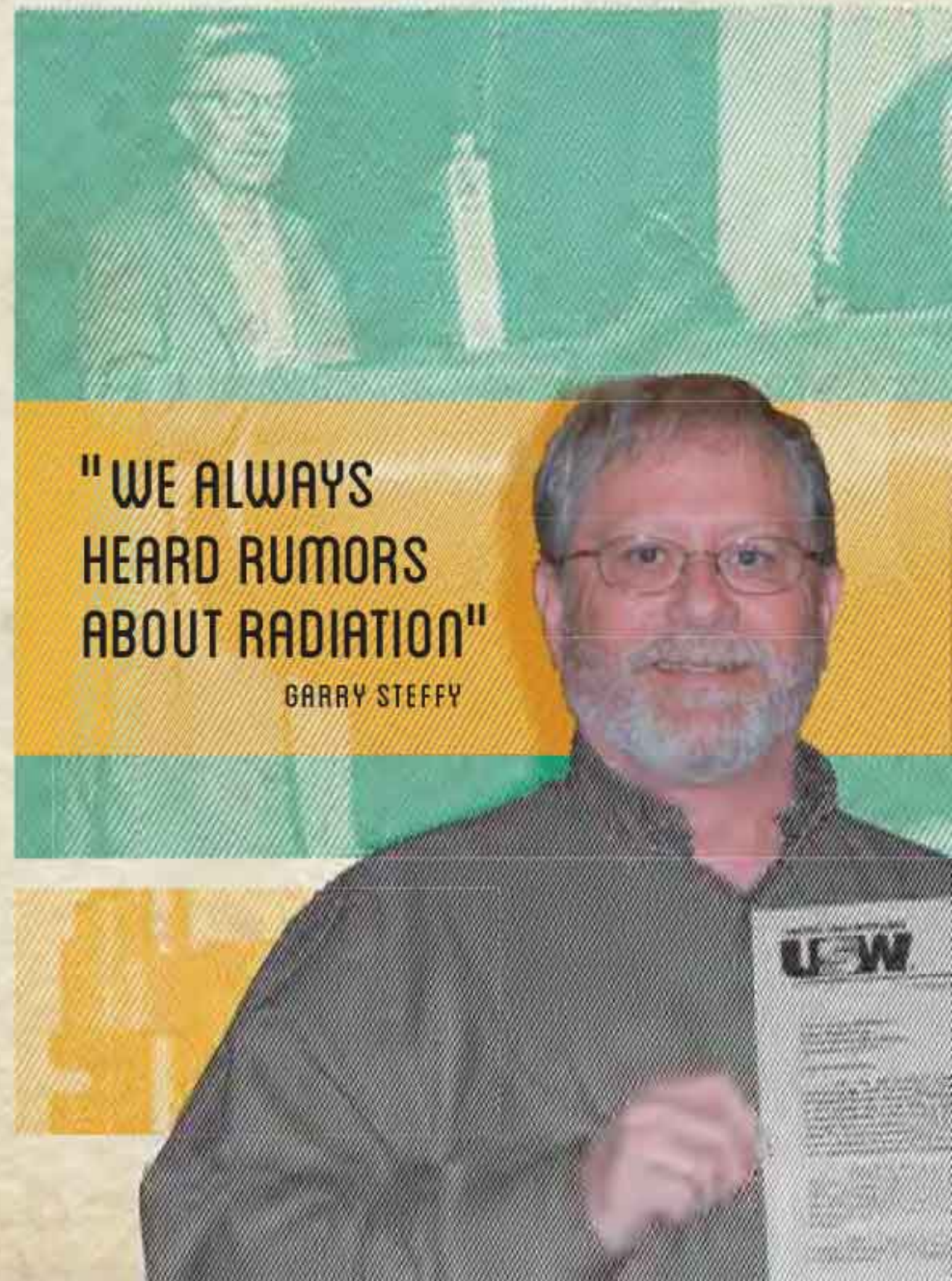
was pressed into billets or ingots and shipped back to Oak Ridge. It later became clear that not all of the radioactive material was removed.

The facility in Millersburg, which claimed a population of 1,329 in the 2010 census, was designated an atomic weapons facility in 2011 under the EEOICA and awarded special cohort status. Under that status, workers who contracted one of 22 listed cancers were eligible to file a claim and receive compensation of \$150,000 and medical benefits for life.

If you did not qualify in that part of the program, employees could be

"WE ALWAYS HEARD RUMORS ABOUT RADIATION"

GARRY STEFFY



compensated under a more complicated “dose reconstruction” formula that considers age, gender and areas worked. Claims would be approved if the numbers added up to a 50 percent probability that an employee may have contracted a cancer from radiation while employed there.

Steffy learned in 2011 from a newspaper notice that he and co-workers at ATI Specialty Alloys, widely known to locals by its previous name Wah Chang, had been exposed to radioactive materials.

Unbeknownst to Steffy, the family of former Wah Chang employee Roy Backer in 2010 petitioned the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to declare workers at the plant eligible for benefits under EEOICPA.

Most workers at the Millersburg plant were never told about the uranium that was processed there or warned to take extra precautions, according to Steffy and a series of reports in the Corvallis Gazette-Times by Bennett Hall.

“We always heard rumors about radiation,” said Steffy, who for 25 years

operated the S-6 electron beam melting furnace that processed the uranium from Y-12.

### Notification letters

After Steffy heard about the program, he started to campaign to let ATI employees know. In the early stages, the company would not publicize the compensation program, but would confirm employment when requested by the program administrators.

Steffy also contacted local attorneys and funeral homes all around Oregon to look for ATI retirees who may have contracted cancer. SOAR several times sent hundreds of notification letters to retirees.

“I’ve gone to nursing homes to visit people who were literally on their last dime in their checking and savings accounts and they get this check,” he said. “It takes the pressure off them and their family.”

In March 2016, as ATI was ending a six-month lockout of 2,200 USW members nationwide, the Millersburg facility stopped responding to requests by the

Department of Labor for employment records of former employees seeking the radiation compensation.

In refusing to verify employment, the company caused claims for compensation to be denied. That prompted Steffy to contact U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio and U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, all of Oregon.

After political pressure from the Oregon delegation, ATI Millersburg resumed employment verification in October 2016, and, for the first time, sent out letters to all current and retired employees informing them of

the federal compensation program.

“In most cases, this was the only proof of a worker actually being employed at the plant,” Steffy said. “If these men had not stepped up to the plate and helped out, frankly I do not know where we would be now.”

The three politicians were publicly thanked for their intervention in late 2018 in a letter signed by International President Leo W. Gerard and District 12 Director Robert LaVenture.

“Garry should be given credit for his hard work and desire to bring justice to this issue,” LaVenture said. “Garry, like many of our SOAR members, never quit wanting to help others after he retired.”

### Task not over

Steffy credits SOAR, the late International President Lynn Williams, who created the retiree program, and his local union President Jim Kilborn for asking him to get involved with the organization.

The ordeal is not yet over. Steffy is asking the government to expand the program to include additional areas of the refinery, a request that could help others who worked around the S-6 furnace. Some areas, he said, were never decontaminated.

“We had a ventilation system that would suck the dust out, and in the winter it would blow hot air on you. They never cleaned that out and through the years people would breathe in this radioactive dust,” he said.

Steffy is seeking records from NIOSH and the Center for Disease Control that he believes might make the case. But unable to pay an estimated \$5,000 records fee, he has sought help from Sen. Merkley to get the documents.

If he prevails, Steffy thinks another group of employees and retirees may receive enough additional credits or points to qualify for an additional \$25 million in assistance.

In the meantime, Steffy continues looking out for other retirees and, occasionally, himself. He undergoes a physical twice a year with the knowledge that he could be diagnosed with cancer.

“I know I’ll get it because I worked around the stuff,” he said. “I’m just waiting until the doctor tells me I have it.”





# *Fly the* **FLAG OF FREEDOM**

UNION MEMBERS ASKED TO DISPLAY THE STARS AND STRIPES

**T**he non-partisan and apolitical National Flag Foundation is urging labor union members and all Americans to fly the U.S. flag on Flag Day, June 14, as a show of unity among fellow citizens.

“We’re not asking for money. We’re not asking for endorsements. All we’re asking is for union locals around the country to proudly display an American flag,” said National Flag Foundation Chairman Romel Nicholas, a Pittsburgh attorney. “That’s it, no more, no less. It’s a call to action to bring our country together.”

International President Leo W. Gerard has endorsed the idea.

“We are proud of our country and proud of our union,” Gerard said.

“There is no better way to show our friends, neighbors and communities our pride and solidarity than flying the Stars

and Stripes on Flag Day.”

Just like the flag, labor unions are part of our country’s fabric and storied history, Nicholas noted. At a time of heightened political division, Nicholas is hoping strong participation on Flag Day will respectfully remind citizens that we are all Americans regardless of our politics, race, creed or national origin. He asked that all flags be hoisted by 11:30 a.m. EST.

American Veterans (Am Vets), a service organization for veterans, has signed on to the project too, said National Commander Rege Riley.

“Our country is divided right now, and we want to get the word out that there are people who still regard the flag as our symbol of freedom,” Riley said.

“Don’t forget about the flag, what it stands for, and those who died for our right to fly it.”

There are historical reasons for June 14 as Flag Day. The Continental Congress established the flag as a national symbol on June 14, 1777, in a resolution that called for the flag to include 13 stripes, alternately red and white, with 13 white stars in a field of blue. President Woodrow Wilson in 1916 proclaimed June 14 as Flag Day. In 1949, Congress designated June 14 as a national holiday.

Between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed stars to be added to reflect the admission to the union of additional states. Today’s flag consists of seven red and six white stripes representing the original 13 colonies. The stars represent 50 states.

The foundation has been based in Pittsburgh for 50 years. It recently

## **TREAT THE FLAG WITH RESPECT**

**A**s a symbol of the country and its people, the American flag should be treated with respect and honored when on display. The U.S. Flag Code establishes advisory rules for its display and care. Here are some highlights:

- The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.

- When flown at half-staff, the flag should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to half-staff position. It should again be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day.
- The flag should not be dipped to any person or thing, including government officials.
- The flag should never be displayed with the union (stars) down, unless

as a signal of dire distress.

- The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.
- In the United States, no other flag should be placed above the American flag or, if they are to be placed on the same level, to the right of the American flag.
- The flag should never be used for





# How to Fold a Flag



Begin by holding the flag waist-high with another person so that its surface is parallel to the ground.



Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.



Fold the flag again lengthwise with the blue field on the outside.



Make a triangular fold by bringing the striped corner of the folded edge to meet the open top edge of the flag, starting the fold from the left side over to the right.



Turn the outer end point inward, parallel to the open edge, to form a second triangle.



The triangular folding is continued until the entire length of the flag is folded in this manner. On the final fold, any remnant that does not neatly fold into a triangle is tucked into the previous fold.



When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.



reorganized and moved its operations to the Koppers Building Downtown, where a flag education center is being built in the lobby.

Koppers Building owners have also agreed to light the building's tower red, white and blue each year on 50 days of national significance, including most federal holidays.

The flag foundation has partnered with a national billboard company on an advertising effort to support the flag on patriotic holidays such as Independence Day, July 4. A separate video campaign called National Flag Foundation Moments is targeting major sporting events across the country.

The flag foundation has also partnered with the National Association of Counties and the National Sheriffs Association in an ongoing program to create and distribute flag disposal boxes in primary counties across the United States.

Follow the campaign on social media using the hashtag #FlyTheFlag.

any advertising purpose, nor embroidered on cushions or handkerchiefs, printed on paper napkins or boxes, nor used as any portion of a costume.

- A flag in worn or damaged condition should be destroyed in a dignified and ceremonious fashion. Some service organizations, including the American Legion, will properly dispose of old or worn flags.



## ENFORCEMENT NEEDED

LABOR FEARS NEW NAFTA WILL FAIL TO STOP OUTSOURCING

**W**ithout stronger enforcement mechanisms, the revised North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) will do little to stop the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs from the United States to Mexico.

That's labor's blunt assessment of the revamped trade agreement that was negotiated last year between the United States, Mexico and Canada to update the original NAFTA, in place since 1994.

"At this point, the problem we have is kind of simple. No matter how good the language of NAFTA 2.0 would be, unless there are strong enforcement provisions it will amount to nothing," International President Leo W. Gerard said.

President Trump, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto signed tentative NAFTA replacement agreements last fall after protracted negotiations. But the deals are not complete until approved by the legislatures of all three countries.

After a quarter century of racing to the bottom, workers in the three NAFTA countries find it more difficult to form unions and negotiate collective bargaining agreements. They face greater inequality, more powerful monopolies and a growing trade deficit.

Rather than accepting that NAFTA 2.0 is the best that can be done, labor is urging the parties to resume bargaining and fight for an iron-clad agreement that raises wages, protects workers and grows the economy.

Labor's assessment came in a report released by the AFL-CIO Executive Council as leading Republicans pushed for Congress to ratify the agreement this summer.

"To support any final deal, we must be confident that it will reduce incentives to outsource, help Mexico eradicate systemic wage suppression and begin creating new, high-wage, high-road jobs in all three countries," the AFL-CIO statement said.

The current text provides more promises than it does concrete solutions. While there are some improvements to labor and environmental rules, and new ideas to boost U.S. content in traded goods, these modest changes aren't enough to ensure working families will benefit.

Other potential sticking points include the tariffs imposed a year ago against steel and aluminum imports by the Trump administration over national security concerns. Both Canada and Mexico lobbied against them.

Outsourcing remains a key concern. The deal lacks effective provisions to reduce outsourcing of jobs to Mexico in key sectors such as autos, aerospace, electronics, appliances, food processing, and call centers.

The agreement requires that 40 percent to 45 percent of all auto content be made by workers earning at least \$16 an hour, which should help retain auto parts jobs.

But the renegotiation will have been a failure if the new rules allow corporate CEOs to continue to close U.S. factories and move to Mexico in pursuit of lower

wages and weak labor and environmental standards.

Some of the most important changes in the new agreement would require Mexico to pursue labor law reforms to encourage independent unions that could bargain for better wages and conditions for workers there.

Without better rules and certain enforcement, Mexican workers will continue to face threats and violence when trying to join an independent union. Without a union and a contract, Mexico's workers will continue to earn wages of \$2 an hour or less.

Any new agreement must recognize that Canada is not our enemy. It must strengthen America's partnership with Canada, where the USW has robust membership, to collectively address global trade issues and go after countries like China, Russia and South Korea that cheat on trade, Gerard said.

Trade policy should be judged by whether it leads to a just, inclusive and sustainable economy that works for all. By that measure, NAFTA, which led to the loss of at least 851,700 factory jobs in the United States, was a catastrophic failure. NAFTA by design favored global employers over workers, weakened workers' bargaining power and encouraged U.S. deindustrialization.

When Congress does its review, Gerard believes, lawmakers should tighten the regulations on what qualifies as a steel product under the agreement's critical rules of origin.

NAFTA 2.0 includes a potentially helpful requirement that automakers purchase 70 percent of the steel and aluminum they use from North American sources. The problem is enforcement. As currently written, the new agreement won't stop manufacturers from importing steel slabs or semi-finished aluminum, minimally finishing them and claiming, as a result, that the material was made in North America.

"The steel should be covered by a North American melted and poured standard with the analogous requirement for aluminum," Gerard said. "And the U.S. melted and poured standard should be aggressively applied to any Buy America procurement."

International President Leo W. Gerard joined chief executives of major American steel companies in calling on Congress to maintain strong U.S. tariffs that are stabilizing the domestic industry.

“Right now, the steel industry is in what I would call recovery. Times are better than they’ve been in a long time,” Gerard told the Congressional Steel Caucus, a bipartisan group representing steel regions.

“But let me say this, Chinese overcapacity still exists,” Gerard added. “We can’t sit idly by and think that just because things appear to be good they’re going to be good forever. We’ve got to recognize that the cheaters still exist.”

Testimony before the caucus occurred March 27, two days after the U.S. Court of International Trade upheld the constitutionality of President Trump’s use of Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 as the basis for trade actions.

A year ago, on March 8, 2018, the president imposed tariffs of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on imported aluminum. Section 232 was used to authorize the tariffs on grounds of national security.

Industry executives told the caucus that the tariffs are just starting to allow the domestic industry to recover from damage caused by decades of dumped and illegally subsidized imports and need to be kept in place.

“Now is not the time to blink,” said U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt.

“No one should be lulled into thinking the job of the Section 232 is complete because the U.S. industry has touched an 80 percent capacity utilization level for a few weeks – a level it hasn’t reached in a decade.”

### Legislation criticized

In prepared remarks, Gerard criticized pending legislation introduced on Jan. 30 in both the Senate and the House that would amend Section 232 to curtail the president’s power to impose tariffs for national security reasons.

That legislation, the Congressional Trade Authority Act of 2019, was introduced by Senators Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Mark Warner (D-Va.), along with Representatives Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) and Ron Kind (D-Wis.).



## TARIFFS ARE WORKING

RECOVERING STEEL INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO FACE JEOPARDY

“They would unilaterally return the fate of America’s steel and other key industries to the whims and schemes of foreign governments and off-shore producers,” Gerard said. “Why would we ever consider disarming ourselves in such a manner?”

Burritt and Gerard disagreed on whether the 25 percent tariffs should apply to imports from Canada, America’s closest trading partner and home to thousands of Steelworkers.

Gerard reiterated the union’s position that 232 tariffs should have been targeted at so-called bad actors, countries like China, Russia, South Korea, Turkey and others that are serial dumpers and illegal subsidizers, not Canada.

“As we have said since day one, they should not have been applied to Canada, which has a truly unique defense, intelligence, and economic relationship with the U.S.,” Gerard said.

“Clearly, to be effective, an exemption for Canada must be coupled with promises on circumvention, transshipment, and enforcement – promises that Canada has made, put into action, and must be encouraged to continue.”

The USW has made clear that time-limited waivers should be available in the event there are insufficient supplies of domestic steel. But to date, the majority of waivers have gone to China, Russia and other trade cheaters – countries who created the trade problem in the first place. “Waivers, if needed, should first go to countries like Canada, and then to other real allies,” he said.

### Positive impact

In the year since their imposition, the Section 232 tariffs on steel have had an overall positive impact on U.S. production, employment and investments, Gerard told the caucus.

American steelmakers sold over five million more tons of steel last year without unfair competition from state-owned companies that illegally dumped or subsidized their products. The U.S. industry recaptured market share while finished steel imports decreased.

“The 232 relief is allowing companies to rehire, recapitalize, refurbish and stand at the ready to provide the steel products necessary for our country’s defense and its critical infrastructure,” Gerard said.

“Equally important for the 31,000-plus USW members who ratified new agreements at companies like Arcelor-Mittal and U.S. Steel, we were able to maintain their healthcare benefits and decent middle-class wages.”

The underlying problem of massive Chinese overcapacity continues to roil world markets, a problem Gerard described as a sword of Damocles hanging over the future of the steel industry in the United States and other market economies.

The American industry faces a two-fold problem of oversupply and declining market opportunities caused, in part, by industry overcapacity and the offshoring of auto industry and other factory production.

Gerard called on Congress to address the nation’s crisis in infrastructure by investing in roads, bridges, schools, water lines and a smart electrical grid – projects that would increase the use of steel and other manufactured products. Any such investment must use American-made products.

“We can’t sit on our laurels celebrating the production, jobs and investment that are occurring,” Gerard said. “We are appreciative, but every day is a new battle.”



# THIS FIGHT

## **CAMPAIGN TO ORGANIZE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH GRADS, FACULTY CONTINUES**

**T**he USW's effort to organize graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh and elsewhere will continue following a late April vote that was rife with anti-union interference.

About 1,400 graduate students cast ballots over four days of voting. The initial tally on April 26 showed a 37-vote margin favoring no union representation, with 153 contested ballots.

While those votes ultimately did not alter the narrow outcome, the USW responded a week after the vote count by filing unfair labor practice charges and objections with the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB).

"We believe the count today is due to the university's misleading information and active efforts to obstruct the campaign and election, including pressuring graduate student workers into voting no," said graduate student organizer Hillary Lazar.

The charges state that the administration's interference included election

watchers who used coercive tactics such as keeping an independent list of voters, asking voters to spell their names, and sharing their information with department supervisors.

The vote, held April 15 to 18, was the culmination of a three-year campaign by grad student organizers, an effort that the university fought every step of the way. Long before voting took place, Pitt began a deliberate campaign to misinform and pressure grads into voting "no."

The university hired the notorious union-busting law firm Ballard Spahr in an attempt to derail the election before it took place, filing an objection stating that the graduate students were not employees and were therefore ineligible to form a union.

The PLRB held a hearing to decide that question last October and in March ruled in the workers' favor, declaring that the grad students were in fact university employees.

Even after that ruling, the university continued its effort to suppress the workers' voices, attempting to keep turnout low by pushing to hold the election in remote campus locations uphill from more easily accessible and central buildings such as the student union.

## **Work will continue**

Even though the challenged ballots ultimately didn't result in an outright victory for the union, the USW's efforts to organize academic workers will continue, said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the union's work on behalf of public sector employees.

"We owe it to these young, brave people to be strong and remain focused and continue to fight," Redmond said.

"This fight isn't over. We owe it to them to make sure that intimidation and harassment will not win in the end. Our union will stay committed to making sure they get a fair chance to become members of our family."

The grad student bargaining unit at Pitt would include teaching assistants, teaching fellows, graduate student assistants and graduate student researchers.

At the University of Pittsburgh, most grad students currently receive only \$18,000 for two semesters' work either teaching or performing research, along with health insurance for one person. The only way to ensure better treatment is to bargain collectively, said Mark Azic, a teaching fellow and doctoral

From left to right:  
Abby Cartus  
Genevieve Newman  
Rahul Amruthapuri  
George Borg  
Kim Garrett  
Donald Joseph  
Helen Ann Lawless

# ISN'T OVER

candidate at Pitt.

“Individual workers have no power in the workplace,” Azic said.

The grad students are one of two groups of workers at Pitt seeking to become Steelworkers. Full- and part-time faculty members at the university filed petitions with the PLRB in January for their own union election covering more than 4,000 people. The university, also with the help of union busters from Ballard Spahr, has also sought to deny faculty their right to organize.

The USW is in the process of appealing an April decision from the PLRB, which denied a hearing on the USW’s petitions, saying the number of signatures fell short of the required 30 percent of the potential bargaining unit.

In its appeal, filed on April 25, the USW argued that the PLRB’s denial was based on an inflated number of employees provided by the university and that the union was never given an opportunity to even look at the list of potential members.

“The union was not provided a copy of this, and more importantly, it was provided no basis for the employer’s determination of who should be on this list,” the appeal stated. “The university

was free to pack the bargaining unit with whoever it wanted to include on this list.”

## New hearing requested

The USW has requested a copy of the list of workers, and that the PLRB schedule a new hearing. The board has not yet responded to the USW’s filing.

If they are ultimately successful, the Pitt grads and faculty would join a growing higher education segment of the Steelworkers’ membership. The USW, already home to more than 7,000 members of Local 1998 at the University of Toronto, has added hundreds of adjunct faculty members in recent years who work at Point Park and Robert Morris universities in Western Pennsylvania.

USW members settled contracts with those schools, while Duquesne University, where the union also organized faculty, has continued to challenge the USW in court, claiming it is exempt from federal labor law due to its status as a Catholic institution.

The USW’s efforts in higher education are part of a national trend of unionization on college

campuses. Full- and part-time instructors, graduate students and researchers across the United States have organized in recent years with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the United Auto Workers, the Service Employees International Union and others.

“Academics can think of themselves as outside of the working class, but we are all the same,” said Kim Garrett, a Pitt grad researcher seeking a doctorate in public health. “We are all working for essentially the same boss who makes so much off our labor. Our research makes millions for the university, and we struggle to support ourselves.”



Nabila Jamal Orozco

# PRESIDENT EMERITUS Boyd Young Dies

*LONGTIME ACTIVIST LED  
USW PREDECESSORS THROUGH  
HISTORIC MERGERS*



**B**oyd D. Young, the Steelworkers president emeritus who helped build the USW into the nation's largest industrial union by guiding two of the union's forerunners through historic mergers, died on Monday, March 11, 2019, at the age of 79.

Born in Evadale, Texas, Young spent more than five decades as a union activist, starting in 1960 as a member of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite & Paper Mill Workers Local 801 (now USW Local 801) at East Texas Pulp & Paper Co. He was elected local president in 1971.

Young began leaving his mark on the labor movement early in his career. As local president, Young's insistence that workers had a right to political speech on the job resulted in a landmark National Labor Relations Board case that established workers' rights to hold conversations with other union members about political issues in their workplaces.

"President Young never wavered from his deeply held commitment to building better lives for working people through the labor movement," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "He provided steadfast leadership and vision at a time when workers needed it the most. Every member of the USW owes him a debt of gratitude. He will be missed."

After serving as local president, Young went to work for the international union, organizing paperworkers throughout Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. He served as a United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) staff representative and then regional director before his election as UPIU president in 1996.

"For decades, Boyd Young was an inspiration to so many young workers and union activists, including myself," said International Vice President Jon Geenen, who served as a staff representative during Young's tenure as president of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE). "He was a leader, a mentor, a co-worker and a friend."

## **Power to workers**

As UPIU president, Young consistently sought to increase workers' power at the negotiating table. With that goal in mind, he led his union into a merger with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Union in 1999, creating the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE).

Young became the president of the new union, which merged with the Steelworkers, then known as the USWA, in 2005 to form the USW.

"Boyd's dedication and sense of purpose made the USW the union we are today," Gerard said.

Young was one of the earliest union leaders to take a global view of the labor movement. That vision was part of what drove him to seek out mergers and alliances.

"We are dealing not with domestic companies, but with multinational companies that are merging and going global," he said in 2005 as PACE and the USWA were preparing to merge. "I believe unions have to do the same thing."

Those global alliances continue to grow and pay dividends for workers around the world today, with the USW's participation in the global alliance IndustriALL, as well as the union's close relationships with Unite the Union in Great Britain and Ireland, and the Los Mineros mine and metal workers' union of Mexico, among many others.

## **Emergency response**

Young also was responsible for creating the union's Emergency Response Team, which provides members, families and co-workers with immediate assistance after life-altering workplace injuries and fatalities, and for establishing the union's coordinated bargaining program in response to growing consolidation in the paper industry.

JoAnn Renfro Johnson, a longtime leader in Local 801, said Young sought to increase minority representation on the PACE staff during his term. "I saw the change," she said.

"Boyd set a high bar for us as union leaders," said Leeann Foster, assistant to the International President, who also worked as an assistant to Young at PACE. "I know he would be very proud of the work we are doing today in the paper sector to continue to make safety a top priority for all workers."

Young, who also served as a vice president of the AFL-CIO, stepped aside when the PACE-USWA merger was finalized, to ensure that union members would have clarity of leadership.

Still, Young remained connected to the USW. Ricky Brunner, former president of Local 13-825 in Evadale, said Young continued to assist the local in disputes with management over the years even after his retirement.

"You could not ask more from anyone," Brunner said. "Boyd was a friend and will surely be missed."

Young is survived by his wife of 58 years, Charlie Faye Young, and their son, Boyd D. "Danny" Young Jr.

"While we feel a deep sadness at Boyd's passing, we also feel a strong sense of gratitude for his dedication to the cause of fairness and justice," Gerard said. "His was a life well lived."

## MICHIGAN LOCAL RATIFIES DOW CONTRACT

**M**embers of Local 12934 in Midland, Mich., ratified a five-year contract after difficult negotiations with Dow Inc., a \$50 billion material sciences business that spun off from merged giant DowDupont.

The agreement was approved April 10 by the nearly 692-member local, which had rejected an earlier version of the contract because of excessive demands for wage cuts and contracting out jobs, said local President Michael Orvosh.

The corporate reorganizing has brought a tremendous amount of change to Local 12934, as they moved from a more worker-friendly management to one that puts shareholders above all else.

“They have been pressuring us for a couple of years, beating us up pretty good, telling us that things were going to change in the next contract,” Orvosh said. “There were some drastic changes. They like to use contractors more than we’d like them to.”

Local 12934 members were originally employed by Dow Corning, a joint venture between Dow Chemical and Corning that was founded in 1943 and dissolved in 2016.

The 2017 merger of Dow and Dupont created DowDupont, which is now in the process of splitting itself into three firms. The chemical business was spun off and renamed Dow Inc. in April. Two other businesses – agricultural chemicals company Corteva Agriscience) and a specialty products business (DuPont) – will split on June 1.

The company’s original “last, best and final offer” (LBFO) included potential pay cuts of \$3 to \$11 for approximately 270 workers. It also included a management’s rights clause that permitted extensive subcontracting of work.

After the rejection, the company and union returned to the bargaining table and reached a less onerous agreement. Pay rates of 20 jobs were increased by \$7 to \$9 an hour above what Dow first proposed and by \$3 to \$4 more for another 40 workers when compared to the first LBFO.

In addition, the final agreement froze the pay for four years for those workers who had been targeted for wage cuts. Orvosh said the freeze should allow negatively affected employees an opportunity to move into higher-paying jobs before seeing their pay decrease.

“It gives them some breathing room. The hope is, that in four years, you’re able to advance to a higher paying job where you never have to take a pay cut,” Orvosh said. “It was a collaborative effort of trying to come up with an agreement that we could live with.”

In the first offer, the company sought extensive sub-contracting and would only protect as union jobs 270 of the 692-member work force at the time of ratification. The ratified offer raised to 450 the number of union-protected workers.

“Dow wanted a blended work force of bargaining unit members and contractors,” Orvosh said. “We ended up getting an additional 220 jobs protected.”

The local also bargained language that improved bumping rights to protect workers with the most seniority if jobs are eliminated.

## DOW LOCKS OUT 220 IN TEXAS

**M**ore than 220 members of Local 13-1 were walking a picket line after being locked out of their jobs at a Dow Chemical facility in Deer Park, Texas, on April 22.

The company made the decision to lock out the USW members after bargaining since mid-February to reach a new contract settlement. The previous agreement expired on March 5.

“The company’s decision to lock its doors on these hard-working union members is reckless and irresponsible,” said District 13 Director Ruben Garza.

“These workers have been bargaining with this company in good faith to reach a fair agreement, and now, through no fault of their own, they find themselves on a picket line.”

The USW and Dow Chemical had been operating under a 24-hour rolling extension of the previous collective bargaining agreement while negotiations on a new contract continued. Management notified the USW on April 15 that it would cancel that extension and lock out the work force if they could not reach a deal by 2 p.m. on April 22.

For the USW, a major sticking point in negotiations has been the issue of equitable distribution of overtime and safety and fatigue concerns as a result of chronic understaffing.

“The USW is committed to making sure that we have consistent and safe staffing levels,” Garza said. “These negotiations are about more than just money. We also must consider the safety and well-being of the workers and the entire community.”

USW members have rejected two “last, best and final” company proposals, one with a “no” vote of 96 percent and another with 98 percent voting “no,” said Local 13-1 President Lee Medley.

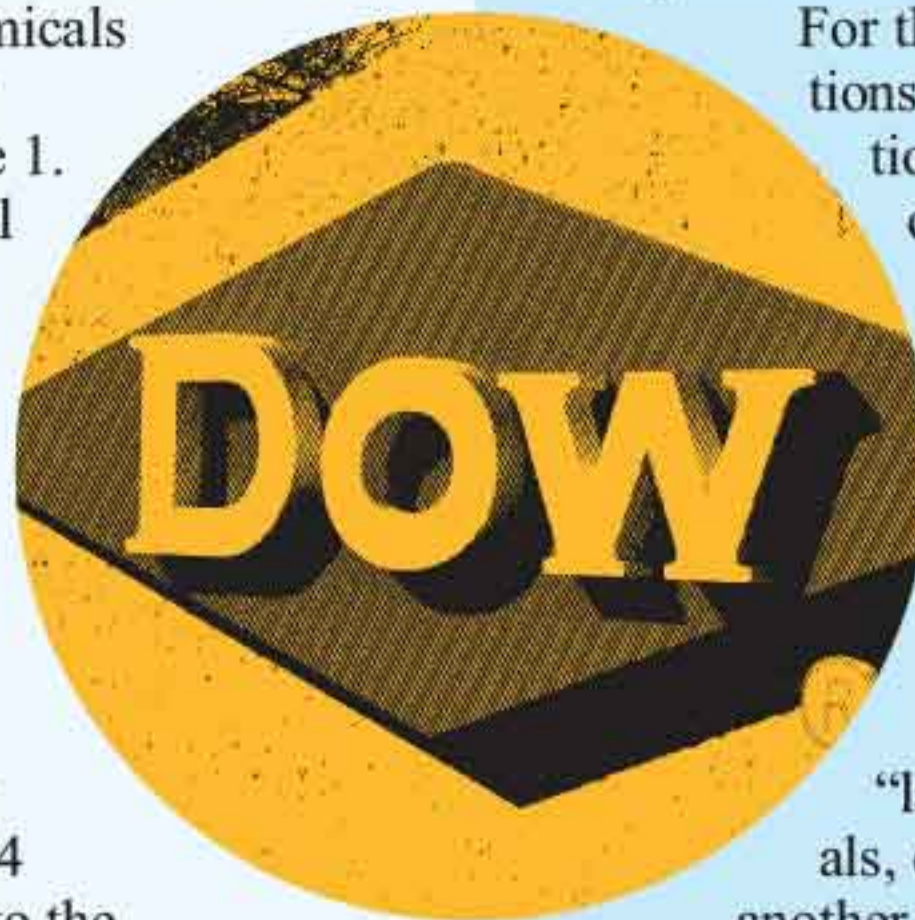
Company officials said the lockout is part of its effort to achieve “harmonization of collective bargaining agreements within Dow across North America.”

Dow Chemical acquired the plant in Deer Park, a Houston suburb, in 2009. Workers there make specialty chemicals used in paints, adhesives, detergents, floor care, plastics, adhesives and sealants, automotive coatings, and other products.

The Deer Park plant is operated by Rohm and Haas Texas, Inc., a subsidiary of Dow Chemical.

The union is committed to bargaining with the company for as long as it takes to reach an agreement, Garza said.

“We have been and we remain willing to work with the company to reach a fair and equitable contract settlement,” he said. “We hope that the company reconsiders this ill-advised decision, puts its work force back on the job, and returns to the bargaining table to negotiate a new agreement.”



## Rapid Response Conference Set

The 2019 Rapid Response and Legislative Conference will be held from Oct. 28 to Oct. 30 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

All USW locals are invited to participate. Rapid Response coordinators, team members and other local leaders are encouraged to attend.

The conference will include sessions for advanced activists as well as those who are learning about Rapid Response and the USW's legislative work for the first time. The three-day event will include plenary sessions, workshops, opportunities to connect with other locals, and more.

The event will conclude with members visiting Capitol Hill for a day of lobbying for the USW's agenda and meeting with elected officials, followed by a reception.

For more information about registration and other details, visit [www.usw.org](http://www.usw.org). Members with questions regarding registration or conference details may contact the Rapid Response Department at 412-562-2291.

## Local 9-288 Provides Environmental Training

Local 9-288 has for the last three years partnered with UCOR, a contractor at the Oak Ridge Reservation in Oak Ridge, Tenn., to provide training to high school students interested in becoming environmental cleanup workers.

This year, UCOR and the USW offered a general industry OSHA course for students at the Tennessee School for the Deaf in Knoxville. Oral interpreters used sign language to communicate with the students. The training was funded through the National Institute of Environmental Health Services.

"The interpreters did an amazing job, and the students were very engaged and receptive," said class instructor Billy Edington, who works for UCOR and is president of the local.

The Oak Ridge reservation is a former gaseous diffusion plant that produced enriched uranium for nuclear weapons during the Manhattan Project and the Cold War. The U.S. Department of Energy is overseeing the cleanup.



## Gerard, Landry Call for Women's Rights Action

International President Leo W. Gerard and International Vice President Carol Landry used the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8 to issue a call for bold action to protect and advance women's rights.

"Unions have always fought for dignity on the job, civil rights, and freedom from violence. Our union remains dedicated to that fight and to creating a more gender-balanced world both in the workplace and in our communities," they said in a statement.

"We also recognize that women's equality is about more than just the absence of violence and harassment – it's about the presence of respect and opportunity," they said.

"Unions offer women and other marginalized groups a gateway to economic success, leadership positions, and better health and safety protections at work, but there is still much to be done.

"The labor movement must take bold action as women continue to face challenges due to the growth of economic, racial, and gender inequality. We must be on the frontlines in the battles for parental leave, workplace violence legislation, and equal representation from the shop floor all the way to the boardroom," they said.

## Michigan Senior Living Staff Joins USW

Direct care aides, housekeepers and dietary staff members at the Teal Lake Senior Living Community in Negaunee, Mich., ratified a first contract on April 27 after successfully voting to join the USW last year.

The 29 new members joined amalgamated Local 4950, which also represents USW members at the Empire Mine, Eastwood Nursing Center, Bell Medical Center, Ishpeming Medical Center, Negaunee Public Schools and Malton Electric.

The Teal Lake employees approached Local 4950 for assistance in organizing. The National Labor Relations Board ordered a rerun of a failed first election that was tainted by management unfair labor practices. A second election held last May secured a union victory.

Staff representative Chris Haddock assisted in the organizing drive and the bargaining for a first contract. The two-year agreement includes pay raises totaling \$1.35 an hour, time and a half, holiday pay, and personal time off, he said.

## Next Gen Member Wins Election

Justin Willis, a Next Generation leader from amalgamated Local 7-507 in District 7, was recently elected commissioner for the Village of Bridgeview in Cook County, Ill., near Chicago.

Next Gen training and union education played a big part in his victory.

"Since being in the Next Generation program, I have become a better person and a stronger union member," he said.

"Meeting younger activists like myself, I was able to see their strengths and that inspired me. They also encouraged me and educated me. Next Gen helped me break through my shell."



## Red Cross Contracts Ratified

A coalition of unions, including USW Locals 254 and 9287, are working under a new three-year contract negotiated late last year with the American Red Cross.

The union coalition represents more than 4,500 Red Cross workers in 24 states. In addition to the USW, the coalition includes Teamsters and members of AFSCME, the AFT, the CWA, Operating Engineers, the UAW, the UFCW and the SEIU.

The national negotiations led to improved wages and health care benefits, and health and safety protections.

Darryl Ford, president of Local 254, participated in the national bargaining. He said the agreement covers some 370 USW members who staff blood drives in Alabama and Georgia. Ford said he was pleased with the results.

“We held onto what we had with nothing but upgrades,” said Ford. “We had no givebacks this time, and we got three years of raises.”

National negotiations on economic issues began last May and an agreement was reached in September. After that, local unions were charged with settling local issues and ratifying the overall agreement. For some locals, that process spilled into 2019.

## Hecla Strikers Mark Two Years

Local 5114 members and supporters held a march and rally in Mullan, Idaho, on March 16 to commemorate two years of solidarity against Hecla Mining Co.’s Lucky Friday mine.

The local began an unfair labor practices strike against the mine on March 13, 2017. The march began at the Mullan Pavilion and ended at the picket line outside the Lucky Friday mine.

Some 250 members of Local 5114 worked under the terms of an expired agreement for nearly 11 months before management’s unfair labor practices forced the dispute.

The strike is the longest ever at Lucky Friday and in the Silver Valley, located in the Coeur d’Alene Mountains in northern Idaho. Mining in the region dates back to the 1880s.



## New Contract Ratified at Cleveland Clinic Akron General

Local 1041L reached a tentative three-year agreement with Cleveland Clinic Akron General, a full-service, 532-bed teaching hospital, on March 14. The pact was ratified a few days later.

The local represents 930 technical, clerical and support staff at the hospital, located in Akron, Ohio. Bargaining began in January.

The contract includes language improvements, a new seniority-based layoff system and significant wage increases, particularly for veteran workers.

“We have workers who have devoted their entire lives to this hospital,” said Local 1014L President Tim O’Daniel. “Some people have been there for 40, 50 years, and they deserve recognition.”



## ASARCO Talks Difficult, Legal Battle Continues

A coalition of eight unions led by the USW is engaged in difficult negotiations with ASARCO for a new contract to cover 2,000 workers at five of the copper company’s locations in Arizona and Texas. Their previous contract expired last year.

Union members are working under the expired agreement on a day-to-day basis with 48 hours’ notice of intent to strike. The company’s demands so far have been rejected as inadequate.

In the meantime, ASARCO has won more time to file an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court in its attempt to reverse rulings that it must pay millions of dollars in copper-price bonuses that the company wrongly withheld from workers hired after June 30, 2011.

ASARCO, a subsidiary of Grupo Mexico, has refused to pay the bonuses despite being ordered to do so by an arbitrator, a decision confirmed in federal court and twice affirmed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The company was given until May 10 to seek review.

The USW is committed both to holding ASARCO management accountable at the bargaining table, and making sure the company pays those who have been unjustly denied bonuses as awarded by an arbitrator and ordered by the courts.

## Union Establishes LGBTQ+ Advisory Council

It took a book about gay, lesbian and transgender steelworkers entitled *Steel Closets* by Anne Balay for ArcelorMittal technician Isabell Sundin and several of her fellow union members to realize they are not alone at work.

“We knew we had to start a movement in the USW for the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) work force in order to ensure our safety and to receive equal benefits along with dignity and respect,” said Sundin, a Steelworker in East Chicago.

“We all knew of horror stories in our workplaces and that we needed to work towards fixing them.”

The USW in February took the first step in a long yet necessary journey toward justice by forming the LGBTQ+ Advisory Council. Its first meeting was held in Pittsburgh with members from several districts and various industries.

“The history of our union is a microcosm of the country, in that those who fall outside of the straight white male majority have had to fight to be heard,” said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who co-chairs the council with International Vice President Carol Landry. “This is about creating a culture that is reflective of our greater society.”

The member-led council set its sights on working to improve contract language, expand the union’s education curriculum to be inclusive and intersectional, and decrease incidents of harassment against LGBTQ+ members.

“Our objective is to build a strong union that is inclusive of all members,” Landry said. “We also know the industries within the union that are growing the most have a significant LGBTQ+ population. If we’re going to grow as a union, this is an issue and a community we need to support.”

The council is working to build a Steelworker presence in Pride Month festivities this June across the United States and Canada to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, a series of violent demonstrations in New York City that spawned the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.



## Health Care Workers Deserve Protections

USW Health Care Council members walked the halls of Congress in April to gain support from representatives and senators for workplace violence protection legislation.

The bills, H.R. 7141 and S 851, direct the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a standard requiring health care and social service employers to write and implement a workplace violence prevention plan.

Valencia Davis, a nurse assistant at the Kaiser Permanente Riverside Medical Center in Riverside, Calif., participated in the lobby day because the issue is one that, unfortunately, dominates her work.

“When we’re on the floor, it’s dangerous, especially if you’re the only one on the unit,” Davis, of Local 7600, said. “The violence is both physical and mental, and we get it both from patients and family members.”

U.S. Rep. Joseph Courtney, D-Conn., who introduced the bill last November, believes health care workers are long overdue for workplace protections.

“This legislation compels OSHA to do what employees, safety experts, and Members of Congress have been calling for years – create an enforceable standard to ensure that employers are taking these risks seriously, and creating safe workplaces that their employees deserve,” Courtney said.

James Schavers, of Local 183 in Apple Valley, Calif., joined the union delegation. A nursing assistant at St. Mary Medical Center, Schavers became involved with his local union to create change.

“When I realized we could actually get involved, I went from wanting knowledge to wanting to actually help people,” he said. “One way to do that was telling members of Congress about my and my co-workers’ experiences.”

## Workplace Violence Ruling Upheld

The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission this spring upheld a ruling and citation against Integra Health Management, finding that the home health care service violated the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

The case involved a 25-year-old service coordinator in Florida who was assigned to a patient with schizophrenia and a history of violent criminal behavior. She told the company she was uncomfortable going to his home alone. On the third visit, the patient stabbed her to death on his front lawn.

The Commission found that workplace violence is a hazard under the law, that the company was aware of the hazard, and in failing to address the hazard, it had violated the act.

Though the case did not involve USW members, the union filed an amicus brief, a legal document that provides information that may be helpful in making a decision. The USW was able to attest to the threat of violence that health-care workers face on the job.



## WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY:

# Remembering Those Who Died on the Job

**T**his Workers' Memorial Day, the USW held a memorial service to remember 19 people who died at USW-represented workplaces in the past year and vowed to never let up in the fight for safer conditions.

"It's important for us to remember that each statistic is a person, a face, a family, and today is the chance for us to remind ourselves what we do, why we fight with every muscle in our body to ensure the safety of our members and of all workers across the globe," International Vice President Fred Redmond said at the memorial.

Jim Schmidt, a member of Local 1557 at U.S. Steel's Clairton Works near Pittsburgh, rang a bell as each of the 19 names was announced. A candle was extinguished for each of the departed as the bell rang.

"We snuff out a flame representing your light which burns no more; and we toll the bell for your spirit to be felt ever more," said an excerpt from a poem written by Local 3657 member Connie Brown.

In 2017, the most recent year for which national statistics are available, 5,147 workers in the United States died on the job, an average of 14 every day, Redmond noted. An estimated 95,000 more died from occupational diseases.

Yet, the Trump administration continues to enact an aggressive deregulatory agenda, gutting safety rules, proposing deep cuts to worker safety and health and training and job safety research. The administration has also refused to move forward with new rules to protect workers on the job.

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) currently has only 752 workplace inspectors, the lowest number since the early 1970s. It would take the agency 165 years to visit all of the workplaces under its jurisdiction just once.

"We in the labor movement know that making sure workers come home safely at the end of their shift is priceless, and that it's not a burden," Redmond said. "It is a responsibility, one in which we hold pride, and one that our union has always kept in our minds throughout our history."

### IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO DIED AT USW WORK SITES APRIL 27, 2018—APRIL 25, 2019

5/14/18	Steven Wade, 60, Caterpillar Inc.
6/12/18	Juan Medina, 57, International Paper
6/16/18	Andrew Goad, 42, BAE Systems
6/19/18	Derek Steier, 28, GEFCO Inc.
6/20/18	José Torres, 53, Peerless Oil & Chemicals Inc.
7/4/18	Jerome Matthews, 45, Phillips 66
8/27/18	Bobby Thomason, 67, City of Princeton
9/3/18	Timothy Stiles, 56, Mountain State Carbon
9/13/18	Stephen Deggs, 29, Stupp Corp.
10/31/18	Frank Leasure, 62, American Standard
11/3/18	Jill Klein, 44, Carmeuse Lime & Stone
11/18/18	Stefan Falzon, 38, Teck Coal Ltd.
11/30/18	Stephen Lane, 53, Gilman Building Products
12/7/18	Dennis Hall, 46, A.Y. McDonald
12/13/18	Roy Evans, 54, Amsted Rail Co.
1/3/19	James Goins, 59, Newport News Shipbuilding
2/9/19	Daniel Hill, 54, Michigan Seamless Tube
4/2/19	Edwin Fleming, 49, ArcelorMittal
4/18/19	Camilo Fernan, Jr, 61, Shell Oil Products US

\*Not included are those who died from natural causes while at work or in transit to and from work.

*This list contains only occupational fatalities reported to the USW's Health, Safety & Environment Department.*



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_



Building Race Tires in Akron  
See page 14.