

USW@Work

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Volume 15/4

A Powerful Voice for Workers



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FOR BIDEN/HARRIS

Why We Do What We Do at Election Time



BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

As the president of SOAR, I write this article as a person who believes in and supports the labor movement, the USW and SOAR. That means I believe every worker should be able to join a union, with fair bargaining, a livable wage, a safe work environment, and have retirement security. As a member of our union, I never felt it was enough as a union member to just pay dues.

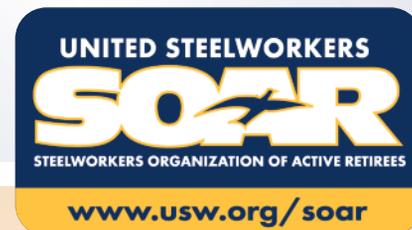
Jerry Fallwell, Jr., President of Liberty University (an evangelical institution) asks more of his members than to just make donations. Wayne LaPierre, Executive Vice President of the National Rifle Association, wants dues as well as member support on NRA issues. At Election time, this includes asking their membership to vote for candidates who support them on their issues. Why would the leaders of the USW and SOAR behave any differently?

SOAR's purpose as an organization, in part, is to advance the policies of the USW and to engage in political and legislative action. There are no union members without jobs; and no need for union leaders who have no members. There is no reason for SOAR if we do not work towards maintaining a decent standard of living for our retirees. We must help to defend vital programs like Social Security and Medicare. We must remain active and involved as we continue fighting to protect and enhance our labor rights, including retirement security.

For 35 years, SOAR has always required that any decisions made on actions be based on the best interest of our members and the USW has done the same—only for a much longer period of time. At Election time, this includes endorsing labor-friendly candidates who support us on labor issues, workers' rights, and retirement security. To make it clear, SOAR does not support a candidate who is not endorsed by the USW.

While SOAR has members who are deeply religious and/or members of the NRA, we do not ask SOAR members to quit the NRA or their church because their leaders do not walk with us on the picket lines or take a position on recent NLRB decisions. I have not heard Fallwell or LaPierre speak out or demonstrate against the illegal dumping of steel or tires or the closing of our paper mills. Nor have I read anything about their position on pension reform or increases in Social Security. I don't expect them to take a position on our issues, and no one should expect the USW or SOAR to take a position on their issues.

I am proud to state that for over 35 years SOAR has been supporting USW-endorsed candidates who support our issues and the issues important to the working and retired members of our union, and will continue to do so. With Election Day coming soon I ask all our SOAR members to please vote for USW-endorsed candidates.



Harris's VP Selection Presents Clear Contrast on Union Rights



JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

Kamala Harris's VP selection cements a staunchly pro-labor platform for our union's endorsed candidate for President, Joe Biden.

Together, Vice President Biden and Senator Kamala Harris have been unwavering in their support for our right to negotiate for better pay, safer working conditions and a secure retirement.

Retired Americans for her unwavering commitment to protecting Social Security, and for her efforts to ensure more workers can retire with the promise of a secure pension. (H.J. Res. 67, retiredamericans.org/voting-record)

Biden and Harris have spoken clearly about their belief that America deserves a President and Vice President with a firm commitment to defending the labor movement and retired Americans.

In his response to our union's candidate questionnaire, Biden pledged his support for some of the USW's top legislative goals, including the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO Act), the Butch Lewis Act which aims to secure the viability of multiemployer pensions, and a promise to ensure a strong future for vital programs, like Social Security and Medicare.

Join with us, as we continue the fight to protect and enhance the quality of life of our retirees and working families. We are stronger together, but six feet apart!

In her time in the United States Senate, Harris:

- ▶ **Fought for workers' rights.** Harris co-sponsored the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, and voted against the biggest rollback of union rights in 70 years, a move that would have impacted more than 1 million workers. (S. 140)
- ▶ **Stood with us for safer worksites.** Harris voted to require employers report prior labor violations when competing for federal contracts. (H.J. Res. 37)
- ▶ **Championed our right to a secure retirement.** Harris earned a 100% pro-retiree record from the Alliance for

Special Thanks to Albert

Longtime union and SOAR activist, Albert Becco, has stepped down from the SOAR Executive Board.

Al began his union career shortly after he graduated from high school at Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I). In 1952, he was drafted and served in the United States Navy during the Korean Conflict. Shortly after he was discharged, Al went back to work at CF&I. It wasn't long before he became active in Local 3267. He held various positions with his local union including grievance representative and president, the position he held until he retired in December 1986. It should be noted, that Al was the longest-serving president of Local 3267, which represents the office and technical workers at the mill.

After retirement, Al became an active member of SOAR; soon after

to be elected president of SOAR Chapter 38-3, in Pueblo, Colo.

Al also became an active member of the Pueblo County Democratic Party (PCDP) where he served as 1st Vice Chair for over 15 years and has been honored twice as Democrat of the year. In 2004 he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention for John Kerry. In 2005, he was named Labor Leader of the year by the Southern Colorado Labor Council where he continues to be a member. In 2019, the PCDP dedicated their building to Becco and presented him with a plaque honoring him for all that he had done for the local party and Democrats throughout the county.

In 2005, Al was appointed a SOAR Coordinator for USW District 12. He held that position until 2008, when he was appointed SOAR Western Region Vice President, a newly added position on the Board, created to better serve our membership in the Western United States. Al served in this position until this past August after making the decision to step down to make way for "younger" blood to take over this leadership role.



Becco, at 87, continues to lead his SOAR chapter and he remains involved with the Dems and continues to serve the Party as an At-Large member of the Pueblo County Executive Committee.

Al and his wife, Norma Jean, have been married 43 years, residing in Pueblo, Colorado. They've been blessed with three daughters, a son, eight grandchildren and currently ten great-grandchildren with one on the way!

On behalf of the entire SOAR organization, we wish Al and his family well, and we thank him immensely for his lifetime of activism and dedicated service, stretching more than six decades, to the Labor Movement and to SOAR.

USW and SOAR Applaud KAMALA HARRIS as VP Pick

USW International President Tom Conway issued the following statement after Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden announced that Sen. Kamala Harris will serve as his running mate:

"The USW and SOAR applaud Vice President Joe Biden's choice of Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate. Like Vice President Biden, Sen. Harris has a strong record standing on the side of working people.

"Over the course of her career, she's worked to hold big banks accountable, prosecuted employers for wage theft and introduced pro-labor legislation in the U.S. Senate.

"Workers need leaders who put their interests first, fighting for retirement security, affordable health care and strong labor rights. We are confident that Sen. Harris, like Vice President Biden, will continue to prioritize these important issues.

"Now, more than ever, our country needs strong leadership. Together, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris offer us a choice to put our country back on the path toward stability and shared prosperity."

SOAR in ACTION
USW@Work

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APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED TO SOAR EXECUTIVE BOARD

As a result of the 2020 International SOAR Conference being postponed, due to precautionary measures taken to protect our members and staff from the spread of COVID-19, the SOAR Executive Board elections that were to occur at this year's conference did not take place. Subsequently, it had been determined that the three-year terms of all SOAR Officers and SOAR District Executive Board positions of the SOAR Executive Board had expired, as of July 31, 2020.

Due to these circumstances, effective August 1, 2020, United Steelworkers International President Thomas M. Conway took action to fill the open positions of the SOAR Executive Board by appointing the persons who previously held a seat on the board to continue serving in their respective position until the next election, which will be held at our International SOAR Conference rescheduled for August 2022. Additionally, the following changes occurred:

Scott Marshall

Appointed SOAR Vice President

Also, in August, United Steelworkers International President Thomas M. Conway appointed Scott Marshall as SOAR Vice President; to fill the open seat formerly held by Albert Becco, who stepped down from the SOAR board at the end of his term.

Scott's union career began in the late-60s when he was hired on at Ferro Fiberglass, in Nashville, Tenn., becoming a member of Local 192 of the United Glass and Ceramic Workers, that later merged into the USW in 1997. Scott served the local as a shop steward until the plant closed down.

After moving to Chicago, Scott hired on at Pullman Standard and became a member of USW Local 1834. He quickly became active in his local, and served the membership as shop steward, co-chair of the "Save Our Jobs" committee, and co-editor of Local 1834's newspaper.

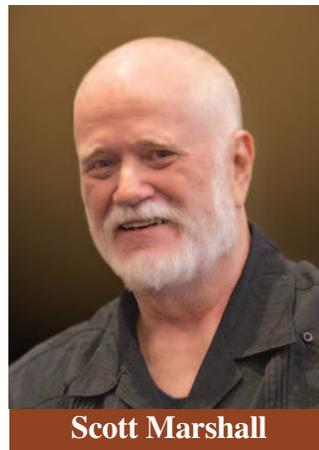
Upon retirement, in the mid-90s, Scott became active in the SOAR chapter that came out of U.S. Steel Local 65 in South Chicago. The chapter later merged with retirees from Local 1033 at LTV (formerly Republic Steel) and retirees from Local 1834 into what is now SOAR Chapter 31-9, which meets at the former LU1033 hall. He was elected president of the chapter in 2012 and served in that

position for eight years.

Scott has remained active in our union and serves as a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL). In 2006 he was appointed a SOAR coordinator for USW District 7. Scott held that position until 2013, when then-USW Int'l President Leo W. Gerard appointed him to the SOAR board to fill a vacancy as the executive board member for District 7. Subsequently, he was elected to the position in 2014, and was re-elected in 2017, and continued to represent the retirees of District 7 until this recent appointment.

Through SOAR, Scott has been active in his chapter's annual commemoration of the 1937 Republic Steel Memorial Day Massacre committee for many years. Other SOAR activities have included working with the USW's political program during the 2004, 2008 and 2012 elections where he was sent to Florida and West Virginia several times to work in the union's U.S. presidential campaigns.

Scott also serves as a board member for the Illinois chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans, and is actively involved with the Chicago Jobs with Justice, which is a nonpartisan, non-profit coalition of labor, faith, and



Scott Marshall

community organizations working in coalition to win meaningful campaigns, such as "Medicare for All," for worker's rights and social and economic justice.

Scott devotes his free time to various food pantries in South Chicago by working to feed the homeless. Until it folded due to

lack of funding, he also was active in VietNow, a weekly program aimed at helping homeless Vietnam veterans. As part of a group, he traveled the city of Chicago, finding vets on the streets, living under bridges and in homeless tents, also in shelters around the city, to deliver food, toiletries, and gently-used clothing to those vets in need.

Scott's wife Bobbie, also a SOAR member and CFL delegate, was working at United States Steel South Works when they met. Bobbie, a leader in her own right, was one of the first women elected to the executive board of a major steel local union—USW Local 65, and was the founder of the rank and file Women's Caucus, a precursor to the USW Women of Steel. Scott and Bobbie have been married for 43 years, reside in Chicago, Ill., and have been blessed with three daughters and eight grandchildren.

Dorine Godinez

Appointed to the SOAR Executive Board

Lastly, in August, United Steelworkers International President Thomas M. Conway appointed Dorine Godinez as the District 7 SOAR Executive Board Member; to fill the open seat formerly held by Scott Marshall who was appointed to the position of Vice President.

Dorine began her union career in 1978 when she was hired on at Inland



Dorine Godinez

Steel Co., (now known as Arcelormittal East) in East Chicago, Ind., becoming a union member of USW Local 1010. While working full-time, Dorine completed her electrical apprenticeship and Spanish translation from Purdue NW. She earned her Associate's Degree in Labor Studies from IU Northwest and finished her Bachelor's Degree in Leadership at St. Joseph College in Indiana.

Dorine quickly became active in her local, and served the membership in a variety of capacities. The USW provided her many opportunities of training in leadership, safety, civil rights, and so much more throughout her more than 30 years of service. Dorine was the first woman grievor elected for Local 1010, serving on the local's executive board.

Dorine has also been very active with Women of Steel and has been fighting for diversity in the union. She started the Women of Steel Committee at her local during which time over 14 women obtained union positions. She also served as a member of the Community Services Committee and the Rapid Response Committee.

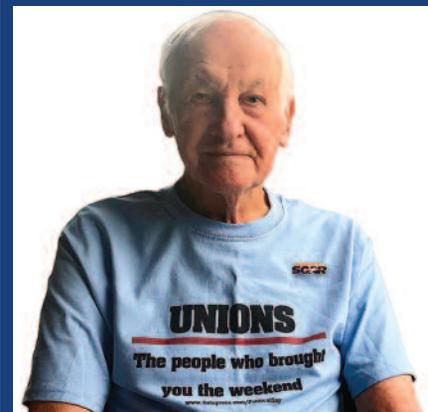
She served on three negotiating committees. For over 18 years, she served as the local's safety coordinator.

As a Hispanic woman, Dorine has always been an activist for Civil and Human Rights. Dorine served as the chairperson for Human and Civil Rights Committee for her local and serviced USW District 7 and the International on both Safety and Civil Rights for over 20 years. Prior to her retirement in 2010, she also served as the Union Training Coordinator for her local.

Since retirement, Dorine served in the capacity of president of SOAR Chapter 30-18, the NipSCO retirees of Local 12775, for over nine years. She has remained active in our union and in 2013 was appointed a SOAR Coordinator for USW District 7. Currently, Dorine serves as the president of SOAR Chapter 31-1 which represents retirees of USW LU 1010, and recording secretary for the Indiana chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans executive board.

Dorine loves to volunteer her time helping those in need. As a volunteer, she has had the opportunity to help build homes with Habitat for Humanity. She also enjoys volunteering for soup lines and the Special Olympics.

Henry Ball Turns 100



Henry Ball was a Steelworker before there was a Steelworkers' union. The longtime USW leader and political activist turned 100 years old this year and remains a loyal SOAR member.

See inside this issue of *USW@Work* for a look back at Henry's first century of life and what he thinks as we look forward to the future.

Dorine has been married to her husband Jesus for 34 years, after meeting at the old Inland Steel Co. Dorine and Jesus reside in Knox, Ind., and have been blessed with five children, ten grandchildren, and currently three great-grandchildren.

On behalf of SOAR, we congratulate all of the SOAR Executive Board members in their newly appointed positions; and, we welcome Dorine to the SOAR Executive Board and look forward to working with them as we continue our mission to protect and enhance the quality of life for retirees and working families.

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



COVID-19 Takes Terrible Toll on Seniors in

By Doug Macpherson
Vice President and SOAR Canadian National Coordinator

A report by the Canadian Institute for Health Information has revealed a horrific statistic: 81 percent of COVID-19 deaths in Canada (as of June 25, 2020) were in long-term care homes—nearly double the OECD average of 41 percent.

Most of those deaths were also in for-profit care homes. Another appalling, though not surprising statistic.

Both of these revelations should inform decisions on reforming long-term care legislation in Canada.

It is clear that the current system of caring for our elderly is failing. Most of the deaths in long-term care facilities were the result of inadequate funding and staffing levels. Many health care and personal support workers are so poorly paid that they are compelled to work multiple jobs in different homes. Thus, they inadvertently help spread the virus throughout these vulnerable populations. The lack of proper preparedness, protocols and personal protective equipment further compound this devastating situation.

For many years, SOAR and other seniors' and health care organizations have called for increased staffing in long-term care homes so that residents would receive a minimum of four hours daily care time (touch time). In spite of those calls, Ontario's Conservative government relaxed regulations, permitting home operators to reduce staffing ratios. Long-term care facility inspections were also greatly reduced, to the point of being almost non-existent prior to the outbreak.

It comes as no surprise that the majority of COVID-19 deaths occurred in for-profit, privately-owned, long-term care homes. In Ontario, all long-term care homes, whether private or publicly run, are funded by the government at the same level, with residents' monthly fees set by the province. Obviously, in order to show value to their shareholders, privately-owned and operated homes, must make a profit on the delivery of services, levels of care and staff salaries, out of the same envelope of money.

Moreover, a recent study conducted by the Toronto Star newspaper showed that, "Three of Ontario's biggest private nursing home companies are set to pay \$59 million to shareholders this quarter despite hundreds of COVID-19 deaths at their facilities." To add insult to injury, one of these companies credits its increased 2020 revenues partially to special government funding for COVID-19.

Union leaders, including USW District 6 Director Marty Warren, have denounced this "perverse" situation. The USW, which represents workers at numerous long-term care facilities, has called on government to ban dividend payments by long-term care corporations that receive taxpayer subsidies.

"While thousands have died and millions are suffering economically during this pandemic, taxpayers should not be subsidizing wealthy corporations that can afford to pay dividends to shareholders," Warren said. "Our tax dollars should be invested in improved care and protection of residents, as well as better wages, working conditions and safety standards for the staff who provide these vital services."

SOAR echoes and applauds these comments.

Clearly the long-term care system across Canada needs attention and reform.

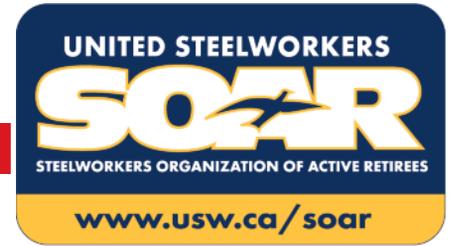


Doug Macpherson

USW members working at Country Village Home in Woodslee, Ontario, stand up for residents and care workers.



For-Profit Long-Term Care



SOAR RECOMMENDS:

- ▶ Ending for-profit long-term care.
- ▶ Establishing national standards and proper licensing for all facilities.
- ▶ Increasing funding and ensuring adequate front-line staffing in homes.
- ▶ Improving infection control practices, including better access to PPE and visitor screening.
- ▶ More frequent, random inspections of facilities.
- ▶ Making full-time hours available to all front-line staff, requiring them to be assigned to one facility and ensuring well-paying jobs and benefits including sick leave.
- ▶ Ensuring a minimum-care standard of four hours per day per resident.
- ▶ Providing on-going COVID-19 testing and contact tracing for all residents and staff.
- ▶ Upgrading existing homes to maintain dignity and respect for all residents by having private rooms that include air-conditioning, toilet and bathing facilities and privacy for personal care services.



SOAR members support striking members of 9042 in Mississauga in their contract dispute.



Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships to Six Students

By Doug May
Granite City SOAR Chapter 7-34-2

Collective efforts to offer advanced learning opportunities and scholarship assistance to high school seniors should not be diminished by COVID-19. While observing safe protocols outdoors at Wilson Park in Granite City, Illinois, the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Chapter 7-34-2 hosted the Eleventh Annual Jane Becker Scholarship award presentation.



SOAR Scholarship recipients at the event were, from left: Maddie Jackson, Grace Sedabres, Owen Buescher, Miriam Kastens and Lauren Rakers. Kayla Cunningham could not attend.

Six area high school graduates who are related to active SOAR members were each presented with a \$2,000 scholarship, August 10, as the top picks for their well-researched essays on this year's topic, "A Just Transition for Workers Moving from Fossil Fuel Jobs to Clean Energy Jobs."

This day is meaningful to so many because it represents hope, especially in this pandemic era. Seeing young people embark on a new endeavor with such enthusiasm was recognized by Bob Daiber, who has volunteered for many years in assisting the SOAR chapter's Jane Becker Scholarship program. As the morning's MC, Daiber said, "We wish them good luck in this new adventure in times like no other."

This event historically draws participation from many elected and soon-to-be elected people who take time out of their schedules to congratulate these young students.

Recognizing this day is indicative of the type of elected officials we need in our community. But, their attendance on a 94-degree morning was admirable.

SOAR sold advertising for a 62-page awards booklet that generated enough money for the six \$2,000 scholarships. "We could not have done this without our donors," stated Jeff Rains, president of the SOAR chapter, "We had a lot of support."

Scholarship awardee Owen Buescher wrote in his essay, "These measures are a great starting point in our march to a greener and cleaner earth, and one that is not only habitable but hospitable for future generations."

The Six Scholarship Recipients were:

Miriam Kastens attending Brown University to study Organizational Studies and Architecture

Grace Sedabres attending Webster University to study Illustration

Lauren Rakers attending Southern Indiana University to study Nursing

Owen Buescher attending University Missouri-Columbia to study Broadcast Journalism

Kayla Cunningham attending Truman State University to study Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

Maddie Jackson attending Saint Louis University to study chemistry this fall.

The SOAR Award Winners this year were:

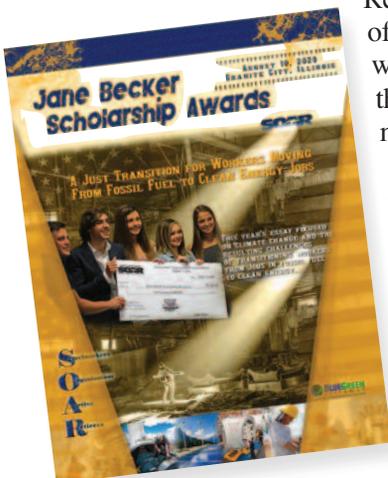
Friend of SOAR
Mayor Ed Hagnauer

Edward Sadlowski Labor Leader of the Year
Drew Gitchoff from Becker (son of former USW President George Becker) Schroder and Chapman Law Firm in Granite City, Ill.

2020 Activist of the Year
Janet Martin, SOAR Chapter 7-34-2

2020 Volunteers of the Year
Ken and Georgia Smith, SOAR Chapter 7-34-2 members

"Congratulations and good luck to the scholarship winners as they pursue their higher education, stated Jeff Rains. "We would like to express our appreciation to all of the essay judges, those officials who were in attendance, and all the SOAR members who consistently volunteer for our ongoing efforts to make this world a better place."



IN MEMORIAM

ROBERT “Big Red” RANKIN

Past District 12 SOAR Executive Board Member

“Big Red,” longtime Union and SOAR activist passed away on July 22, 2020, at the age of 82.

Robert “Bob” Rankin grew up on a family farm on the outskirts of San Antonio, Texas. After high school, he ran the family’s dairy farm for two years and then joined the Navy from 1958-1963. After boot camp he served on the USS Bennington, CVS 20, an antisubmarine warfare aircraft carrier home-ported in San Diego. His ship took two cruises to the Western Pacific where they were home-ported in Subic Bay in the Philippines and Yokosuka, Japan. His ship was one of the first to serve off the coast of Vietnam. Bob was a Third-Class Electrician.

After meeting and marrying the love of his life Anna Mary Miller in 1961, and shortly after his discharge from the Navy, the couple settled in Carson, California, where they raised their family and were longtime residents. Bob began his union career when he went to work for Allied Chemical Corporation. After a series of mergers, the company changed its name to Honeywell. Bob joined the United Mine Workers of America as part of District 50 (Gas Coke & Chemical Workers). The district, also after a series of mergers, was absorbed into the United Steelworkers of America. During his union career, Bob served his local in many positions including local union president. When Honeywell downsized their operation in Carson, his local was absorbed into a large, amalgamated Local 1981.

Bob’s interest in politics and unionism led him to be an active member of the Steelworkers Los Angeles/Orange Counties Legislation and Education



Committee (L&E Committee) and served as its chairman for some years in the early 2000s. He also became active in the Democratic Party.

In 1991, Bob went to a workshop about becoming a delegate to the Democratic Convention and ran to be a delegate for Bill Clinton. He was elected to the DNC in 2000 (serving two terms) and had been a delegate to the Democratic Convention several times. Bob was a California Super Delegate in 2004 and in 2008, a role he took very seriously. Bob also had a strong belief in the American Democratic process of voting and worked the polls on election days for many years, eventually becoming an election poll coordinator.

Bob retired from Honeywell as an electrician, in 2003. A month before he retired, he was asked to become active in SOAR and was appointed a SOAR coordinator. In 2008, he was elected to the SOAR Executive Board to represent the retirees of USW District 12 and served in that position until his resignation in 2012, to care for his wife until her passing.

Big Red’s family described him as having “a heart as big as Texas and as bright as California.” All who knew him in SOAR will remember him that way as well.



Robert “Big Red” “Bob” Rankin
1937-2020

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



SOAR in ACTION

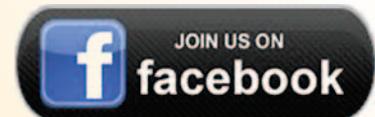
Dunkirk, NY — Members of SOAR Chapter 4-1 pose for a group photo, while working on the USW’s Member-to-Member “Our Union, Our Voice” postcard writing campaign, at their chapter meeting held August 25. Left to right are: Tom McCarthy, Joe Rozen, Don Brisky, Jim Bickhart, Theresa Bickhart and Roger Calanni.



Granite City, IL — Working with Community Care and Restoration Church, SOAR Chapter 34-2 members helped out with two free, drive-up food distribution events held August 28 and September 25. The food was supplied by the St. Louis Food Pantry; the supplies included fresh produce, dairy products and eggs for families struggling with the COVID pandemic. These were drive-thru, no-contact events.



Plymouth, IN — During their August chapter meeting, SOAR members of District 7 Chapter 30-18 go “incognito” (wearing a mask) to write postcards to USW members and retirees during the pandemic, reminding the recipients to check their registration status and to register to vote, if needed. This action was performed in conjunction with the USW’s Member-to-Member “Our Union, Our Voice” postcard campaign.



WHICH CANDIDATE

Will Stand Up to the Mercantilist Government of China?

By Jeff Bonior

The Presidential election is just weeks away and we at the Alliance for American Manufacturing are closely monitoring the trade and manufacturing policies put forth by both President Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden.

New ideas and strategies that will return a healthy manufacturing industry to the United States and a fair trade policy that helps our nation's economy by putting more Americans back to work are what we look for in an effective presidential candidate.

As a non-partisan institution, AAM will not endorse a candidate but we aim to decipher what policy changes will be most beneficial to American workers and manufacturers.

There are many ideological differences between the Republican president and Democratic challenger but the one area that both candidates and AAM can agree on is the desperate need to deal with the mercantilist government of China.

Millions of manufacturing jobs have been offshored to China since 2001 leaving many of America's cities hallowed out with the loss of their well-paying factory jobs. In 2016, Trump campaigned on bringing major manufacturing back to the United States, a strategy that arguably won him the presidency as he was able to win the critical manufacturing states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

After his election, Trump began to get tough on China, but many of his solutions to our trade imbalance with China

was pure rhetoric. He deserves credit for bringing China to the table on trade but his "Phase 1" trade deal is completely inadequate. It does nothing to tackle the most critical issues with China like the communist country's state-owned enterprises, industrial subsidies, overcapacity, predatory investments and trade enforcement mechanisms.

Manufacturing took an additional hit with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and although it has shown some slight signs of recovery, factories have lost 750,000 jobs in the past six months and manufacturing is down 733,000 jobs since July 2019.

Former Vice President Biden also points to China and its aggressive maneuvers to stifle American companies and workers by playing an unfair trade game.

Biden's solution is his plan called "Build Back Better," which deals with infrastructure investment and jobs, clean energy, a healthy workforce and racial equality. Infrastructure and clean energy innovation will prompt new investments to be made right here in America and not outsourced to China where labor is cheap and product quality is unreliable.

Biden said the Trump administration doubled the rate of offshore federal contracting during its first 18 months, spending \$3 billion of American's tax dollars on foreign investments in steel when this money could have gone to America's steelmakers.

Biden proposes that during the first four years of his presidency, the federal

government will spend \$400 billion on manufacturing and \$300 billion on research and development. The goal is to create five million new jobs (with an emphasis on union jobs) in addition to helping restore jobs lost because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two presidential candidates — despite the rhetoric and vitriol — know that dealing with China's unfair trade practices is a major component of getting America's economy back on track. They may have vastly different ideas on how to deal with the communist nation's aggressive attacks on America's manufacturers, but their goal is the same.

We can only successfully do business with China if it operates as a free-market economy with a level playing field. American companies cannot compete with those manufacturers in China that are owned or heavily subsidized by the Chinese government.

All SOAR brothers and sisters are encouraged to vote on Tuesday, Nov. 3. If you are elderly and cannot make it to your polling place because of COVID-19 health worries, be sure to request an absentee or mail-in ballot which you should return as soon as possible.

Remember that whichever candidate you choose to occupy the White House for the next four years, we are counting on that man to tackle China's mercantile economy with a firm hand and facilitate a Made in America movement the likes of which we haven't seen in 50 years.

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



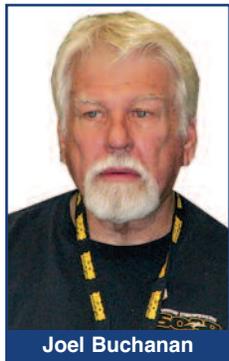
As Un-American As You Can Get

By Tom Conway
USW International President

Joel Buchanan's stomach turned when he watched poll workers deny ballots to Latinx voters ostensibly because the names and addresses on their driver's licenses didn't match those on election records.

And his blood boiled when election officials closed polling stations in poor neighborhoods, deliberately disenfranchising citizens unable to travel to other communities to cast their ballots.

"It's ugly, and as un-American as you can get," the retired Steelworker and Navy veteran said of the voter



Joel Buchanan

suppression he's observed as a campaign activist and poll watcher in various states.

Although dismayed by the duplicity he witnessed during two decades of political

activism, Buchanan never expected to see an American president openly try to steal an election by disenfranchising millions of voters.

But that's what's happening. Donald Trump's repeated attempts to tear down the U.S. Postal Service and cast doubt on the legitimacy of mail-in ballots are nothing but a desperate attempt to undermine American democracy.

"We're talking about an assault on our rights and our form of government," noted Buchanan, a longtime member of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 2102, who first got involved in politics because local elected officials failed to support union members during a 1997 steel mill strike in his hometown of Pueblo, Colo.

"When a president tries to manipulate the post office to benefit himself in an election, what's going to happen if

he wins that election?" Buchanan asked. "What's the next step? These are scary times."

Trump and his new, hand-picked postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, dismantled critically important mail-sorting machines, banned postal worker overtime, reduced hours at some post offices and eliminated trips to intentionally delay the delivery of mail-in ballots beyond election deadlines.

That would disenfranchise millions of Americans who want to vote by mail this year because they fear contracting COVID-19 at the polls.

Amid a ferocious public backlash and threats of lawsuits from more than 20 states, DeJoy this week agreed to suspend the changes.

But the danger of Trump suppressing votes during a crucial election remains very real.

There's no guarantee that DeJoy will return postal operations to normal levels, as he promised to do, and the Trump toady and big Republican donor continues to hobble the mail in other ways.

Although he has no experience at the postal service, DeJoy fired or reassigned nearly two dozen seasoned executives who intimately understood the agency and knew how to ensure it operated at peak levels during the election season.

Attacking the postal service directly isn't Trump's only front in his war against mail-in ballots. His campaign already sued Pennsylvania and all 67 of its counties, for example, to keep voters from depositing mail ballots in convenient drop boxes.

Trump repeatedly claims without so much as a shred of evidence that a surge in mail-in votes will lead to widespread fraud favoring his opponent, Joe Biden.

"It's all just crap," Buchanan said, noting Colorado has one of the most voter-friendly, equitable voting systems in the nation—thanks to the mail.

Colorado is one of the few states that not only mails ballots to all voters but encourages residents to return them the same way.

If they prefer, citizens can still cast their ballots at polling places or deposit them in secure boxes, similar to the ones in Pennsylvania that Trump wants to eliminate. But many Colorado residents simply drop them in the mail.

"Most people, Republicans and Democrats, like the system we have here," said Buchanan, vice president of Chapter 38-3 of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) and District 12 representative to the group's executive board.

Members of both parties win elections in Colorado, he added, clearly demonstrating that the system works for Republicans and Democrats alike.

If the system is tilted toward anyone, it's the voters.

Universal mail-in balloting provides equal convenience to all citizens, no matter where they live or how busy their Election Day schedules.

Mail-in balloting prevents election officials from questioning voters' legitimacy and disenfranchising them on the spot, as Buchanan observed four years ago at a polling place where one of the elections officials had the audacity to display a Trump hat right on his desk.

And people voting in the privacy of their homes face no intimidation from overzealous campaign workers thronging the doors at polling places or activists who stage noisy rallies nearby.

"When somebody's 75 years old and drives up and sees that happening, they just turn around and leave," Buchanan said.

Because of the convenience of mail-in voting, Colorado has one of the nation's highest turnout rates.

Although Trump claims mail-in ballots invite fraud, the opposite is true. In Colorado, candidates may appoint watchers to observe election officials as they check voters' signatures on



ballot envelopes against signatures already on file. If signatures appear not to match, the unopened ballot receives further review.

Foreign governments cannot hack mail-in ballots, as they did some electronic voting systems four years ago, and the post office has its own police

force, the Postal Inspection Service, to guard against mail fraud.

Last spring, one of Colorado's county elections officials invited presidential candidates to visit his office to see how mail-in ballots are counted and learn about the safeguards ensuring the integrity of the delivery and tabulation systems.

Trump never took him up on his offer.

Instead of working to improve election security, an issue he claims is a top concern, Trump continues to assail the legitimacy of mail-in ballots and use the president's bully pulpit to undermine public confidence in the election system.

And instead of encouraging higher turnout to ensure as many Americans as possible have their voices heard at a pivotal time in the nation's history, Trump refuses to say whether he'll accept the outcome of the Nov. 3 vote.

Buchanan worries that Trump's attacks on the system will lead to yet another form of suppression—Americans refusing to cast ballots because they lose faith in the election process or fear their votes will go uncounted.

He just hopes enough voters understand that the real threat to democracy comes not from fraudulent voting but a president pulling every conceivable trick to suppress votes and usurp the people's will.

"That's exactly what this is all about," he said. "I just never thought I'd see this kind of situation in this country."

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS *Projected to Increase in 2021*

Social Security's annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is an increase in the benefit amount people receive each month. By law, the monthly Social Security and SSI federal benefit rate increases when there is a rise in the cost of living. The government measures changes in the cost of living through the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

The CPI-W rises when prices increase, making your cost of living go up. This means prices for goods and services, on average, are a little more expensive. The COLA helps to offset these costs. Throughout much of 2020, there's been concern that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic would mean seniors wouldn't get an increase in their Social Security checks come 2021.¹

Unfortunately, Social Security recipients have gotten used to not getting much of a raise from Social Security. Since 2010, retirees have had to deal with three years in which they got no COLA at all, and six more when the COLA was 2% or less. Only twice did they get more sizable boosts—and even then, COLAs of 2.8% and 3.6% aren't exactly hitting the lottery.¹

This publication of *SOAR in Action* goes to press one month before the Social Security's COLA will be determined. By the time this issue reaches your mailbox, Social Security will have announced the COLA, if any, for 2021.

However, the Kiplinger Letter is forecasting a 1.2% increase in the 2021 COLA.⁴

No matter where the 2021's COLA ends up exactly, it'll have only a marginal impact on benefits. Earlier this year, Social Security reported that its average benefit for retirees was \$1,503 per month. A 1.2% COLA would add \$216 per year to what people get from Social Security.¹



Unfortunately, CPI-W continues to do a relatively poor job of considering the costs that matter most to seniors. This means there's a really good chance those who depend the most on Social Security will continue to see the purchasing power of their income decline over time.²

An analysis from The Senior Citizens League found that the purchasing power of Social Security dollars has declined by a whopping 34 percent since the year 2000.² The reason? The CPI-W is a measure that takes into account the spending habits of urban and clerical workers. These are mostly folks who are of working age and don't have the same spending habits as seniors. Thusly, medical care and housing, which make up a substantive portion of expenditures for seniors, are given less weighting in the CPI-W in favor of education, apparel, and transportation expenses, which matter less to seniors.³

Currently, the Social Security Administration pays out benefits to nearly 69 million Americans.



Sources:

www.socialsecurity.gov

¹<https://www.fool.com/retirement/2020/08/16/social-securitys-2021-cola-bigger-than-2020/>

²<https://www.fool.com/retirement/2018/09/30/the-most-important-social-security-date-of-the-yea.aspx>

³<https://www.upi.com/Study-Social-Security-buying-power-down-34-since-2000/6091529597919/>

⁴<https://www.kiplinger.com/retirement/social-security/601286/2021-cola-a-raise-likely-for-social-security-recipients-after-all>



SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurrin, SOAR Legislative Director *

Normally, SOAR Eyes on Washington provides you an update on pending legislation. However, there are two actions happening behind the scenes, that until recently, were going unnoticed. Both issues are extremely important because they will have a major impact on Social Security benefits for current and future retirees. Proposals such as these are examples of the many reasons why our Union



Jay McMurrin

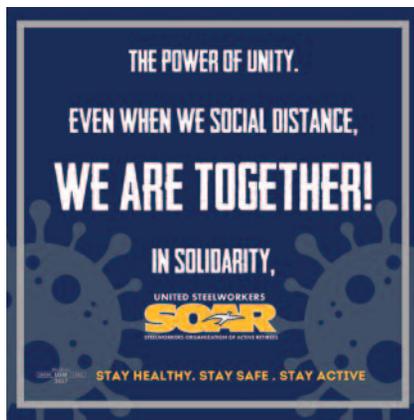
encourages us to vote for Labor-endorsed candidates. Social Security is truly under attack! But, we can stop the threat of losing our retiree benefits by electing the right people!

The first action that will have a major impact on Social Security is an executive order that President Trump signed in late August. The order creates a payroll tax “holiday” for workers. The payroll tax is 12.4% tax, which 6.2% is paid by the worker and an additional 6.2% paid by the

employer. The money is deposited into the Social Security Trust Fund and is used to pay monthly benefits for seniors, widowed spouses, dependent children, and the disabled. The order stipulates that the tax “holiday” is in effect until the end of 2020. At that point workers are required to pay the taxes they were relieved of. To accomplish that, the government will tax individuals at a 12.4% rate, or double their typical deduction. Participating in the tax “holiday” is voluntary and because of the payback requirements, it is not known how many workers will take advantage of Trump’s plan.

That “holiday” tax break may sound pretty painless. But, it is what Trump said following the issuing of the order. He promised, “If victorious on November 3rd, I plan to forgive these taxes (the taxes owed from the tax holiday) and make permanent cuts to the payroll tax. I am going to make them

all permanent.” If Trump is reelected and makes good on his promise to make the payroll tax cuts permanent, according to Social Security actuaries the fund will run out in 2023 and folks receiving disability benefits will be impacted even sooner. To be clear,



no benefits would be paid out until the President and Congress acted to replace full-funding. Some advocate replacing the revenue with money from the general fund. However, the country is \$22 trillion in debt, there is no money in the general fund.

The second action to keep a SOAR eye on is a scheme introduced in the Senate by Mitt Romney (R-UT). Under the Romney plan Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid reform will be treated much like a free trade agreement, meaning it will be “Fast Tracked” through Congress. Romney calls for each legislative chamber to appoint members to serve on a committee that will be charged with writing legislation to address one of those programs. Once the committee agreed on a resolution and drafted it into bill, the language will be sent to the full House and Senate for an immediate vote on the measure. There will be no debate, no hearings to allow citizen or expert testimony, no amendments and no changes. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) the Senate Majority Leader has stated that he supports the Romney proposal and will not act on reform unless fast track is approved.

Fast Track for trade agreements hasn’t worked because the people most impacted by the trade pacts are shut out of the process. Now, Congress wants to do the same thing with vital safety nets. Without input from workers and experts, Social Security and Medicare will probably end up being what our trade policies have become— a bonanza for Wall Street!

On the other side, Joe Biden has a plan not just to save Social Security; but, to actually improve it. Currently, wages in the United States are taxed on all earnings up to \$137,000 annually. All earnings over that amount are tax-free. Under the Biden plan, that cap will remain in place. However, for all earnings over 400,000 annually, the 6.2 tax will apply. Doing that would not only extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, it would also allow Social Security to increase benefits for current recipients.

Fortunately, the two actions we have been discussing likely won’t be acted on until after the election. That gives us time to stop them before they are put into action; we can do that by casting our votes for Union-endorsed candidates. **We must save Social Security.**

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

* Jay McMurrin also serves as SOAR Executive Board Member, District 2.



Election Day is Upon Us, and the Biden-Harris Ticket Needs Your Support

By Robert Roach, Jr.

Election Day is just around the corner, and every senior now needs to have an advance plan for how they will vote, finalize that plan and execute it.

The Alliance for Retired Americans has endorsed Joe Biden for President. At the Democratic National Convention, we heard from a wide cross section of bipartisan supporters why Joe Biden is the right leader to bring us out of this pandemic.

I know Joe and I know retirees can count on him to look out for seniors' best interests. We can trust him. With him as our 46th President and Sen. Kamala Harris as Vice President, retirees will know they have leaders who will strengthen and expand our earned Social Security and Medicare benefits. They will ensure that millionaires pay their fair share into the Social Security system so that it remains solvent.

Vice President Biden and Sen. Harris both have strong pro-retiree records. As a senator Joe Biden earned a 96% lifetime pro-retiree score in the Alliance's annual Congressional Voting Record. Senator Harris has earned a 100% lifetime pro-retiree score.

They will defend workers' and retirees' defined benefit pension plans and the right to retire with dignity after a lifetime of hard work. They will also ensure that Medicare negotiates lower drug prices, and that medicines and vaccines developed with taxpayer dollars will be affordable for all.

Voting is more complicated this year and is likely to require more steps than you are used to. First, double and even triple check that you are still registered to vote at your current address.

Some states have purged their voter rolls and you need to make sure you are still registered.

You can do this online at www.vote.org, a non-partisan, trusted website. This site also offers important details about the latest changes to laws in your state, including signature, witness and ID requirements.



Once you confirm that you are registered, you can use vote.org to find out how you can vote in your community. Due to the pandemic, many states have shifted requirements and polling locations — and if you intend to vote early or by mail, you must pay close attention to the deadlines.

The U.S. Postal Service says that to ensure a mail ballot will be counted, you must request it AT LEAST two weeks before Election Day. A number of states offer drop boxes to ensure that postal delays do not become a problem. Vote early, and vote by mail or drop box if you can, so that you stay safe during the pandemic. And encourage your friends to do the same.

Please take a minute now to check that you are registered by going to www.vote.org and entering your name and address.

And don't forget about the rest of the races in your community. From the U.S. Senate to state and local elections, retirees must make their voices heard. .

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.

Don't Miss this IMPORTANT DEADLINE!

Open Enrollment season for all Medicare enrollees runs through December 7.

Have you looked at your Medicare Part D and Advantage plans to ensure they still work for you? Each year, both Medicare Advantage and Part D plans make changes to their benefits, cost-sharing, provider networks and monthly premiums. That means the plan that best served you in 2020 may not be the best plan for you next year.

Given that out-of-pocket health care costs may consume 25% or more of a Social Security check, it's especially important that beneficiaries take the time to ensure last year's plans still meet their needs.

New! Changes coming to Medicare in 2021 include Telehealth, other virtual services, and more.

If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can change to a different plan one time during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, between January 1- March 31 each year. For more information on joining, dropping, and switching plans, visit Medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE. Also, the link to the 2021 Medicare and You Handbook follows: https://www.medicare.gov/sites/default/files/2020-09/10050-Medicare-and-You_0.pdf





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