

USW@Work

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A Powerful Voice for Workers



Ride the Blue Wave for Retirement Security

The election is over. We have celebrated the so-called blue wave and now it's time to get ready for our next fight.

That was the common theme of numerous speakers addressing the 2018 Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) Membership Meeting held mid-November in Las Vegas, Nevada. Delegates to the conference elected ARA officers, attended workshops on advancing senior issues and heard from speakers discussing such topics as, "the coming fight to save Social Security and Medicare," "recognizing financial fraud aimed at the elderly" and "using social media to get our message out."

The ARA is an organization for Union and community activist seniors, which was founded by the AFL-CIO in 2001. It is the predecessor of the National Council of Senior Citizens; that organization played a critical role in the passage of Medicare. The group's leadership was instrumental in gaining the support of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and shepherded the senior health care plan through Congress.

AFL-CIO President, Richard Trumka welcomed delegates warning them that though it is great news that

Democrats took control of the U.S. House, this is not the time to rest. He stated that, "Mitch McConnell has already said that shrinking the national deficit will be a top priority in Congress this fall and in 2019. And he said that cutting Social Security and privatizing Medicare/Medicaid are on the table."

That message was reinforced by keynote speaker and Pulitzer Prize Award-winning financial journalist, David Cay Johnston. Johnston explained that Republicans have opposed social safety net programs since they were passed as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. He said that the current administration's tax cuts, which will add over \$1 trillion to the deficit over the next ten years, were passed to create an excuse to privatize, voucherize, and defund Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid and the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC). The author of several books on economics added, "There are plenty of ways we can act to preserve Social Security for

continued on page 2

SOAR More Important Than Ever



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

Recently USW members in Massachusetts ended a six-month lockout at National Grid with pensions being one of the major issues. The company did not want to continue providing a defined-benefit pension plan for new hires. This scenario is becoming a more common issue affecting current and future retirees, as more often than not, despite skyrocketing profits, companies no longer want to provide benefits to their retirees — even after all their years of hard work and dedicated service.

I did some research on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website to gather some information to better understand where this country stands on pensions. I was surprised to find out that according to the BLS in 2017 only 15 percent of private-sector workers participated in a defined-benefit pension plan and only 50 percent participated in ANY workplace retirement plan. Those numbers go up to 23 percent and 54 percent when you include state and local government workers. These numbers also show a continuing pattern of employers freezing or terminating defined-benefit pension plans for workers.

I raise this issue to bring the importance of preserving and improving what is for many, the primary source of income in retirement, Social Security. We in SOAR have been fighting for improvement in the way Social Security is funded by removing the cap on earnings and making sure any attempt to reduce benefits is met with strong resistance.

Many of us in SOAR have less to worry about than the present generation of workers; unfortunately, the possibility of a comfortable retirement is no sure thing for them. That is why it is more important than ever before that the present workforce, if they haven't already done so, consider the formation of a SOAR chapter in their area. The continued attack on retirement security must be confronted by those presently in SOAR and those who look forward to retirement in their future.

SOAR Coordinators and Executive Board members must make themselves available to local unions in their area and let them know how important and valuable a SOAR chapter can be to them.

This year let's all make an effort to grow and improve SOAR in your respective areas and Districts.

Source: <https://www.bls.gov>

Ride the Blue Wave for Retirement Security

continued from page 1

the future. In fact, instead of threatening to cut the program, we should be discussing ways to expand it.”

In addition to hearing from informative speakers, delegates acted during the first night of the gathering to choose ARA leadership. Reelected by acclamation were: President, Robert Roach, Jr. Roach is a retired officer of the International Association of Machinist; Secretary-Treasurer, Joseph Peters, retired Director of UAW President Region 1; Executive Vice President, Elizabeth Schuler, the current Secretary-Treasurer National AFL-CIO; and Jo Etta Brown a retired banker, Executive Vice President of community organization affiliates.

It wouldn't be a Union meeting without Steelworkers presence and this year's USW SOAR delegation played an active role throughout the conference. Steve Landon, an active SOAR member and president of the Idaho State Chapter of the ARA, stated that he found the meeting to be very enlightening. “During the general session, we gained insight into the history of important social safety programs,” Landon said. He added, “It was not just speakers pointing out problems. They offered real, workable solutions to today's problems.”

SOAR member and Virginian ARA State President, Cliff Carlton said that he found the convention workshop to be very beneficial. He stated, “You could tell the National Staff worked hard to develop the topics they presented. They instructed us on creating a message, taking pictures to tell a story and how to use social media to get that story out. They were very educational.”

Finally, Julie Stein, ARA board member and USW International SOAR Director said that she thought the fellowship between seniors was very important. “The speakers and workshops were instructional,” she said. “However, I think we learn a great deal from each other when we discuss the things that work and don't work. I'm encouraging more of our SOAR members to attend these events.”

The conference ended with newly re-elected President Roach, Jr. thanking delegates for their participation and wishing them a happy, healthy holiday. In closing, he stated, “In the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., “We are all angels with one wing and alone we can get nowhere. However, when we embrace each other there is nowhere we can't go!”

Election Results Already Paying Dividends for Working Families



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

From taking swift action to expand health care access to more Americans, to leading the charge to protect Social Security, lawmakers who were backed by our union during the 2018 election campaign have quickly taken up the fight for working families in states all across America.

"Health care is for everyone, not just the well to do," said Janet Mills, the USW's endorsed candidate and now-Governor of Maine during her inaugural address. Mills signed 'Executive Order 1' during her first day in office in an effort to remedy the state's opioid crisis by expanding health insurance to more than 70,000 Mainers who were previously unable to access care.

In addition to expanding health care, Mills was the obvious best choice for working families based on her commitment to grow the middle class by defending workplace rights and supporting laws that encourage job creation and investments in infrastructure.

In Michigan, where an anti-union "Right to Work" law was forced through the state legislature and signed by the former Governor Rick Snyder in 2013, our union worked hard to help elect Gretchen Whitmer, who was a staunch ally of workers during her years in the Michigan State Senate. Reversing the anti-union "Right to Work" law will be difficult because Governor Whitmer's pro-worker allies are in the minority in the state legislature. However, Whitmer has already taken a number of steps to improve life for working families, including signing a series of Executive Directives aimed at ensuring fair pay, strengthening workplace protections for state employees, and rein in employers who attempt to deny workers quality health care and other benefits through job misclassification and unfair contracting practices.

While progress in the federal government has been stymied by the longest partial shutdown in history, some of our union's most trusted allies in the United States Senate, namely Sherrod Brown (OH), Tammy Duckworth (IL), Bernie Sanders (VT) and Elizabeth Warren (MA), have formed the Expand Social Security Caucus. Joining them in this effort are more than 150 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, including Conor Lamb (PA-17), whom our union strongly supported in a March 2018 special election to fill a vacant seat. Lamb also had the USW's backing in November when redistricting forced him to run against another incumbent member of Congress who had voted consistently to weaken work protections and retirement security.

With less than one month into the 116th Congress and the legislative sessions in state governments across the country, the hard work of USW members in the 2018 election campaigns is already paying dividends for retirees and working families.

***Band with us, as we continue the fight to protect and enhance the quality of life of our retirees and working families.
We Are Stronger Together!***

Sources:

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Janet Mills



Gretchen Whitmer

UNITED STEELWORKERS
SOAR
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

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SOAR in Action

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Changing of the Guard

Lena Sutton appointed to replace Reg Duguay as District 6 SOAR Co-ordinator

Toronto—After serving many years as District 6 SOAR Co-ordinator, Reginald (Reg) Duguay has decided to retire.

Prior to joining the USW, Reg was the Canadian Director of the United Rubber Workers and was instrumental in bringing the URW into the successful merger with the Steelworkers. While active in the district and his own SOAR Chapter 6-80, Reg also served as a board member for the Ontario Federation of Union Retirees.

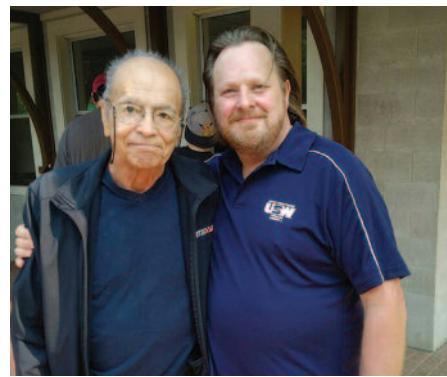
"Reg's dedication to the retiree movement will be sorely missed as well as his advice and wise counsel. We all wish Reg the very best of

health and happiness in the next phase of his life," said SOAR National Co-ordinator Doug MacPherson.

As one door closes another opens. We are pleased to announce that USW District 6 Director Marty Warren has appointed Sister Lena Sutton to replace Reg as District 6 SOAR Co-ordinator. Lena is the President of Chapter 6-10 in Hamilton, Ontario. Lena counts among her many awards the prestigious Jefferson Award and the Lynn Williams Award for Service. Lena's energy, commitment and experience in political and social activism will be put to good use as we continue to grow SOAR in District 6.



L-R: Lena Sutton and her husband, Bob Sutton.



L-R: Reg Duguay and District 6 Director, Marty Warren.

SOAR District 3 Ramp Up Lobbying Efforts

Victoria, B.C.—For the first time in District 3, SOAR members are working jointly with active USW members to lobby the British Columbia government on issues that affect seniors and the active USW members.

USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt praised SOAR members' contributions during a three-day lobby campaign in October 2018.

"I was pleased with their impact and they brought a unique viewpoint and showed that seniors' issues are everyone's issues," Director Hunt said.

Monty Bartlett, chair of the SOAR Chapter 3-14 Political Action Committee, added, "It was important to get the story of SOAR out to the government members. Some were not aware of what we do in their communities."

SOAR Vice-President Kay Noonan said the collaboration between active USW members and SOAR activists was a great success and added value to conversations with the legislators.

"We really appreciate the efforts put forward by Steve Hunt and the staff to work with and support the issues of our members," Kay said. "I know this will

Even at reception, Kay Noonan lobbies B.C. Minister of Health, Adrian Dix.

not be the last time that we work successfully together. This was time well-spent."

B.C. SOAR Coordinator Fred Girling summed up the effort by saying, "I think that this was the most important project the SOAR chapter did this year and now that we are back in our communities we have to follow up with letters and visits with our local Members of the Legislative Assembly."

Chapter 3-14 members have been campaigning on the elimination of hospital parking fees and have made difference. The city of Surrey has opened up free parking on streets surrounding its hospital and implemented two hours of free parking in the hospital lot. As one city councilor said in the debate, "The hospital is the one place where you don't go by choice."

The chapter has recently received a reply letter from Adrian Dix, the B.C. Minister of Health, indicating that the government has heard their concerns.



Back row L-R: Fred Girling, BC Coordinator; Monty Bartlett, Chapter 3-14 PAC chair;
Front row L-R: Michelle Day, Local 1944; Kay Noonan, Chapter 3-14 VP; Sabrina Daniels, Local 1944.



BRIAN CORCORAN Wins 2018 Lynn Williams Award

By Doug Macpherson
SOAR Canadian National Coordinator

Labrador City, N.L. – It was a pleasure to attend the annual SOAR Chapter 6-SA1 Christmas dinner and dance on December 14 2018. I was there to present the Lynn Williams Award for Service to Chapter President Brian Corcoran. People could not have been friendlier and more accommodating to me and the fact that all former presidents of the chapter were in attendance made the event especially memorable.

The Canadian Lynn Williams Award is open annually to all chapters in Canada to nominate a person whom they believe has demonstrated exemplary service to the membership and community in keeping with SOAR's constitutional mandate.



L-R; Junior Humphries; Charter President, Cluny Blandford; Doug Macpherson; Brian Corcoran; and Darrell Brenton. (Cluny was the president when the charter was issued.)

The Canadian SOAR executive considers all written submissions and votes by secret ballot to select a winner. Each year the selection become more difficult as the number of quality nominees increases annually.

Brian Corcoran is well-known in his community for his selfless service to others. For many years he has served as President of his Canadian Legion Branch as well as President of SOAR Chapter 6-SA1, where he keeps members well-informed of political and social issues and activism.

Brian's contributions to his community are too numerous to list, but here are a few examples. He is the go-to person for any senior who has problems with their social security pension or benefits, helping them navigate the complexities of government bureaucracies. He negotiates reduced air fares for seniors and others facing medical emergencies, given that residents of remote Wabush and Labrador City often must fly out of the community for treatment. There is not a community event or a fundraising effort that takes place without Brian's active participation.

Brian is in every respect the epitome of what Lynn Williams envisaged a SOAR chapter leader to be. He is a worthy recipient of this prestigious award.

L-R; Doug Macpherson presents Brian Corcoran with the Lynn Williams award.

The Battle for Pension Reform Continues

In December 2018, SOAR chapter leaders and members across Canada participated in a national public consultation process to demand government action to protect pensions and benefits of workers and retirees.

SOAR members participated in an online consultation process launched by the federal government in response to growing demands for changes to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act (BIA) and the Companies Creditors Arrangements Act (CCAA) to protect pensions and benefits when companies face insolvency and seek bankruptcy protection.

Our friend and brother Scott Duvall, a New Democrat Member of Parliament from Hamilton—and a

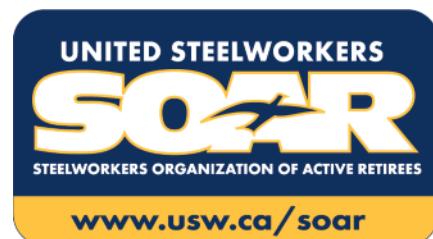
SOAR member—has been relentless in pushing for strong legislation to protect Canadians' retirement security. Scott has tabled a private member's bill in the House of Commons, Bill C-384, which would protect pensions and health benefits in bankruptcy and insolvency cases.

Scott has been unstoppable in questioning government ministers on what their plans are to stand up for workers and pensioners. Currently, court-appointed judges in bankruptcy and insolvency cases can decimate pensions and benefits with the stroke of a pen—an appalling system that has long been upheld by Liberal and Conservative governments. Millions of Canadian workers and pensioners, including Steelworkers, have suffered as a result.

By Doug Macpherson
SOAR Canadian National Coordinator

Due largely to Scott's efforts, the government has promised reforms, leading to the recent public consultations that prompted a great response from many SOAR members.

Unfortunately the public consultations closed on December 21. However, I encourage you to call your Member of Parliament and tell them the current laws are unfair and meaningful change is needed to genuinely protect pensions and benefits for workers and retirees.



Steelworker Retirees Recognize Company Exec's **POSITIVE INFLUENCE on STEEL CONTRACTS**

By Carl Green

St. Louis/Southern Illinois Labor Tribune

Granite City—Some United Steelworkers retirees are acknowledging a company executive in Cleveland, Ohio, because he may have had a strong influence on the union's successful contract negotiations with U.S. Steel.

At a time last fall when negotiations with U.S. Steel could have gone either way, Cleveland Cliffs Inc. agreed to a contract with its Steelworkers that reflected the stronger economy and improved steel market. Workers ratified it Oct. 12.

A few days later, the union and U.S. Steel agreed to a four-year contract that was ratified in November, also with raises and improved pensions, covering 16,000 workers. Arcelor Mittal workers ratified a similar contract on Nov. 29, covering about 18,000.

Jeff Rains, president of SOAR Chapter 7-34-2, thought it would be appropriate to show some appreciation for Lourenco Goncalves, chairman and CEO of Cleveland Cliffs, for leading his company through the negotiations in an enlightened and cooperative manner that made it clear the Steelworkers' contracts could be improved this year.

PUT IT IN A LETTER

Rains wrote a letter to Goncalves and sent a copy to SOAR's national office, which was distributing it to the other chapters if they want to join in. "I'm assuming a number of them will send it," he added.

The letter which was signed by the many members attending their monthly chapter meeting, calls on the companies to reward not only their stockholders but also their stakeholders—such as the workers.

It states: "We at SOAR would like to personally thank you for doing what we consider to be the right thing during your recent contract negotiations. Gone are the days when corporations considered their workforce to be a valuable asset. In the past, the men and women of a corporation were rewarded for their loyalty and hard work when business was successful and in return, the same workforce made sacrifices if need be to ensure the well-being of their employer.

"The workers were under the impression that they would receive a retirement that would allow them to live in dignity in during the latter years of their lives. They didn't consider themselves to be a 'legacy cost' and neither did the corporation.



SOAR Chapter 7-34-2 Recording Secretary Marlene Carey (left), and Dorothy Asbury, a trustee of the chapter, were two of the many members who signed the letter. — Labor Tribune photo

"That was not true of the employers that we recently negotiated with, and we believe that by your good faith bargaining, it moved others in the right direction. Rewarding the 'stake-holders,' not only the 'stock-holders,' ensures that in the future, the company will be much better off. Please pass on, to all those involved in the negotiations, our sincere appreciation."

COMPANY HAS FOUR MINES

Cleveland-Cliffs, the nation's largest and oldest independent iron ore mining company, agreed to a four-year contract including raises and covering about 1,800 USW members at two mines in Michigan and two mines in Minnesota.

Goncalves was hired to lead the company in 2014 after a long career in the industry starting with a Brazilian steel company and heading California Steel starting in 1998.

Rains said he wrote the letter to express appreciation but also to reiterate the workers' and retirees' belief that they should share in the industry's recent good fortunes. The U.S. Steel contract seems like a good indication that there was some effect. "They did turn it around," he said. "It is a pretty good contract."

GERARD: HISTORIC AGREEMENT

USW International President Leo W. Gerard said the U.S. Steel contract was nothing less than a historic agreement.

"This completes the restructuring of the steel industry following its near-collapse five years ago when a global financial crisis plunged company after company into bankruptcy," he said following the vote. "The hard work of our members was instrumental in rescuing the industry and putting it back onto the road of profit that it rides today."

"We've won good wage and pension increases in this contract, and our members are well deserving of it," he said.

"Our union has always negotiated a pattern in basic steel, and this contract sets the standard for agreements that come next."



Jeff Rains



Lourenco Goncalves

Pictured L to R: SOAR Director Julie Stein, Award Recipient Marc Scott and USW District 10 Director Robert "Mac" McAuliffe.

At the USW's ceremony last December honoring the 2018 USW Jefferson Award winners, International staff and district directors surprised Marc Scott, the USW 2018 Champion Volunteer from Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees, with a donation of more than 200 young adult books for his program "Olivia's Books."



USW Staff Surprise SOAR Member at Ceremony Honoring Community Service

Last year, Scott won a National Jefferson Award for starting the Olivia Scott Foundation in honor of his 17-year-old daughter who passed away from cancer. One of the Foundation's projects, "Olivia's Books," gives books to teens receiving treatment at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh.

International and district staff members purchased brand-new books from an Amazon wish list full of popular titles from the young adult genre to donate to Scott's program. Ceremony attendees, including Vice-President at Large Carol Landry, Vice-President of Human Affairs Fred Redmond, the

2018 USW Jefferson Award winners and district directors, wrote "care cards," tucked bookmarks into the books, and wrapped each one with a bow before USW International President Leo W. Gerard announced the gift to Scott as he was accepting his award from District 10 Director Robert McAuliffe and SOAR Director Julie Stein.

Olivia's Books is one of many programs the Olivia Scott Foundation runs in order to support young patients and their families as they go through life-threatening or life-altering illness or trauma.

If you would like to donate a book to the Olivia Scott Foundation, you can purchase off the USW Cares – Olivia's Books wish list on Amazon and have your donation sent directly to USW New Media (which will deliver the books to Marc Scott):
<http://usw.to/OliviasBooks>.



Hand-written "care cards" are attached to new books purchased from the Amazon wish list and wrapped with a bow as a donation to one of the Olivia Scott Foundation projects, "Olivia's Books."



USW display honoring 2018 Jefferson Awards National Employee Volunteer winner Marc Scott.



TAKING ACTION for RETIREMENT SECURITY

Update on the Crisis Facing Some Multiemployer Pension Plans

During the past year, Rapid Response launched an effort to address a crisis facing some financially-troubled multiemployer pension plans, including two that USW members and retirees have a stake in, the PACE Industry Union-Management Pension Fund (PIUMPF) and the National Integrated Group Pension Plan (NIGPP). Recent developments require the need for more action as 2019 unfolds.

BACKGROUND

The impacted plans have seen a perfect storm of hardships including plant closures from bad trade policy, a massive loss of assets due to the financial crisis of the Great Recession, and structural challenges impacting industries. This has pushed them from secure financial footing into distress, putting the benefits of current and future retirees at risk. This issue extends far beyond our union. In total, a million people could see their pensions affected. The magnitude of the problem is putting the future solvency of a portion of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) that deals with multiemployer plans into jeopardy. The PBGC is a government-run, privately-funded, insurance program to protect pension benefits.

MEMBERS and RETIREES ACT

The circumstances that led to the crisis are linked to government decisions. The rules governing pensions are government-created. That is why our elected officials need to engage in finding a solution. Steelworker members and retirees urged action from the U.S. Senators and Representatives who were part of the Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans. Members and retirees wrote, rallied, delivered letters, engaged on social media, and took other steps to push the Committee to come up with recommendations and legislative language to address the pending crisis by their deadline of November 30, 2018. We are frustrated to report that a solution was not reached.

NEXT STEPS

Our union is not letting up. We remain steadfastly committed to finding a solution.

We expect action in the U.S. House in the coming months given that key allies are now in positions to move proposals. Our union has supported the Butch Lewis Act (H.R. 397), which would address the crisis by extending long-term loans to troubled plans. It was reintroduced in the House in January with support from

both Democrats and Republicans. We are currently encouraging Representatives to show their support by cosponsoring the bill.

If you'd like to know more about the bill and see if your Representative is a cosponsor, go to www.congress.gov and search for H.R. 397.

Please stay tuned to Rapid Response for updates and more ways to engage.



YOU SPOKE OUT We Are Listening

In a Rapid Response survey conducted in late November, we asked retirees to rank issues by importance. The top response was “ensuring earned benefits like Social Security are protected.” A significant number of people also indicated that “having a dependable pension or other retirement savings outside of Social Security” was key.

BUY AMERICAN HIRE AMERICAN

Indications are that Americans prefer purchasing products made in America.

By Jeff Bonior

A recent poll conducted by the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) reveals across all political ideologies American's have a 95 percent favorable rating of products Made in America. The percentage of voters who favor Buy America policies for government procurement stands at a whopping 91 percent.

Americans are beginning to understand the importance of Buy America policies. AAM's research reveals that for every dollar spent of public spending with strong Buy America laws that manufacturing jobs will increase by 33 percent.

However, there is one caveat. It is not always easy to determine what is truly Made in America. You can find t-shirts with Made in America pressed on the shirt in large, bold lettering. Except, when you take a closer look at the label, you find the product was made in China, Indonesia, India or Bangladesh.

When the NAFTA 2.0 or USMCA trade agreements are resolved, Canada and Mexico will be back in the American marketplace in a bigger way. Canada, our neighbors to the North (or South if you live in Detroit), will again be producing products for the U.S. marketplace that are of high-quality and affordable. Canada is America's second-leading trading partner because of its ability to match the expert craftsmanship of American products.

As of now, it is up to us as consumers to research and ask questions about the origin of the products manufactured globally.

China has been cheating American manufacturers for years and now is the time to get wise and make sure you are purchasing a quality, American-made product. In the steel industry, China often changes the certifications and ships tubing and slabs from a third country because of a worldwide crackdown on its inferior-made steel.

This is not limited to the steel industry as China has deceived labeling of a variety of products. The textile industry suffers from the worst China/Made in USA abuse.

When a product is made in America, it must comply with Made in USA regulations set by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Section 5 of the FTC prohibits unfair or deceptive practices.

The FTC applies the "all or virtually all" standard to unqualified Made in USA claims. Marketers that claim their products are Made in the USA must be able to substantiate that all or virtually all a product's parts and processing are of U.S. origin.

But lo and behold, you can often find a foreign-made garment with a Made in USA label and an American flag.

This requires a bit of, and sometimes diligent, research by the consumer. But you can often tell the country of origin by the quality of goods.

In the American steel industry, it is not always evident of the country of origin because of blatant cheating and relabeling the steel from one country (China) to another. Contractors often purchase inferior steel from smaller companies to increase their profit margin,

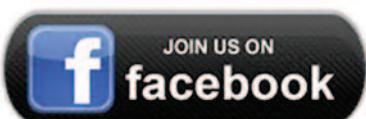
But if it is inspected by veteran, American steelworkers, they can determine the quality of the pipe or rolled steel.

Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger thought he would save the state time and money by offshoring to China the structural steel for the Oakland/Bay Bridge in 2002. The bridge wasn't completed until 2013. It turned out to be a disaster with cost overruns, long delays, poor quality welding and steel that continues to deteriorate today.

So just a little bit of research will help you find a quality American-made product that will last for years instead of months. Be sure to ask questions about the labeling because the FTC could not possibly keep up with this massive deception.

And when in doubt, just thoroughly inspect the product. You will notice the top-quality American-products that will not only last for years, but you will be helping American workers.

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



facebook.com/groups/uswsoar

Government Partial Shutdown

The partial shutdown of the federal government was a major attack on Unions and the working class. The shutdown affected 25 percent of the federal government. More than 400,000 federal workers were effectively locked out; furloughed without pay. Another 400,000 were engaged in compulsory labor without pay.

The population, as a whole, was affected by delays in income tax refunds and other federal stipends. Over and above that, the disruption of air travel, as payless paydays drive air traffic controllers and airport security screeners from their jobs, as well as the loss of many other services.

A partial government shutdown led to financial stress for federal workers. National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) President Tony Reardon stated, "I've been dismayed and frankly angered by suggestions that they shouldn't have financial concern."

American Federal Government Employees (AFGE) President J. David Cox Sr. said in a statement, "Our members put their lives on the line to keep our country safe. Requiring them to work without pay is nothing short of inhumane."

Finally, on January 10, in a letter sent to Washington, D.C. leaders about the shutdown of the United States government, USW International President Leo W. Gerard made the following statement, "On behalf of the 850,000 members of the United Steelworkers (USW) and in solidarity with the more than 800,000 workers impacted by this unnecessary shutdown in nine of fifteen federal departments, I urge you to reach an agreement that will allow critical agencies to conduct the necessary tasks to move our economy forward."

The shutdown, which is the longest in American history, ended January 25 as a result of a temporary spending bill that was signed into law. It restores operations of the affected federal agencies and opened the way to paying the 800,000 federal workers who had been furloughed or forced to work without pay for 35 days. The government will only remain open until February 15, and so there could be another shutdown fight in a few weeks.

*John Patrick, District 13 SOAR
Executive Board Member*

Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his Legacy for Unions

On Monday, January 21st, we celebrated the birth of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the work he did for underrepresented communities in the United States. Dr. King would have turned 90 this year, and while nearly everyone can speak to his legacy regarding the Civil Rights Movement, fewer recall his advocacy for unions.

The day before he was murdered just over fifty years ago in Memphis, Dr. King delivered his



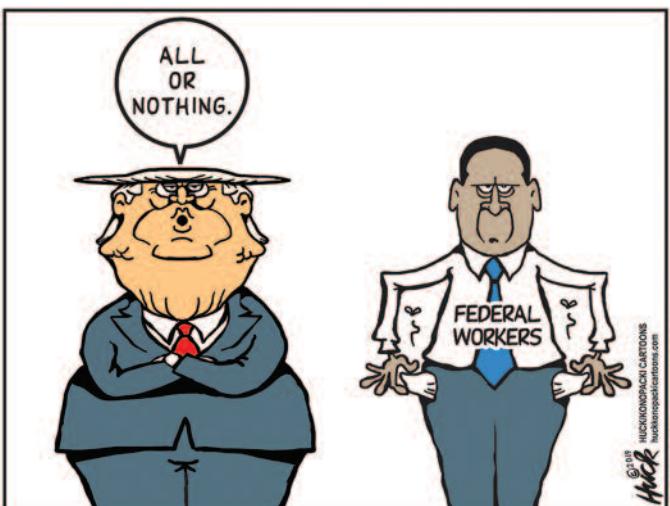
famous "I Have Been to the Mountaintop" speech, declaring that "the issue is the refusal of Memphis to be fair and honest in its dealings with its public

servants," highlighting the necessity for the right to collectively bargain and join a union.

Dr. King was in Memphis in support of striking African-American sanitation workers, many of whom worked 60-hour weeks but still needed to collect welfare to survive due to their low wages.

"Martin Luther King, Jr. understood the importance of unions. He saw the connection between civil rights and union rights, and used his voice to elevate those issues in a way that still influences conversations today," said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance.

Whether observed through volunteering, learning about King's life, or simply taking a moment to contemplate his legacy, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is an important holiday that should not be forgotten.





Let's Make the New Congress the One that Finally Addresses Skyrocketing Drug Prices

By Robert Roach, Jr.

A recent Washington Post article highlighted a shameful fact: as the cost of insulin skyrockets, some desperate diabetics are risking their lives by rationing their medication. The family of Alec Raeshawn Smith of Minnesota, profiled in the piece, is convinced he was skimping on his insulin doses when he died unexpectedly at age 26.

A father from Maine testified at a Senate hearing last May that a 90-day prescription for his son's insulin cost \$1,489. Researchers at the Yale Diabetes Center recently found that one in four diabetic patients reported lowering the doctor-recommended insulin dose because of the cost.

Insulin is just one example of many: prescription drug prices are rising steeply, far beyond the rate of inflation.

Since January prescription drug corporations have raised prices in the United States on more than 250 prescription drugs, including the world's top-selling medicine, Humira. Many industry analysts anticipate that even more pharmaceutical companies will raise their prices after the

beginning of the year to avoid the spotlight.

It is clear that Americans pay higher prices than in other countries. One major part of the solution is not new, it is just painstakingly difficult to achieve: we must allow Medicare to use its power to negotiate prices with drug corporations the way that the Veterans Administration does.

Let us work together to ensure that the new Congress, together with the current Administration, makes prescription drug prices a priority so we can achieve meaningful change in 2019.



Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

A New SOAR Chapter for District 7

SOAR members in Lemont, Illinois, were honored to have their SOAR Chapter 7-PC-7 officially chartered by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. The new chapter will be home to retirees from USW Local 7-517 (Citgo Oil Refinery).

On December 11, 2018, SOAR Executive Board Member, Bill

Gibbons presented the charter to the newly elected officers of the chapter; Wilmer Wittig is serving as the chapter's first president.

Individuals receiving the charter pictured below are: Bill Gibbons, presenting the charter to Wilmer Wittig, President; Mark Ferry, Vice President; Wayne Kilma, Secretary-Treasurer;

Dwight Hays, Trustee. Also pictured is Jerry Brooms who was very helpful in forming this chapter, as well as chapter members: Dave Ferro, Clark Gilbert, Lee Severt, Mark Pellegrini, Gary Nagel and Bob Gomer.

Wittig previously served as the Financial Secretary of the local union for 26 years prior to his retirement. He stated that he has been impressed with the interest among the retirees in forming their SOAR chapter.

Many of Local 7-517 retirees and SOAR supporters were formerly officers of Local 7-517, before their retirement. They believe that SOAR is essential for the retirees—not only by being involved and having an organized voice as retirees; but, also to see each other at meetings, discuss matters of mutual interest and maintaining their friendship over the years.



SOAR in ACTION

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60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



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