

# USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 16/1

A Powerful Voice for Workers



UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**SOAR**  
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

**WELCOMES BIDEN ADMINISTRATION**



Derivative of Saul Loeb/Pool Photo via AP

## Time Marches On



**BILL PIENTA**  
SOAR President

**As time marches on and we move into 2021, I would like to remind everyone that time does not stand still, and we should take time to enjoy life and be grateful for what we have.**

I must start with being grateful for my time with Harry Hynd, SOAR VP Emeritus, who recently passed. I was fortunate to have called him a friend and to work alongside him to fight for worker and retirees' rights. Harry never thought of himself as being too important to roll his sleeves up and lend a hand to anyone who needed it. Many people had their life improved by things that Harry did, and his love for our Union could not be equaled.

At times the nostalgia makes us believe things were better "back then." Well, maybe they were and maybe not. I did a little research and found the following examples. You be the judge if we were better off then or now.

In 1980 there were 7,405 fatalities in private industry; in 2019, there were 5,333 fatalities in private industry.

The percentage of workers in the private sector who have only a defined-benefit pension plan is 4%, down from 60% in the early '80s.

About 14% of companies offer a combination of both defined-benefit and 401k plans.

Only 85% of full-time private industry workers have access to employer-provided health coverage. 15% have no ability to contribute or purchase health care from their employer.

For 2021, Social Security tax is withheld from the first \$142,800 of earnings; in 1980, Social Security tax was withheld from the first \$25,900 of earnings. (In 1966, when I started in the mill, the tax was withheld from the first \$6,600 of earnings, and I, for one, did not earn \$6,600 that year.)

Social Security has provided cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increases to the benefit for many years. In 1980 recipients received a 14.3% COLA increase. In 2020 that COLA increase was 1.3%. The average Social Security benefit received in 1980 was \$321. In 2020 the average benefit received was \$1,504.

I do not know if things were better in the old days, but I do believe that I was better off belonging to a union and received union wages and benefits that have allowed me to enjoy my years in retirement.

Hopefully, soon we will be able to renew our activism and become more involved in issues that impact SOAR and our Union. Stay safe and healthy.

## SOARing Into a New Year



**JULIE STEIN**  
SOAR Director

**Well, it is 2021, and like most Americans I had a significantly scaled-back holiday season compared to what I'm used to.**

While the holidays were uncharacteristically low-key, that certainly doesn't mean nothing happened since our last publication.

We have surpassed the harrowing reality of more than 400,000 Americans dying from COVID-19. Fortunately, vaccinations are finally in circulation and millions of Americans have already been inoculated.

On January 5, Georgians voted in a highly-contested runoff election that flipped the United States Senate to a narrow pro-union majority after the victories of Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock. Both candidates were endorsed by the USW.

On January 7, President-elect Joe Biden announced he will nominate Marty Walsh to be the next Secretary of Labor. If appointed, Walsh would be the first union member in nearly 40 years to hold the position. Walsh is currently the Mayor of Boston, was a proud, card-carrying member of

the Laborers International Union (LIUNA) and headed the Boston Building and Construction Trades Council.

After the announcement, Walsh said, "Working people, labor unions, and those fighting every day for their shot at the middle class are the backbone of our economy and of this country. As Secretary of Labor, I'll work just as hard for you as you do for your families and livelihoods. You have my word."

Lastly, Congress certified the results of the November 2020 election in spite of an unprecedented and violent attack by Trump-loyalists on the U.S. Capitol leaving at least six people dead. I don't know when I'll be able to put my sense of disbelief about it all into words. Right now, it just feels surreal and incomprehensible.

I believe it goes without saying that in the wake of the last four years America is ripe for change and healing. Countless Americans are suffering, and our only way out of this is together.

Much needs to be accomplished, and without delay. Stay tuned because there is going to be plenty of work ahead.

***Wishing you all peace, safety and solidarity in the early months of this new year.***

# USW and SOAR

## WELCOME BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

*USW International President Tom Conway issued the following statement in response to Joe Biden's inauguration:*

“The USW and SOAR congratulate Joe Biden on January 20, 2021, becoming the 46th president of the United States and welcomes his vision and experience as our country faces unparalleled challenges.

“From containing the pandemic to revitalizing our flailing economy, it's essential that we have strong, steady leadership that prioritizes working people.

“The new administration is extremely qualified to address these crises. President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris understand that all workers deserve fair wages, safe working conditions and a secure retirement, and they've assembled a cabinet that has proven that they're eager to work to create good, family-sustaining jobs and healthy, vibrant communities.

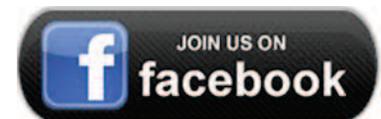
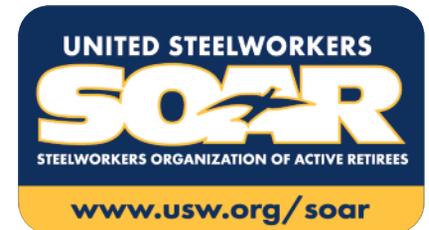
“Central to the success of this revitalization effort is a clear focus on building back our country's crumbling infrastructure. Aggressive investment in a modernized infrastructure will not only help rebuild our domestic supply chains and create badly needed manufacturing jobs now, but will also ensure long-term sustainable economic recovery for generations to come.

“President Biden has long been a friend of our union and of all working people. The USW is excited to work with his administration as together we put our country back on the path toward health and widespread economic opportunity.”

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**SOAR**  
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



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**SOAR in ACTION**

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**Willie Lee Moore**  
1928-2020

## WILLIE MOORE

### *Past District 1 SOAR Executive Board Member*

Willie Moore, a longtime Union activist and former SOAR Executive Board member passed away on November 13, 2020, just two days before his 92nd birthday.

Willie was born in Demopolis, Alabama, and as a young man moved to Canton, Ohio seeking greater opportunities. Willie's

union career began in 1948 when he was hired on at Republic Steel as a member of the United Steelworkers of America. One year later, he joined the United States Navy Reserve and served as an Engineman for 15 years, until 1964. Willie was active in his local union and had served as past Vice President of USWA Local 1200.

After working 43 years in the same plant as a Steel Inspector (Finishing), Willie retired from Republic Steel

in March 1990 and he joined SOAR that same year, becoming a member of SOAR Chapter 27-1. Willie quickly became an officer of his chapter and he served for many years as president until shortly before his passing.

Willie was elected to the SOAR Executive Board in 2002 to represent the members of USW District 1. Willie was re-elected in 2005, 2008, and 2011, and he served in that position until 2014.

USW Vice President David McCall and former District 1 Director described Willie, "as a great person, a kind and gentle man, but could speak with conviction and authority, and he certainly loved our union." Willie's leadership and ability to communicate with retirees during the LTV and Republic bankruptcies was instrumental in the union's efforts to establish credibility and support for the VEBA that re-established healthcare for the retirees. He will be sorely missed.



**John B. Patrick**  
1949 - 2020

## JOHN PATRICK

### *Past District 13 SOAR Executive Board Member*

John Patrick, a longtime Union activist, retired Texas AFL-CIO President and former SOAR Executive Board member passed away on October 28, 2020, at the age of 71.

Our union lost a great friend and fierce advocate for all working people. John began his union career in 1972 as a member of

the International Association of Machinists while employed with Cameron Iron Works in Houston, Texas. He then became a member of the USW in 1977 while employed with Reynolds (Aluminum) Metals where he was elected local union president. (1984-1996)

John served the USW in a variety of roles, including more than five years as Assistant to the District 13 Director. He was known for his skill in bargaining tough contracts, his tenacity in pursuing arbitration, and his innovative approach to organizing.

A U.S. Army veteran, John was also active in the Texas AFL-CIO. As its president, he was deeply committed to

representing every working person in the state, advocating for civil rights, better treatment for low-wage workers and greater bargaining power for all.

Texas AFL-CIO President Rick Levy, respectfully regarded John "as a powerful leader because he knew power grows when you share it with others. Countless union leaders and activists across Texas and beyond know they wouldn't be where they are today without the mentoring and friendship of John Patrick."

John also was an exceptional leader advocating for union workers through Texas politics as he served for many years on the Democratic National Committee.

Even in his retirement, John kept fighting for working people and was appointed to the SOAR Executive Board in April 2018, to represent the members of USW District 13, serving in that position until his resignation in 2019, due to health reasons.

John dedicated his life to our movement. He will be greatly missed. In addition to his wife Linda, John leaves behind two sons, John "Brent" Jr. and Cooper.

*May they rest as they served our*



Henry "Harry" Hynd  
1933-2020

## HARRY HYND

*Retired Director and SOAR  
Vice President Emeritus*

Harry Hynd, a longtime Union and SOAR Activist, passed away on December 29, 2020, at the age of 87.

Harry's union career began in 1951, in the Scottish coal mines with his early membership in the National Union of Mineworkers where he was a steward. He immigrated to Canada in 1957. In 1958 he was hired on at

Stelco in Hamilton where he became an active member of Local 1005 as plant grievance chairperson. In 1971, he joined the Steelworkers staff, where he served members in Hamilton, the Niagara Peninsula and Toronto.

Harry served as the Assistant to the District 6 Director, Leo Gerard, and in 1989 then-President Lynn Williams assigned Harry to serve as an interim Director of District 3 after Len Stevens became ill. Harry became District 6 Director in 1991, when Leo became Canadian National Director.

Harry's reputation was always as a skilled negotiator and troubleshooter, skills that added to his leadership throughout his years as director. Following his 1991 appointment, he was elected to a full term in 1993 and again in 1997. He retired at the end of that term in March 2002.

Throughout his career in the labor movement, education was always a priority for Harry. He was an instructor in the Steelworkers' education program for many years. He served on the Mohawk College Board of Governors, was a member of the Ontario Federation of Labour's Education Committee, and was the Education Coordinator for Steelworkers District 6 for six years prior to his appointment as Director. As a retiree, Harry was often called on to teach, passing his skills on to another generation of Steelworkers.

Harry continued to serve the Union as SOAR Vice President from 2005 until 2019, when he was appointed SOAR Vice President Emeritus for his contributions to SOAR and his many years of service to our Union.

Throughout his life, Harry was an active and proud New Democrat. No matter the challenges he faced, Harry was always a trade unionist of great character and integrity, a true gentleman.

Harry's family described him as "a tireless worker for a cause he believed in. He fought the good fight, firm in his beliefs that he was on the just side of every battle."

He will be greatly missed. In addition to his wife Margaret, Harry leaves behind two daughters and three granddaughters.



## CHAPTER 38-3 GIVES BACK



Pueblo, CO - SOAR Chapter 38-3 Executive Board members, Al Becco, Joel Buchanan and Dorothy Butcher (not shown, Betty Spinuzzi) on a very cold and windy winter day collected 250 pairs of socks, many gloves and knitted hats, along with 60 Christmas Stockings filled with goodies donated by USW Local 2102, in the first ever "SOAR Drive-Thru Sock Donation." The items were donated to the Pueblo Cooperative Care and Share organization and will be distributed to Pueblo citizens that can use a little help in these tough times. Thanks to all who helped and donated!

# KEEP SAFE, WEAR A MASK

## Protect seniors and long-term care residents from COVID-19

Lena Sutton  
SOAR Executive Board Member  
District 6

### COVID-19 is the greatest health concern across Canada and throughout the world.

COVID-19 cases continue to rise dramatically in Canada. As of Jan. 5, 2021, there were 614,552 cases nationally, including 197,360 in the province of Ontario. New COVID cases in Ontario reached a record of 3,800 in a single day in the first week of January as the total case count in the province surpassed 200,000 and the death toll approached 5,000. On Jan. 5 alone, 51 new deaths were confirmed, of which 22 were long-term care residents.

Seniors continue to be hardest-hit by COVID-19, especially in long-term care and retirement homes. As of early January, more than 2,150 residents had died, with that number increasing daily.

The Ontario Health Coalition reported that from Sept. 1 to Dec. 15, 2020, 4,594 residents and staff had

been infected in Ontario and more than 700 residents died during that time.

While families, health-care workers and communities are struggling to support each other, corporate owners of long-term care homes in Canada continue to increase their profits, even as these for-profit facilities have had higher rates of infections and deaths than not-for-profit and publicly operated homes.

In January, approximately 226 long-term care homes in Ontario were experiencing high infection rates and deaths. The majority of them were for-profit homes. They are known to have too many low-wage, part-time workers who are forced to work in multiple homes to earn a living. They have shortages of personal protection equipment and inadequate staffing and levels of care for residents.

Staff training is often lacking in these for-profit homes. They often fail to comply with basic government requirements for standards of care.

These problems exist in Ontario while Premier Doug Ford's Conservative government allows these corporations, their board members and CEOs — many of them Conservative supporters — to collect large salaries and pay out huge dividends to shareholders.

These for-profit homes in Ontario fall under Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA), a self-regulated industry group created by a previous Conservative government. This authority has no desire to force care homes to clean up their act or have their licences revoked.

The situation at some for-profit long-term care homes has been so bad that the federal government brought in military staff to help deal with the situation. Conditions were so horrible that some military staff needed counselling for PTSD after completing their tour. The military also produced reports outlining the horrific conditions in the homes and condemning the lack of provincial government oversight.

The Ford government has not levied fines or revoked licenses of these homes, even when the most egregious neglect and incompetence is revealed. There has been no improvement in quality of management and infection control in homes. Infection control cannot happen without proper staffing and care. In fact, homes with abysmal records have been awarded additional funds from the province for new beds and expansions.

For-profit homes like the Chartwell Residence in Hamilton have high rates of infection and death among residents and staff. The Ford government has done nothing for workers or residents. Since 2003, former Ontario Premier Mike Harris has held the position of part-time Chair of the Board of



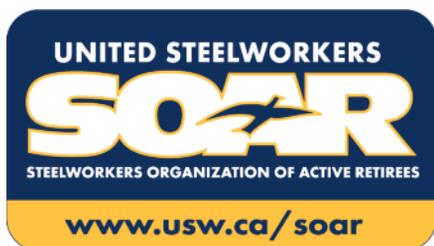
During a break in their meetings last year, members of the District 6 Health Care Council visited Conservative MPP Lisa MacLeod's office, Minister for the Status of Women at the time, to press for improvements to long-term care.

Chartwell Residences, collecting a salary of \$237,000 year plus \$7 million in stocks. Harris and his wife also operate Nurse Next Door, a private, for-profit provider of home care services to seniors and others.

Premier Ford promised his government would make changes to protect long-term care residents and staff from COVID-19. The staff and residents are still waiting. Instead, Ford and his Conservative government passed Bill 218 which indemnifies the long-term care industry from liability for negligence in its handling of the spread of COVID-19. This takes away the families' and workers' rights to sue facility owners while protecting for-profit operators with close ties to the Conservative government. Former Conservative premiers and staff sit on the boards of these for-profit operators as well as working as lobbyists for the industry.

The Ford government adds insult to injury to families, staff and residents of those homes by awarding the Order of Ontario to former Conservative premiers Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, the latter a member of the board of Central Park Lodges long-term care. This honour is supposed to be reserved for Ontario's finest citizens, whose contributions have shaped and continue to shape the province for the better.

We need long-term care homes that are non-profit, with proper management, staffing and regulations ensuring quality care for residents. We need to elect New Democratic Party members in our federal and provincial governments who will represent workers, families, seniors, retirees and those most vulnerable in our society instead of CEOs and shareholders who are motivated by greed.



## SOAR Members Get Active in Western Canada Elections



John Horgan with a fab group of USW members. This photo was taken during the 2017 election when we could still get together in person.

### With strong USW support, Premier John Horgan's New Democratic Party (NDP) achieved a resounding victory in the British Columbia (B.C.) election on October 24, 2020.

The minority NDP government in B.C. came out of the election with 57 seats – up from 41 – to form a majority government. The Liberals were down 13 seats, winning only 28, while the Greens lost one seat to end up with two. Five Steelworkers won their seats – Harry Bains, Raj Chouhan, Jagrup Brar, Katrine Conroy and Doug Routley.

In the constituency of Langley East, where the Local 2009 hall is located, the NDP returned a member for the first time in over 20 years. SOAR Chapter 3-14 members Fred Girling, Michelle Laurie and Jeff Laurie were all involved in the Langley East campaign by assisting in polls on election day and helping count mail-in ballots. All three serve on the Langley East NDP executive as president, treasurer and secretary, respectively.

In the Saskatchewan election held on October 26, the NDP maintained its official opposition status with 13 seats, while the ruling Saskatchewan Party was returned to power. USW member Jennifer Bowes from Local 5917 won her seat in Saskatoon University. USW members Malik Draz (Local 2014) and Kelly Hardy (Local 9841) also ran but were not elected.

Jennifer Bowes from Local 5917 (left) along with volunteers pose for a photo in front of her vehicle while campaigning before the Oct 26 election.



# Why We Demand Public Medicare in Canada

By Bob Sutton  
Secretary SOAR Chapter 10  
Hamilton, Ontario

**On December 29, I listened to U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders remark that, “There are 90 million Americans who are either underinsured or have no health insurance.” I found this appalling. It reminded me of a speaker from Harvard University I heard at a conference in Washington, D.C., many years ago (she was originally from Canada) who stated, “After living in the United States for over 20 years and experiencing their health care system, I now know why they call it the home of the brave.”**

For most Canadians our greatest fear is that right-wing governments will eventually privatize our treasured health care system for the benefit of wealthy, for-profit health care providers.

I would like to describe my personal experiences and those of my friend Wayne with our not-for-profit system to show why we must defend public health care in Canada.

Wayne and I went to high school together, took the same apprenticeship program and worked together for over 30 years at the same Stelco steel mill. We socialized, vacationed and took extended motorcycle trips together.

Six years ago, Wayne was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Unfortunately, he didn't go for early tests and ignored some of the signs until it had progressed into his bones.

For almost two years Wayne went through chemotherapy and other procedures at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton. Later he required blood transfusions and numerous tests. I took him to almost all of his appointments.

During one transfusion (three units of blood and about seven hours), Wayne asked me if there was some place I would rather be. At first, I said, “I am exactly where I want to be.” On further thought, I said, “Yes, I would rather you and I be riding our motorcycles through the hills of Vermont and New Hampshire on our way to the east coast.”

Wayne had asked me if I would sit with him for his medical consultations, since I might ask questions he didn't think of and better remember what the doctor said.

At one consultation, Wayne had been having headaches and he asked if his cancer might have spread to his brain.

The doctor asked if Wayne was willing to have an MRI scan. Wayne expected it would be weeks away, but the doctor said, “How about this Friday?” The point is, Wayne knew, as well as the doctor and me, that he was dying of cancer and it was only a matter of time, but still the doctor and the health care system was not giving up on him.

The cost of all of these treatments was 100% covered by our public health care system.

In May of 2020, I had some minor discomfort in my chest, under my right arm. I called my family doctor. This was during the first lockdown due to COVID-19. My doctor suggested I not dally around and go to the emergency department at Hamilton General Hospital. Thankfully, I heeded her advice.

After a COVID screening I was directed to the hospital's ICU. During the next few hours, I was given an EKG, CT scan, X-rays and numerous other tests – I'm not even sure what they all were. The diagnosis was that I had a blood clot in my lung and an irregular heartbeat. I was given blood thinners and after a long discussion was allowed to go home since I was otherwise healthy.

When my family doctor saw the test results, she called me and said she was arranging for an MRI scan, since she had spotted a possible crushed vertebrae.

In early June, my doctor scheduled an appointment with a cardiologist, followed by another CAT scan on November 11 and a series of ultrasounds of my chest, and another consultation with the cardiologist.

Total cost to me? Nothing! My wife Lena dropped me off and picked me up, so I didn't even need to pay for parking.

I could give numerous other examples of our great health-care system and how I fear any movement towards a for-profit system. In Canada, everyone has medical coverage. No Canadian is denied health care.

I fail to understand how the United States, supposedly the richest country in the world, continues to deny health care to millions of its citizens. The only explanation I can see is the private insurance companies, doctors and private hospitals malign the benefits of public health care because they have something to gain from America's for-profit system. I think of how much they pay in advertising and the millions of dollars in political donations to maintain that system. Something to think about.



The Amsted Rail plant in Granite City laid off nearly 200 members of United Steelworkers Local 1063 in February 2020, citing a lack of orders for the steel castings, and closed the plant on November 23 citing complications from the COVID-19 pandemic.



## UNION, COMMUNITY PITCH IN FOR LAID-OFF LOCAL 1063 MEMBERS AT AMSTED RAIL

By Robert Kelly, Correspondent  
St. Louis/Southern Illinois Labor Tribune

**Granite City, IL** — Laid-off members of United Steelworkers Local 1063 expressed happiness recently with \$60 Schnucks gift cards provided by their union to help them with groceries over the holidays

USW Local 1063 raised more than \$22,000 in just three weeks to bring that bit of holiday cheer to its members, many of whom have been laid off since January 2020, said union President Antonio Wellmaker.

Union members came to the union hall over two days just before Christmas to claim their gift cards. “We appreciate it,” said member Parrifh Sanders. “I need whatever help they can give me.”

### A Difficult Year, A Call for Help

Amsted Rail laid off nearly 200 members of Local 1063 in February of last year, citing a lack of orders for the steel castings, and closed the plant on Nov. 23 citing complications from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The shutdown affected more than 400 members of Steelworkers Local 1063, Machinist Locals 660, 688, and 313 and Electrical Workers Local 309.



Local 1063 President Antonio Wellmaker (left) and Terry Biggs, Labor liaison with the United Way, and also local union member of USW 1899, stand ready to help distribute \$60 Schnuck's gift cards to laid-off Local 1063 members who work at Amsted Rail in Granite City.

— Labor Tribune photo

With the additional layoffs coming just before the holidays, Wellmaker and Terry Biggs, Labor liaison with the United Way of Greater St. Louis, came up with the idea for the gift cards, which they thought would be better than trying to organize a direct holiday food give-away for Local 1063 members. But they had only three weeks to implement that plan.

Some 30 area businesses, other unions, organizations, including SOAR Chapter 34-2, and individuals, quickly answered the call for help, Wellmaker said. He and Biggs said they were overwhelmed by the generosity.

Schnucks added to the response by giving laid-off workers a five percent discount, in addition to the gift cards.

Wellmaker said Amsted was planning to recall about 240 workers early this year to restart limited production at the Granite City plant. “But there will still be over 200 workers laid off,” he said.



USW Local 1063 members (from left) LaGrant Dunn, Parrifh Sanders, Lavelle Cole, Ed Beck, and Local 1063 President Antonio Wellmaker show the \$60 Schnuck's gift cards members received at the union hall before Christmas. The workers are laid off at Amsted Rail in Granite City. Officers of Local 1063 distributed the gift cards to members laid off at the Amsted Rail plant in Granite City, Ill. — Labor Tribune photo



Tom Conway

# SEIZING the MOMENT

When COVID-19 forced the 66-bed Maryhill Manor into lockdown, a resolute Veronica Dixon and her colleagues realized they had to make a choice: band together or fall apart.

So they put in longer hours, shouldered extra duties and leaned on each other to keep the Niagara, Wis., nursing facility operating as the coronavirus swept through, sickening dozens of residents and staff members.

What saved Maryhill Manor also offers hope for a country convulsed by storms. Only by working together can Americans end the pandemic, create a more equitable society and build a just economic system.

Dixon, a cook at the nursing home and the financial secretary of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 3168, noted that COVID-19 exacerbated the inequality that mires millions

in poverty and tears at the nation's social fabric.

"How can you not come together and try to work it out?" she asked.

"The rich keep getting richer, and the poor keep getting poorer," observed Dixon, who's seen more people in Niagara struggle since a local paper mill shut down, eliminating hundreds of family-sustaining jobs, more than a decade ago. "There has to be something in between so people can live a decent life and not worry about how to pay their bills."

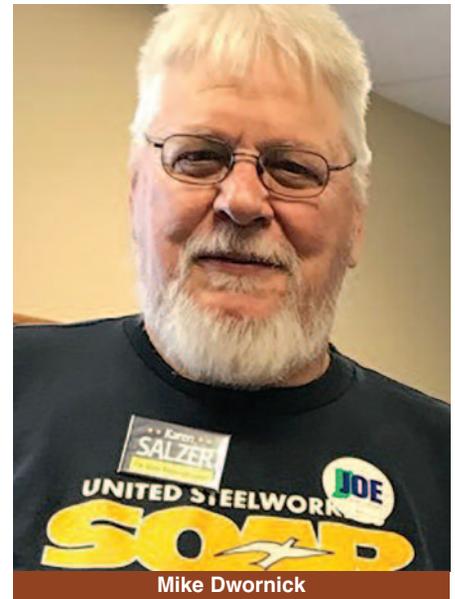
So many Americans see the nation at a crossroads that they came together in record numbers to elect

Joe Biden, charting a course for healing and progress.

Then, in runoff elections for U.S. Senate this month, Georgia voters propelled the nation yet another step along the path of change by electing Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, inclusive candidates committed to progress.

"You can't lie about the numbers," Dixon said of the historic election results. "People want change."

But it isn't enough for Americans to band together at the ballot box. It's just as important to



Mike Dwornick

rally behind the initiatives that build a fairer country, just as the solidarity of union workers yielded the 40-hour workweek, decent benefits and workplace safety in previous decades.

Right now, it's essential that every citizen pitch in to arrest a pandemic that's already stolen more than 400,000 lives and left the economy in tatters.

Scientists and researchers maintained a feverish pace during the months they spent developing the vaccines, and pharmaceutical manufacturing workers put in grueling hours producing millions of doses. USW members manufacture glass vials for the vaccines and special packaging to keep them safe during transport. Still others label the vaccines and ship them.

With the Biden administration pledging to oversee a speedier, better coordinated rollout, millions of ordinary Americans will soon be able to roll up their sleeves to protect themselves and their communities. Dixon





Getty Images

and her colleagues lined up when the vaccine reached Maryhill Manor, knowing the faster people are vaccinated, the more lives will be spared.

And after bringing COVID-19 under control, America can tend to the fragile health of its democracy and strive for a new, shared prosperity that will shore up the nation's foundation.

When Niagara's paper mill closed, a trucking company that did business with it disappeared not long after. Nothing ever replaced them. Dominating Niagara's economy today are low-wage and part-time positions that fail to cover basic expenses, let alone enable workers to save for the future.

"There should not be anybody trying to raise a family on \$7.25 an hour. That's crazy," Dixon said, referring to the poverty-level federal minimum wage that congressional Republicans left in place for more than a decade. "We have to make sure that, somehow, we get our share."

To create a just economy, Americans need to continue advocating for

legislation that will help workers organize and impose meaningful penalties on employers who illegally attempt to thwart union drives.

Working people helped push the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act through the House last year. Senate Republicans refused to consider it. But workers remain hungry for changes that will yield a more level playing field.

Organized workers command decent wages, affordable health care and a voice on the job. Because unions fight for equitable working conditions, they help to narrow racial and gender pay gaps. And because union members embrace social justice and understand the power of collective action, they often volunteer for service projects that uplift their communities.

"As a group, you're that much stronger," noted Mike Dwornik, an Indiana resident and a District 7 coordinator for the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

Because of union steel mill jobs,

Dwornik said, he earned a "pretty darn good" living as well as a stable retirement.

When the federal government sent him two pandemic stimulus checks — as it did millions of other Americans — he donated the money to charity.

Dwornik realized a lot of people needed the help more than he did. He particularly worries about friends whose retirements depend almost entirely on Social Security — and who get rattled every time they hear about the program potentially running out of money.

Now, Americans can leverage Biden's strong support of retirees and coalesce around a campaign to shore up Social Security and Medicare programs for generations to come.

"I know a lot of people don't want to get involved in politics. I understand that," Dwornik said. "But I'll tell you this: They have to know what's going on and act on the things that affect them.

"It doesn't take a lot to write a postcard or fire off an e-mail or even write a letter," he said. "They've got to get off their butts and do it. There's strength in numbers."

That's exactly what Dixon and her colleagues discovered at Maryhill Manor during the darkest days of the pandemic.

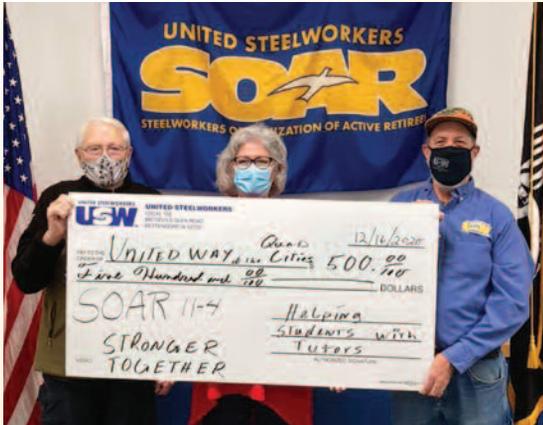
Their unflagging teamwork kept the virus out of the facility for months and then sustained them when patients and co-workers finally started to get sick.

"We held on, and we did a lot better than all the other nursing homes in the area," Dixon said.

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**President's Perspective Blog Post:**  
<https://www.usw.org/blog/2021/seizing-the-moment>

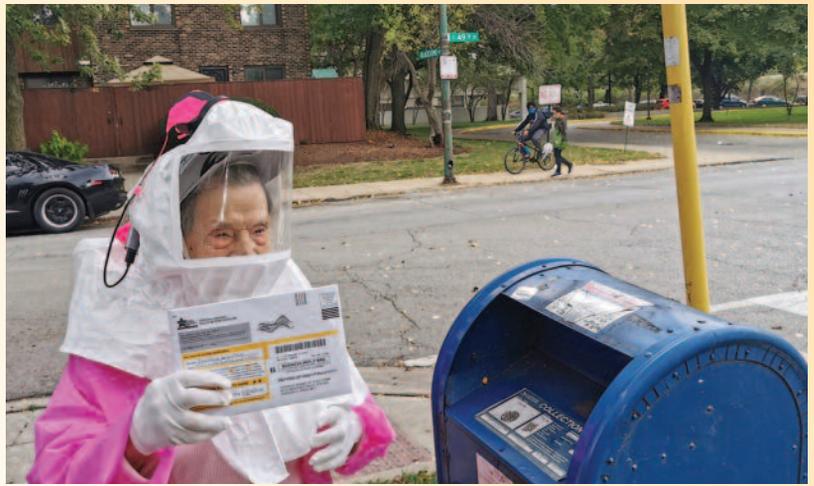
# SOAR in ACTION



Bettendorf, IA — SOAR Chapter 11-4 donated \$500 to United Way to help fund tutoring for children struggling in school or falling behind due to remote learning whose family cannot afford the cost of tutoring. For more information on tutoring, visit <https://qctutorconnection.org>. Pictured: SOAR Chapter Vice President Gerald Porter, President Bonnie Carey and USW Local 105 President Brad Greve.



Newport News, VA — SOAR Chapter 35-1 made a holiday donation of \$300 to Virginia Peninsula Foodbank to help provide healthy food to children, families, seniors and veterans, who otherwise might go hungry in the community. Pictured from left, Virginia Peninsula Food Bank Representative Tracy Hansbrough, SOAR Chapter 35-1 President Linda Kindred, and SOAR Chapter 35-1 Treasurer, Tyrone Ward. For more information, visit [www.hrfoodbank.org](http://www.hrfoodbank.org).



Chicago, IL — In her 102 years, SOAR activist Bea Lumpkin has seen it all: both World Wars, the flu pandemic of 1918, the Great Depression, the New Deal, women's suffrage, the Civil Rights movement and more. Bea has seen our union be on the right side of history time and time again, and she shared an important message with us before Election Day: "This really is the most important election of our lifetimes, and WE MUST VOTE!" Pictured above, Bea Lumpkin poses for a photo before dropping off her mail-in ballot at her neighborhood mailbox. Thanks to all who voted in the November elections!



Washington, D.C. — Talk about showing his true colors — newly elected Frank Mrvan of Indiana CD1 proudly wore his USW mask while being sworn in to Congress on January 4, 2021. He'll be working as co-chair of the Congressional Steel Caucus. Elections matter, especially when our friends can help us pass worker-friendly policies! Thanks to the many SOAR activists who helped to get him elected!

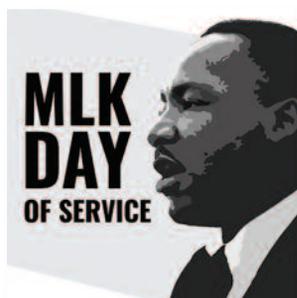
Kouts, IN — Pictured at left, District 7 SOAR Coordinator Ken Yatsko (SOAR Chapter 7-1) is one of many SOAR activists who made phone calls and wrote out postcards to encourage Georgia residents to vote for the Rev. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff in the two highly-contested U.S. Senate run-off elections. Ken made over 1000 phone calls to promote voter turnout, and his wife Mary Ann, also a SOAR member, helped to address 200 postcards in days leading up to the January 5 elections. The two Georgia victors, both labor-friendly candidates, are now serving in the U.S. Senate. Thanks to all of our SOAR activists who helped out during this election season!

# SOAR Chapter Hosts MLK National Day of Service Event

## “United We Serve”

The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR Chapter 7-34-2) recently hosted a Community Garden and Neighborhood Clean-Up Day as part of the “United We Serve” MLK National Day of Service for the Inauguration of President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris on January 18, 2021.

**Granite City, IL** — Held just two days before the 59th Presidential Inaugural Ceremonies, the Granite City SOAR chapter joined thousands of volunteers throughout the nation in serving their communities, dedicating time and service to celebrate and honor the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



The host Chapter was rewarded on their day of action with sunshine and over 30 volunteers for their Community Garden and Neighborhood Cleanup event. Working in conjunction with local groups, including the Alton Boy Scout Troop #1, USW Local 1063, members of the local church who sponsor the Community Garden, and other volunteers, the group conducted a cleanup of the garden, compost box, and the immediate neighborhood, hauling the gathered refuse in a truck donated by the city of Granite City.

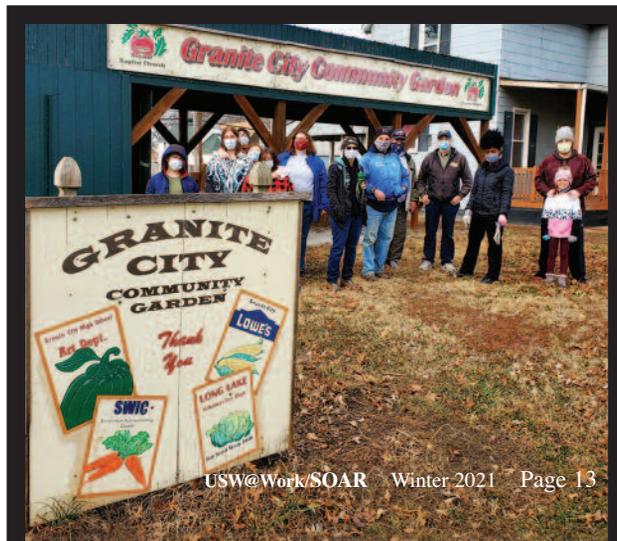
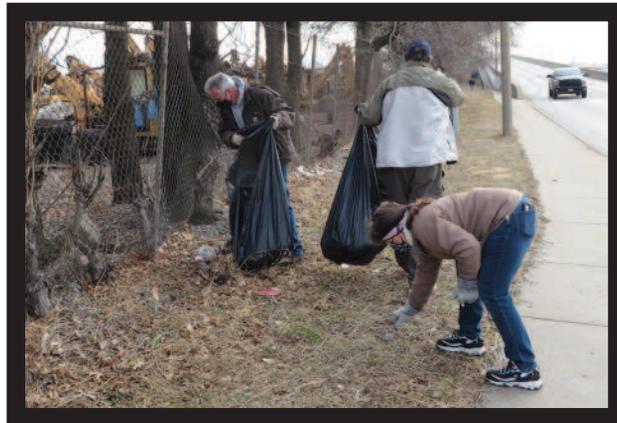
Coffee and baked treats kept the volunteers sugared up and caffeinated throughout the morning, followed by hot dogs and refreshments for lunch at the community garden site. The group followed COVID-19 social distancing and masking protocols during the cleanup event.

**Thank you to all of the volunteers who graciously participated in the MLK National Day of Service!**

*Observed each year on the third Monday in January, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is the only federal holiday designated as a national day of service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. AmeriCorps, an agency supported, in part, by the U.S. federal government, has been charged with leading this effort for the past quarter-century.*

*AmeriCorps collaborated with the Presidential Inaugural Committee for this year’s MLK National Day of Service, as an opportunity for all Americans to take on King’s legacy of unity and service at a time when the global pandemic calls on all of us to work together and support our communities.*

For more information, visit <https://www.americorps.gov/>.





# Amongst the Many Issues Facing Our Nation, Biden's "BUILD BACK BETTER" Plan Still a Priority

By Jeff Bonior

The 2020 election results have been tallied, and the Democratic Party has taken control of the presidency and Congress. This bodes well for President Joe Biden and his "Build Back Better" plan to fix America's failing economy and to create millions of much-needed, well-paying union jobs.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing is a non-partisan organization, but we evaluate policy proposals that we feel will improve the economy and the relationships between successful American businesses and the millions of hard-working Americans.

With the Democratic Party in control of the executive and legislative branches of government, AAM hopes to see a change of focus on what is best for America's dedicated, loyal workforce.

President Biden has proposed an aggressive agenda for the early days of his presidency, but none is more important than his pledge to "unify Americans." The waning days of the Trump regime were an embarrassment and shock to the rest of the Western world that regards the United States as the beacon of democracy.

We are hoping President Joe Biden can restore America's exalted stature in short order.

We also are encouraged by many of the proposals Biden has put forth to strengthen our economy while at the same time effectively dealing with the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

At the top of his list of priorities is to quickly provide the vaccines needed to stop the coronavirus in its tracks. Many of our SOAR brothers and sisters are at the age where they should be among the first to receive the vaccines. We can only defer to our frontline first responders and medical personnel who face imminent danger every day.

President Biden also plans on financial assistance to all that have been adversely affected by the pandemic. He

wants to put real revenue into struggling businesses and the pockets of Americans who are having trouble paying the rent or putting food on the family table because of this unprecedented loss of work.



President Biden knows that an investment today will pay off in the long run for business and families alike.

There are a host of other issues that Biden will address, including many that President Trump abolished by Executive Order. Examples include climate change, clean energy, and made-in-America procurement.

A top Biden administration priority is investing in America's infrastructure, which means fixing and updating our nation's roads, bridges, water systems, transportation systems, electrical grid, broadband, and so many more things we rely upon daily. We no longer lead the world in advanced innovation, but Biden's plan puts America back on track to again become the world leader that other nations look to for guidance.

Through infrastructure investment, it is possible that America will gain nearly 13 million quality jobs by 2024. And the good news is that the issue of infrastructure is mostly bipartisan. Both Democrats and Republicans seek a massive infrastructure investment. It is good for business and good for workers. It will provide thousands of jobs for America's steelworkers.

We here at AAM encourage all SOAR members to contact their representatives in Congress and immediately encourage them to begin the work of the nation and pass a substantial infrastructure bill. The rewards will benefit SOAR members, active steelworkers, and the future generations of USW members.

Please call your local member of Congress at their district office or reach them by calling the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to their D.C. office.

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



# The New Senate Majority Must Strengthen Retirement Security

By Robert Roach, Jr.

**When Georgia Senators Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff won their runoff elections last month, President Biden’s ability to advance policies that will support retirees and working Americans got a big boost.**

Both of these new senators made commitments to put retiree interests ahead of wealthy corporations, and of course their victories put an end to Mitch McConnell’s time as Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate.

Greater retirement security is in reach, if we help President Biden, new Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi turn the administration’s campaign promises into laws.

President Biden campaigned on strengthening and expanding Social Security, lowering prescription drug prices, adding new benefits to Medicare, and defending our pensions — all things that union retirees need and that the Alliance has been fighting for years to make a reality.

The results in Georgia also mean we can now bolster the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that protects Americans with preexisting conditions, closed the prescription drug doughnut

hole, and provides millions with affordable health insurance.

Finally, the new administration has promised to increase safety measures in nursing homes to ensure the well-being of their residents and staff as we continue to fight the pandemic. These regulations should never have been rolled back by the last administration, and the pandemic showed what can happen if we don’t hold nursing home operators accountable.

Alliance members look forward to four years without the constant threats to our earned retirement benefits that we have unfortunately become accustomed to, and to making progress on the issues most important to seniors. We need to keep working to make sure that a majority of the Senate follows through on the new administration’s retirement security proposals.

*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](http://www.retiredamericans.org).*



“There is no tragedy in growing old, but there is tragedy in growing old without means of support.”

– Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1934

Whether you work in an office or the shop floor, the ability to retire with dignity has been a primary function and a core value of the United Steelworkers since our founding. For all of you who are currently retired, it is clear now more than ever that the decisions made in Congress have a direct impact on what you have planned for in the future. The last few decades have led to a policy gridlock as some legislators and their backers fight to raise the retirement age and privatize social security while others fight to expand benefits.

## THE FACTS ARE PLAIN

Only 59 percent of employees have access to a 401(k), and of them, only 32 percent are investing in a 401(k), according to the U.S. Census Bureau (as of 2017). Meanwhile, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that under current law, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance OASI trust

fund’s balance would be exhausted during the calendar year 2031.

It is more evident than ever that Congress will need to address a growing crisis in our largest federal funds. How will they do that? Our legislative Department, led by its Director, Roy Houseman, has laid out some strategies and possible legislative vehicles our union can support to make positive advances.

### Strengthening Social Security

We will build support for legislation that strengthens the social security trust fund without raising the retirement age, such as The Social Security 2100 Act (H.R. 860) led by Congressman John Larson.

### Replenishing and Improving Medicare

Our union will fight to ensure the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund (Medicare Part A) will be restored from the losses it incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will also fight to lower the cost of prescription drugs and expand Medicare coverage to vision, dental, and hearing by supporting the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3).

### Protecting Multi-Employer Pensions

Continued work to enact legislation like the Butch Lewis Act (H.R. 397/S.2254), which provides long term loans to pensions or a Temporary Partition Program using the

Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation (PBGC) for multi-employer pension plans. Extending the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)—This credit

is available to workers who receive Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) or participants in a pension plan under PBGC. Our union is the key advocate behind past extensions of this tax credit, the latest of which expires at the end of 2021. We will continue to work on extending the HCTC and work to find ways to make it permanent.

*We wish to thank our extraordinary SOAR activists for all that they do and have done to secure retirement security for not just their generations but for those ahead. And we can’t wait to continue to see the rewards of those efforts as we move into this next year, eyes wide open, engaged, and ready to stand together.*





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