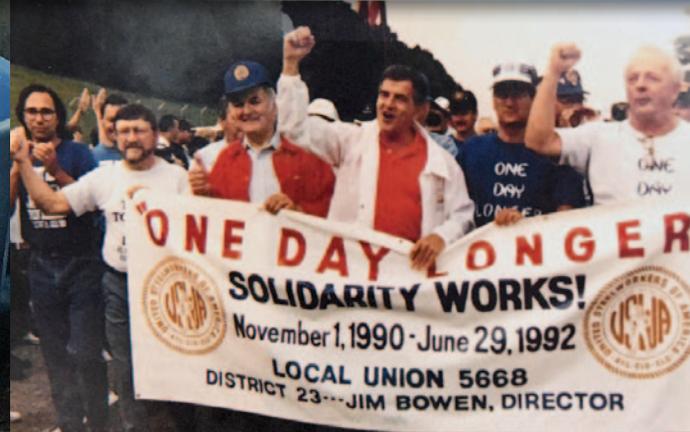


# USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 17/3

A Powerful Voice for Workers

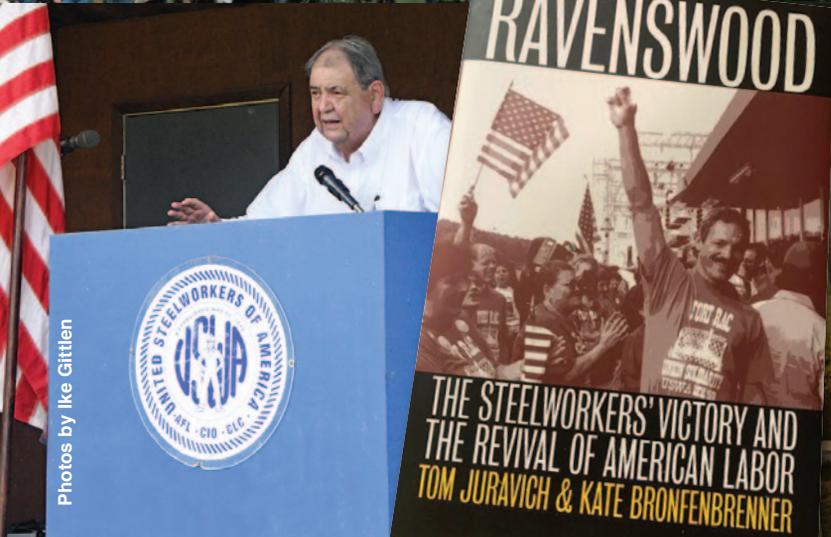


# ONE DAY LONGER

*30 years later*

Steelworkers Mark Anniversary of Victory at Ravenswood Aluminum

story on pages 4-6



## Our Mission Remains the Same



**BILL PIENTA**  
SOAR President

**As you are reading this, SOAR will have just concluded its 13th International Conference, where delegates from Canada and the United States gathered to discuss many topics and set the direction for our organization for the next three years.** The delegates listened to

speakers, debated and voted on resolutions submitted by chapters and the SOAR Executive Board, and heard from the leadership of the USW.

Then-USW Int'l President Lynn R. Williams helped define our organization 37 years ago, connecting the USW locals and their retirees with a great emphasis on protecting and preserving company-provided pensions and health care benefits for retired members of the USW. All these years later, retiree benefits continue to be a concern of our organization.

But, we in SOAR must recognize that many USW-represented facilities now offer 401K plans instead of defined benefit plans. Also, fewer companies are willing to provide retirees with company-provided health care, which requires many new retirees to depend on Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans for their health care.

Examples of current-day issues include Medicare Advantage plans denying medical testing or treatment, a covered expense under Medicare. Having to pay high service fees and taking on the fiduciary responsibility of retirement accounts are the newer concerns that impact present-day retirees and someday will impact the quality of life of future retirees.

SOAR must continue working with our locals and groups, like Rapid Response, Women of Steel and legislative committees, to address issues impacting retired and active members. We must also look at the problem of finding members for SOAR chapters that no longer have a local that was the feeder organization to the SOAR chapters in the past.

With the strong support SOAR has received and continues to receive from the leadership of the USW, and with the strong and hardworking leaders of our SOAR chapters, I believe SOAR can and will grow and become an even more valuable tool to the USW and all retirees.

**Our fights may change along the way, but our mission remains the same: To improve the standard and quality of living for our active and retired members and the labor community.**



**Lewis W. Webber**  
1941-2022

## HONORING LEWIS W. WEBBER By Bill Pienta

Unfortunately, I recently attended a funeral honoring the life of SOAR Chapter 4-6 President Lewis Webber. Lew had held an officer's position in the chapter since 1997 and had served as president of the chapter since 2008. Before retirement, Lew worked in the maintenance department for Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna, N.Y.

My first encounter with Lew was at a meeting held by then-Senator Hillary Clinton regarding former employees who had been exposed to radioactive material while working at the plant.

Lew spent many years and countless hours fighting for and assisting workers from Bethlehem Steel and other companies in processing claims with the government to ensure that former employees and their families got whatever they were entitled to receive as a settlement. Lew became involved with this many years ago, and he learned how to navigate through the so-called government "red tape" and provide employment documentation after a plant was shut down. Lew did this even though he was not entitled to any settlement.

Lew, along with members of his chapter, could always be seen at protests, demonstrations, meetings or picket lines in support of USW members and their issues.

I had asked him to show support to the ATI workers who were on strike by showing up at the picket line, and without hesitation, he replied that he would be there and would bring his members with him. He then added that although he could not walk the line because of his health and limited ability to walk, he would show up and bring refreshments for those who could walk the line.

Lew Webber never asked the union for anything. He would only ask what he could do to help the union or what help he could offer to the active and retired members. Lew is now resting, and I am incredibly saddened that he is gone but very honored to have known him and been able to call him a friend.

Rest in peace, my friend. You will be deeply missed by your SOAR family, alongside the many other workers and families whose lives you've touched.

***"This man worked tirelessly for years to bring justice for Bethlehem steelworkers who were exposed to uranium on the job in Lackawanna, N.Y. Many of them suffered slow, painful deaths from cancer they contracted due to this exposure. In addition, their families suffered financially dealing with this disease due to expensive medical treatments and the loss of, in many cases, the sole provider of income for the family. It was a long, hard fight, but Lew never gave up and continued to fight to expand the class of workers who were covered by this settlement. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him."*** —Tom O'Shei, USW District 4



**JULIE STEIN**  
SOAR Director

## America's Governors Have Unique Powers to Address the Needs of Seniors

In our Spring *SOAR in Action* publication, I suggested that while the federal government oversees vital programs like Social Security and Medicare, America's governors make daily decisions that significantly impact retired and retiring Americans.

Thus, who we support for governor in November should be at least as important of a decision as who we plan to vote for to be our next representative in Congress.

After all, 36 states accounting for nearly 80 percent of America's total population will elect their next governor this year.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, states were struggling to adjust to the massive challenges of millions of baby boomers retiring.

As America's largest generation of retirees, baby boomers face unique pandemic-related challenges, particularly in housing, health care, nutrition and transportation.

### So, what powers do governors have to address these issues?

- ▶ When it comes to **housing**, a governor's bully pulpit can be invaluable as state legislatures negotiate their budget each year. Skyrocketing housing costs and interest rates increased throughout the pandemic have led some governors to use their bully pulpit to fight for increased funding for affordable housing and utility assistance for vulnerable populations, including senior citizens. At least one governor has even leaned into a new effort to encourage homeowners to consider sharing their homes with senior citizens transitioning to more affordable/accommodating housing.
- ▶ In the area of **health care access** and the **cost of prescription drugs**, governors' efforts range from tapping into their state's budget surpluses to provide temporary financial assistance to helping people with medical expenses, to backing pay increases and other incentives to attract more workers in the area of community-based and home health care.
- ▶ Lastly, to address the intersecting issues of **food access, nutrition and transportation**, some governors are expanding partnerships with companies like Door Dash that can deliver food boxes to seniors who face transportation barriers or are homebound for medical reasons.

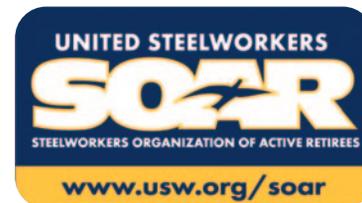
The above-mentioned is not an endorsement of these policymakers or their ideas. Instead, my goal is to get everyone thinking more critically about what we should expect from governors and what demands we can make of them to bring greater security to future generations of retirees.

*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!*



HAPPY SUMMER!  
STAY HEALTHY. STAY ACTIVE. STAY SAFE.



[facebook.com/groups/uswsoar](https://facebook.com/groups/uswsoar)

**SOAR in ACTION**

## USW@Work

Published as an edition to *USW@Work* for the United Steelworkers  
60 Blvd. of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



**Winner of ICLA's**  
**journalistic competition**  
**awards for General Excellence**  
**in 1986, 1990 and 1993**

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**Address editorial material to:**  
Editor, *USW@Work*, *SOAR in Action*  
United Steelworkers  
60 Blvd. of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



**Send address changes only to:**  
USW Membership Department  
60 Blvd. of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or E-mail: [MEMBERSHIP@USW.ORG](mailto:MEMBERSHIP@USW.ORG)

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**USW@Work** (ISSN 0883-3141) is published four times a year by the United Steelworkers AFL-CIO-CLC, 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Subscriptions to non-members: \$12 for one year; \$20 for two years. Periodicals postage paid at Pittsburgh, PA and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: **USW@Work**, USW Membership Dept., 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.



## JUNE 29, 1992

was a day to remember for union workers in West Virginia and across the nation. That was the day Local 5668 members in Jackson County, W.Va., marched—in unity—back to work at Ravenswood Aluminum Co. after being locked out of their jobs for more than a year and a half.

# ONE DAY LONGER

*30 years later*

## Steelworkers Mark Anniversary of Victory at Ravenswood Aluminum

This June, hundreds of workers, retirees, families and neighbors from the community came together in Ravenswood to celebrate the 30th anniversary of that moment, the lessons of which have only grown in significance in the three decades since.

Speakers at the anniversary event included International President Tom Conway, District 8 Director Larry Ray, District 1 Director Donnie Blatt, and a host of other local, district and international activists.

### 'The Heartbeat' of 5668

Marge Flanigan, whose late husband worked at the factory, helped to organize the 30th anniversary event along with Local 5668 President Ed Barnette, whose late father was among the locked-out workers.

The USW, with Flanigan's help, brought working people together in Jackson County just as they did in the early 1990s when their community needed them the most. During the

lockout, Flanigan helped lead the Women's Support Group, a conclave of USW wives and community members who called themselves "The Heartbeat of Local 5668."

"It was probably the most solidarity that you could ever see," Flanigan said of the way the USW members and their supporters stuck together during the historic Ravenswood lockout. "We became a family, fighting together. And 30 years later, we're still a family. There isn't one person in that union that wouldn't come to my aid if I needed them."

That steadfast togetherness was born out of a grueling struggle for survival—for the union workers and their community—that began at midnight on Halloween night in 1990. That's when the company's new ownership group, led by fugitive billionaire Marc Rich, which had purchased the factory from Kaiser just a few years earlier, kicked the union workers out of the plant and immediately began bus-ing in scabs by the hundreds.

"Everybody was in disbelief," Flanigan said. "The company spent millions of dollars in preparations. The Steelworkers could see what was going on. Negotiations weren't going well, but everyone was hoping for a contract extension. That didn't happen."

The company hired paramilitary-style security, erected massive barbed-wire fencing and did everything in its power to make life difficult for the locked-out work force.

"As the workers marched out of the plant, the scabs were already walking in," Flanigan said. "The company definitely knew this was coming."

### Economic Consequences

The Ravenswood plant, which opened in 1954, had never been the scene of a work stoppage before, but this time things were different. The plant's new owners, along with company Chairman R. Emmett Boyle, were determined to slash costs, and they saw the 1990 contract negotia-



tions as an opportunity to push the workers to the breaking point.

“Boyle was dead set on busting the union,” Flanigan said.

When the lockout began, winter and the holiday season were about to begin as well. Jobs at the aluminum factory had been some of the best around, so the businesses in Ravenswood and the surrounding communities all felt the sting of the loss of income that USW members and their families were seeing first-hand.

To make matters worse, for the first few months, the locked-out workers didn’t receive unemployment compensation, so they had to rely exclusively on USW strike and defense benefits, along with the kindness and solidarity of their friends in the community and throughout the labor movement.

There was a need to bring people together, and Flanigan and her friends in the Women’s Support Group stepped up to fill the void.

“We had to do something,” Flanigan said. “We tried to keep people’s spirits up by doing fun things.”

The support group planned solidarity dinners for the workers’ families each Tuesday. Union members built a kitchen and a stage where the USW-member-led “Paw Paw Band” would perform each week during the potluck.

“People would dance and sing. Everybody brought a covered dish,” Flanigan said. “We had people there by the hundreds. That was the glue that held us together.”

At the time, the average age of a Ravenswood worker was 52, with an average tenure of 22 years. The workers weren’t going away. They were dug in and determined to fight.

“The workers had built their whole lives around this company,” Barnette said. “From buying property and building homes to starting families and raising children.”

The union collected funds to make sure bills were paid, meals were made available, and children had toys at the

holidays. “One day longer” became the USW’s rallying cry.

“Nobody lost their home during the lockout,” Flanigan said. “Nobody lost a car.”

## Global Campaign

While helping local families keep their footing, Local 5668, with assistance from the USW headquarters in Pittsburgh, also mounted an international campaign to save workers’ jobs by putting pressure on the company’s new owners, a global conglomerate with operations in 40 countries.

The leader of the company, Rich, was facing indictment for racketeering, tax evasion and other charges in the United States. He was living in Switzerland after having fled to escape arrest.

USW members traveled to Washington, D.C., and across the globe, and enlisted the help of other international labor organizations, corporations and political leaders, to keep the pressure on Rich and his vast, powerful consortium.

Members organized boycotts and held demonstrations across the country, including outside the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia and at the Indianapolis 500. Major customers, including the Stroh Brewery, halted business with Ravenswood in an effort to hasten the end of the lockout.

“Our voices were being heard around the world,” Flanigan said.

Meanwhile, in Ravenswood, union members were pouring into town by the busload—from nearby communities and from hundreds of miles away—to lend financial and moral support to the locked-out workers. Rallies,

often headlined by then-USW International President Lynn Williams and then-Vice President George Becker, attracted crowds of 7,000 people and gained national news coverage.

In the spring of 1991, the company brought federal racketeering charges against USW members and their supporters, but it did nothing to slow down the workers’ momentum.

“They did everything they could to try to stop us,” Flanigan said. “But it never worked. We had no choice but to fight.”

With union members barred by law from demonstrating directly outside the facility, family members and supporters took it upon themselves to make sure the workers’ voices were heard at the site. Day and night, family members ran caravans of cars and trucks for miles along the road

*continued on page 6*



Photos by Ike Gittlen



# ONE DAY LONGER

## 30 years later

continued from page 5

leading to the factory, blocking plant entrances and doing everything they could to prevent scabs and management from getting inside the gates.

“Scabs quit by the hundreds,”

Flanigan said, noting that the company was forced to hire about 5,000 replacements during the lockout to do the work that had previously been done by 1,700 union members.

### Lessons Learned

The USW also sought relief through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), charging that the company's actions were illegal and that management should be forced to fire the replacements and rehire the locked-out work force with back pay.

Under mounting pressure, the company reopened negotiations in the spring of 1992. Fearing that a decision on the NLRB charges would not go their way, the company finally reached an agreement in June of that year to dismiss the scabs and bring Local 5668 members back to work.

In the decades since, Local 5668 has faced other challenges—including concessionary demands and work stoppages—but none of those events have galvanized the entire region and gained international attention the same way the battle in Ravenswood did from November 1990 to June 1992.

The lockout lasted 20 long months, but its lessons and repercussions stretched well into the 21st century.

Through the Ravenswood struggle, USW members and other unions found a new way to confront multinational corporations—joining forces with their own international allies and mounting campaigns from local union halls to the halls of international governments. Since the Ravenswood lockout, the USW has built a global network of allies who have helped workers confront unscrupulous employers across the world for the past 30 years.

Now, when companies force union workers onto a picket line, the protests go well beyond the plant gates. The workers’ voices go global and the campaigns pursue justice on every economic, political, legal and humanitarian angle that the union can find.

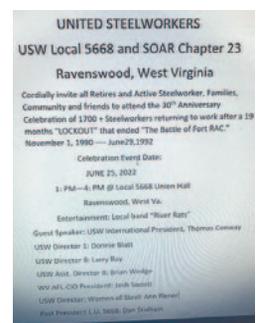
As Local 5668 President Barnette said, “It was not just a single event or person that won the battle.” Leaders from the local to the district to the international level all pitched in to help turn the tide.

“Most of all,” he said, “it was the undying grit and determination of the rank-and-file members refusing to give up and to trust and remain loyal, not only to their union, but to each other.”

The victory remains an inspiration for union members across all industries. Ravenswood provided new evidence that workers—despite the relentless attacks on unions and the manufacturing crisis that marked the 1980s—still had the power to fight back and win against wealthy, powerful corporate titans.

Today, the aluminum factory in Ravenswood employs about 1,100 workers and is run by Constellium. Many of the USW and community leaders who were involved in the dispute three decades ago have since passed on, leaving Flanigan and a handful of others to keep the memory of the historic fight alive and make sure the next generation of union workers continues to carry with it the lessons that she and her USW family learned firsthand.

“We’re still here,” Flanigan said. “As long as the Steelworkers here are able to walk and talk, we’ll be fighting for justice. We’ll never forget.”



Photos by Ike Gittlen

# IN MEMORIAM

## MARIE C. MALAGRECA First SOAR Coordinator



Marie C. Malagreca  
1927-2022

Marie Malagreca, a longtime USW activist and the first SOAR coordinator, died on June 9, 2022, at the age of 95.

Ms. Malagreca graduated from the Robert Morris School of Business in Pittsburgh, where she became proficient in comptometry and steno typing. When Spang-Chalfant Co., in

Etna, Pa., employed her in its payroll and accounting department, she promptly joined the USWA. Marie served as the recording secretary and, later, as financial secretary of her Office & Technical Workers local union.

Joining the staff of the USWA in 1948, Malagreca originally served as an office secretary in the union staff office in Etna and specialized in the analysis of contract pension provisions. In 1978, she was promoted to be one of the union's first female full-time staff representatives, serving local unions and negotiating retiree benefits in then-District 19, which later became District 20.

A civic-minded trade unionist, Malagreca served on the Allegheny County committee to improve patient services at Kane Hospital in Pittsburgh. She was instrumental in developing the "Mini-Kane" structure bringing hospital services closer to the residents of the Kane Community Living Centers.

In 1985, Malagreca was asked by then-International President Lynn R. Williams to be the national coordinator of a new program the union was starting called SOAR (Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.) She served in that capacity until her retirement in 1994.

Marie was a union and political activist her entire life. After retiring with 47 years of service from the Steelworkers, she became active in the former National Council of Senior Citizens and was a founding member of the Alliance for Retired Americans, serving on that group's executive board until 2007, when she retired at the age of 80.

"Much of what SOAR does today has its foundation established under Marie's leadership," said SOAR Director Julie Stein. "From the very beginning, she worked to fulfill President Williams' vision to mobilize our union's retirees to support legislative policies that improved their quality of life."

Marie passed away shortly after celebrating her 95th birthday.

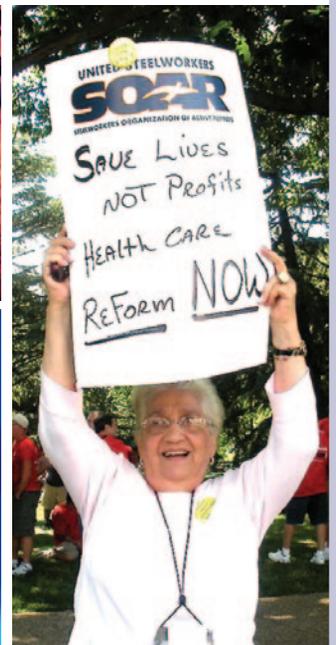
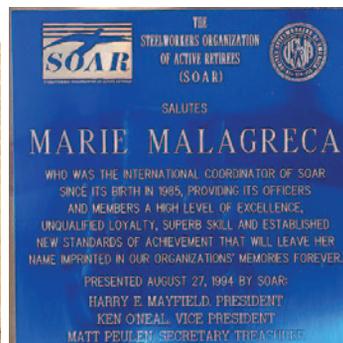


MARIE MALAGRECA, the newly-named Staff Coordinator of SOAR, is shown at right (seated) with her aide, Gloria Santos, at international headquarters of the USWA.



"Marie was a real trailblazer, a true friend and a wonderful mentor. She lived a full and interesting life!"

Jim Centner, Retired SOAR Director



*May she rest as she served our Union ~ in power and in peace.*

# SOAR in ACTION



Bettendorf, Iowa—On June 14, members of SOAR Chapter 11-4 rally with USW Local 105 for a fair contract.



St. Clairsville, OH—Held June 28, the Belmont County Democratic Party hosted a well-attended “meet and greet” event with U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown to include an open discussion about labor, senior and women’s issues. Also discussed was the critical need to keep the pro-worker/pro-senior majority in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, as well as to pick up additional seats to increase the already too-narrowed majority spread in the November midterm elections.

Pictured above, members of SOAR Chapter 23-9 pose with Senator Brown after the event. From left to right: Don and Sandra Fuchs; Ross Campbell, Trustee; Carol Campbell; Joe Marcisio; Regina Sikora, Trustee; U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown; Joe Sikora; and Johnny Waugh, Vice President.



Pueblo, CO—On June 10, SOAR Chapter 38-3 members, along with leadership from USW Locals 2102 and 3267, attended the Steelworkers *Your Union, Your Voice* townhall held at the USW LOCAL 2102 union hall.



Chicago, IL—On July 3, SOAR members and friends joined Starbucks workers who had just walked off the job because of management attacks on their effort to organize their union at a local store. National Starbucks union leaders and other Starbucks workers from different parts of Illinois also joined the rally picket!

Detroit, MI—In April, USW District 1 held their Biennial & Educational Conference. Leading by example, and in show of solidarity, the USW staff in Michigan have signed up to become members of SOAR. This photo illustrates the importance of a recent change in SOAR’s Articles of Association and Bylaws that welcome active members of our union, age 45 and older, to join SOAR. Thank you for your strong support of SOAR!

Shown left to right, front row: Ed Leary, Sub-District 6 Director; Tammy Beebe, Admin. Asst.; Donnie Blatt, District 1 Director; Julie Stein, SOAR Director; Mike Bilodeau, Staff Rep. Back row: Terry Newton, Staff Rep; Cathy Ferguson, Staff Rep; Steve Meyer, Sub-District 4 Director; Al Calhoun, Staff Rep; Jeff DeLong, D1 SOAR Executive Board Member; Tonya DeVore, Staff Rep; and Steve Donovan, Staff Rep.



# District 4 Gets a New SOAR Chapter



On Sunday, June 26, 2022, SOAR members in Barrington, N.J., were honored to have their SOAR Chapter 4-19 officially chartered by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. The newly formed chapter will be home to retirees from USW Local 4-00380 (4-380).

Local 4-380 is an amalgamated local representing a variety of different workers employed by International Paper (IP), GCUA, Gloucester City Public Works, National Gypsum, Briggs Co., GULF Oil, Matheson, GCIA, Express Scripts; and is incredibly proud to be the home local to USW International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn.

Al Polk, District 4 SOAR Executive Board Member, reported that Local 4-380 President Robert Tapp and SOAR Chapter Financial Secretary Amanda McNulty Stayton were instrumental in laying the foundation for this new chapter.

Edward Vogel, who was very active in the local before his retirement, is serving as the SOAR chapter's first-ever president. Vogel served as the financial secretary for many years and was an active shop steward.

The chapter's first vice president is James Regan. James, or as most call

him Jimmy, was also very active in the local before his retirement. Jimmy served as vice president for many years and was an active shop steward. A highlight of Jimmy's working career is that he hadn't had a machine jam-up since 1994, which is still the IP record!

Both of these men were vital parts of the local while working. And, as retirees, they will be an integral part of the SOAR chapter. Joining them as newly-elected officers for SOAR Chapter 4-19 are Scott Chisholm, recording secretary; Amanda McNulty Stayton, financial secretary; Jamone Murray, treasurer; and trustees: Butch Multanski, Bruce LaMarra, and Justin Fields.

Robert Tapp stated, "Local 4-380 is extremely proud to sponsor SOAR Chapter 4-19, and we are pleased that these extremely well-rounded individuals have accepted their new positions within the chapter's leadership." Tapp

Pictured are officers and members of Local Union 4-380 and SOAR Chapter 4-19, from left to right: Ed Ratliff, LU 4-380 Vice President at Large; Amanda McNulty Stayton, LU 4-380/Chapter 4-19 Financial Secretary; Robert Tapp, LU 4-380 President; Terrill Hargrove, LU 4-380 Chief Steward GCUA; Edward Vogel, Chapter 4-19 President; John Shinn, USW Int'l Secretary-Treasurer; Scott Chisholm, LU 4-380/Chapter 4-19 Recording Secretary; and Eric Briddell, LU 4-380 Trustee.

continued, "As officers, we know they will do great things to lead and grow the new chapter."

The chapter plans to meet every third Sunday at 9 am at the American Legion Post 370 in Magnolia, N.J., and they intend to support the work of Local Union 4-380 while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.

**SOAR welcomes all new members of Chapter 4-19, and together we will continue the fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!**

# Steelworker Minister of Labour Brings in Card Check in British Columbia

By Harry Bains

*SOAR Chapter 3-14 in British Columbia asked Steelworker and B.C. Minister of Labour, Harry Bains, to contribute an article to SOAR in Action.*

**It is my utmost pleasure to be featured in this magazine and to be able to reach retired Steelworkers continent-wide. I thank you all for your service and union activism and hope that you are enjoying retirement. I was appointed as Minister of Labour, by B.C. Premier John Horgan in 2017, and for a second time in 2020.**

As many of you may know, I have been a long-time labour activist and that my journey began as a member of the United Steelworkers union at a local sawmill. Thus, being the Minister of Labour for B.C. has truly been an honour for me and I assure you that I wake up every day committed towards improving workers' rights.

In my two terms as B.C.'s Minister of Labour, my ministry has made some major changes and we are looking forward to making more. We were successful in increasing the minimum wage to \$15.65 an hour—making it the highest minimum

wage of all provinces in Canada. This latest increase is the first to be tied to inflation.

Our B.C. NDP government also brought an end to the lower discriminatory minimum wage for liquor servers in B.C., 80 percent of whom are women who were particularly impacted by the pandemic.

As the pandemic has taught us, workers need protections around taking sick leave. On Jan. 1, 2022, B.C. became the first province in Canada to implement a minimum standard of five days of paid sick leave every year, to protect workers and businesses.

Additionally, we improved the Workers Compensation Act to provide better support to injured workers and their families, and to enhance WorkSafeBC's investigations of workplace incidents.

I am also very proud to say that B.C. will return to the single-step union certification process—also known as the card-check system.

Workers in B.C. deserve to have a voice and a choice in how their workplace operates—without barriers. Single-step certification will allow workers to join a union when a clear majority of all workers indicate they wish to do so through signing membership cards. This eliminates the second step of the two-step process and reduces the opportunities for employer interference or backlash. Below I will be sharing some of the changes our government has made since forming government.

Seniors have supported our province for decades. Now that they are retiring, it is our job to support them. That is why we have made significant changes and investments to improve the lives of our seniors. We increased the seniors supplement for low-income seniors—the first time the supplement was ever increased.

We have doubled the maximum rate for a single person receiving the seniors supplement and are happy to report that the overall rate increases will provide extra financial support to 80,000 seniors in B.C.

Additionally, we have brought the largest-ever increase to income and disability assistance in our province's history. This has positively impacted more than 300,000 British Columbians, many of whom are seniors.

For people on income assistance living in special care facilities, the

**Single-step certification will protect the right to join a union. Steelworker and B.C. Minister of Labour Harry Bains and guests announce changes to B.C.'s Labour Relations Code on April 6, 2022.**

Photo credit: Province of British Columbia on Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0





**Steelworker and B.C. Minister of Labour Harry Bains speaks to media in July 2019, during an announcement that foreign workers who help fill labour shortages in a wide range of B.C. sectors will be better protected under a new government licensing requirement for recruiters.**

Photo credit: Province of British Columbia on Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

comforts allowance has increased by \$20 to \$115 per month. The comforts allowance lets people buy basic personal items. The increased amount reflects the rising costs of goods since the allowance for income assistance was last increased in 2005. We will continue to implement changes in accordance with our poverty-reduction strategy and remain steadfastly committed to continuing this important work.

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) is a Crown corporation in B.C. providing insurance. When the BC NDP formed government in 2017, ICBC was in crisis, what many people referred to as a “dumpster fire.”

It was a tough task, but we were successful in putting in place a no-fault auto insurance system which allows the injured party to get the treatment they need to fully recover.

It was important for the government to put in place enhanced care so that those injured in a crash would not have to pay out-of-pocket for any additional expenses.

The new system includes improved income replacement benefits for those who are unable to work and additional benefits for those with a serious life-altering injury. The income replace-

ment benefits are nearly double what they were under the old system.

I am happy to report that the enhanced care system has brought insurance rates down significantly and increased the level of care people receive.

When we formed government in 2017, it was one of our top priorities to get British Columbians the answers they deserve around money laundering. We stayed true to our commitment. The government is closing real estate loopholes, strengthening policies and procedures in gambling facilities and improving laws to deter money laundering.

The public inquiry into money laundering was headed by Justice Austin Cullen of the B.C. Supreme Court and looked at the full scope of money laundering in B.C., including real estate, gambling, financial institutions and the corporate and professional sectors. We wanted to know who knew what, when, and who profited from these illicit activities.

To address money laundering in real estate, the B.C. government has introduced measures such as introducing legislation in March 2021, to establish BC Financial Services Authority as the single regulator for financial services, including real

estate, to help streamline and unify regulation of the sector and require businesses to keep transparency registers in their corporate records.

Our government is also working to update and modernize the Mortgage Brokers Act and to increase beneficial ownership transparency for B.C. companies. Furthermore, we are reviewing the results of a consultation to potentially create a regulatory framework for money services businesses. Lastly, establishing the new Landowner Transparency Registry for real estate will help end hidden ownership of land in British Columbia.

The Expert Panel on Money Laundering in Real Estate has called disclosure of beneficial ownership information the “single-most-important measure” to addressing money laundering.

The investigation and in-depth review respectively resulted in significant and ongoing reforms that dramatically reduced money laundering activities in B.C. casinos. We have been clear since day one that dirty money has no place in B.C., and we will continue our work to protect our province from illicit activities.

Thank you, once again, for your years of union activism and for supporting our province. I’m grateful to have this opportunity to share some of our BC NDP government’s achievements with you and hope to have many more to share soon.

In solidarity,  
 Harry Bains  
 – Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of British Columbia for Surrey-Newton

# The Election is Over *NOW THE HARD WORK BEGINS*

*By Doug Macpherson  
Vice President and Canadian National SOAR Coordinator*

**Ontario, Canada’s largest province by population, has recently conducted a provincial election on June 2, 2022, which resulted in the return of a majority Progressive Conservative (PC) government, with an increased number of seats — while the New Democrat’s held onto the Official Opposition, albeit with fewer seats than at dissolution.**

SOAR and the USW extend our thanks and appreciation to outgoing Ontario NDP Leader and Leader of the Official Opposition Andrea Horwath for her years of public service, solidarity with working people and her contributions to advancing progressive policy.

We can anticipate that the PC majority will move quickly to reward their friends in the business and development industries, and the New Democrats will be hard pressed to stop or slow them down. Premier Doug Ford, has been a spendthrift, at least during the pandemic, creating large budget deficits, which I am sure his caucus and the business community will demand to be curtailed and reduced going forward.

During the last legislature, Ford did not tolerate dissent within his caucus, especially around his COVID policies, and anyone that challenged his authority was swiftly removed from caucus. Now with a larger group that will be more difficult to control, he may be more conciliatory to the many different points of view expressed by the members of his caucus. Especially the extreme right.

For us social democrats, I can see the hard work of containing the cuts to services and programs is about to begin. We have already heard the rumblings about private health facilities to ease the burden on our health care system.

Plans to increase the number of for-profit long-term care facilities, in spite of the evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed, that the death toll and unsanitary conditions in for-profit facilities were much worse than in the not-for-profit operations or municipally run facilities.

Ford has already announced plans to grant 30-year licences to the worst offenders in the private, for-profit homes. It has already been announced that the former Minister of Education in the previous government will be promoted to Minister of Health, and we know



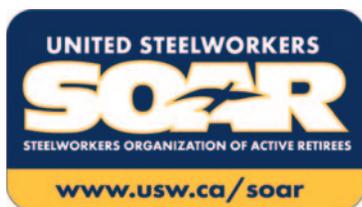
**SOAR Vice President and SOAR Canadian Coordinator Doug Macpherson (centre) with two elected Steelworkers in the Ontario Legislature, Jamie West (Local 6500), left, and Guy Bourgouin (Local 1-2010), right.**

that as Education Minister, he mused about private education and online learning as a way to cut costs.

If we thought that we could relax and rest, it is instead time for our union to be even more active in protesting and taking part in political actions alongside the Official Opposition New Democrats to protect what is best in our society.

## **Congratulations to the four Steelworkers who were re-elected:**

- Guy Bourgouin** (Mushkegowuk–James Bay)
- Jeff Burch** (Niagara Centre)
- Michael Mantha** (Algoma–Manitoulin)
- Jamie West** (Sudbury)



# CHINA THREATENS America's Solar Manufacturing

Our United Steelworkers brothers and sisters know all too well of the deceptive practices used by China to circumvent America's fair-trade laws. If the state-subsidized Chinese steelmakers were not selling their inferior steel products directly to American importers, they found a way to ship product into the United States through third party countries like Vietnam, Mexico or Brazil.

The Section 232 steel tariffs that were put in place in March of 2018 have been the major catalyst to limiting this unfair dumping of Chinese steel in the U.S. and are largely responsible for the healthy comeback of the American steel industry.

But the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has implemented its "dumping" policy in another industry of great concern to American industry—solar panel manufacturing. Our

nation's industries are actively investing in alternative energy sources to meet the demands of sustainable, affordable, renewable energy which will power our homes and, eventually, America's steel mills in the 21st century.

The CCP uses unfair trade practices to dominate markets and now there is evidence that Chinese companies are getting around tariffs by shipping their solar panel products through other countries. The Commerce Department is investigating these claims, but some members of Congress are listening to importers and working overtime to thwart the U.S. government's scrutiny.

And to make matters even more precarious, President Biden recently announced that his administration would waive solar panel tariffs for two years on Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, countries that are thought

to be the third-party exporters of Chinese-made solar panels.

The Commerce Department is currently investigating whether Chinese solar companies are sending their products through these four countries to avoid U.S. trade enforcement. This trade cheating threatens America's solar workers and manufacturers who stand ready to make the things we need to power a clean energy future.

If U.S. solar importers are so confident in the integrity of their products, what are they so eager to hide? If importers succeed in quashing this investigation, not only would it threaten U.S. solar manufacturers who are already far behind China in manufacturing capabilities, but it would damage America's entire trade enforcement process. As USW members know, when trade enforcement is effectively applied, American industry and its workers reap the benefits.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) urges all members of Congress to strengthen America's domestic solar manufacturing capabilities, which must include not only strong investment but also a willingness to take action to level the playing field for America's workers and manufacturers. It is vital that this Commerce Department investigation be allowed to proceed without further interference.

AAM believes that our country needs to transition to more sustainable energy. But we cannot trade foreign oil for made-in-China solar panels, especially since there's vast evidence these products are made with forced, slave-like labor. The U.S. needs to do everything we can to ensure we can make the things we need to power a clean energy future and that includes a steadfast willingness to enforce our trade laws.

**We at AAM ask all the USW SOAR family to contact their representatives in Congress as well as President Biden and tell them that the Commerce Department must be able to conduct its investigation without interference. You can reach your members of the U.S. Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives by calling their state district offices or by phoning the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to their Washington, D.C. office. You can also leave a comment at the White House by calling 202-456-1111.**

*Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing*



Photos by Getty Images



# SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurrin, SOAR Legislative Director

**During the 2020 elections the Steelworkers union urged its members to vote for Joe Biden for President of the United States. While there were a number of good reasons for the union’s endorsement, perhaps the most important was gaining a Labor Secretary that would more fairly enforce U.S. labor laws.**



Jay McMurrin

One of the first acts of President Biden was to appoint Marty Walsh to head the U.S. Department of Labor. The USW decision to back Biden appears to be paying off as organizing drives in 2022 increased 57 percent over the same period last year. And unions are again winning those elections.

The USW scored a big organizing victory earlier this year when over 360 members of the United Football Players Association (UFPA) voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with the United Steelworkers International Union. President Tom Conway said, “Giving players a strong collective voice will ensure more security for players, their earnings, and their jobs.” UFPA members have played in the NFL, CFL, Arena Football, the XFL and those currently playing in the USFL.

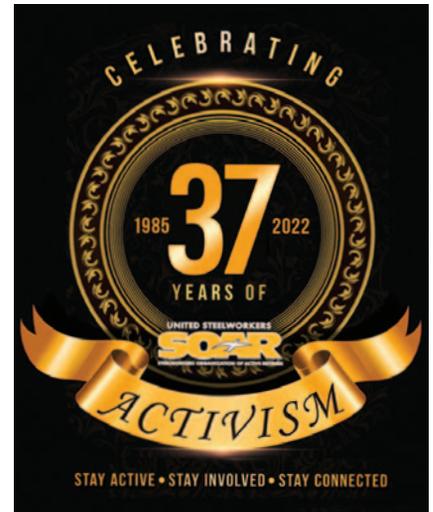
In other organizing news, workers at 17 U.S. Starbucks locations voted to join the United Starbucks Union, an independent, worker-formed labor organization. A similar organizing effort in Buffalo, N.Y., was defeated. However, during that drive, the company’s overly aggressive anti-union campaign resulted in 29 unfair labor practice charges and over 200 violations. Again, that underscores the need for a Labor Department dedicated to giving workers a fair shake.

In Iowa, the state’s Grinnell College became the first in the country to form a wall-to-wall undergraduate union. The election was held in April and saw workers vote 327 to 6 in favor of forming a union.

Also, in April, workers at Amazon’s Staten Island fulfillment center voted 2,654 to 2,131 in favor of unionizing. As a result, the 6,000-member bargaining unit is now preparing to negotiate with one of the largest employers in the country. In addition, organizing efforts are underway at several other Amazon locations across the country.

And finally, last month, workers at Apple’s Towson, MD store voted to join the Coalition of Organized Retail

Employees (CORE), a division of the International Association of Machinists (IAM). As in the other organizing campaigns, money wasn’t the key issue for workers. Instead, they expressed a desire to gain a voice in the workplace to help influence decisions that influenced their private and work lives.



As retirees, this is exciting news to hear of workers joining our movement. New members increase our clout in Washington and our state capitols as we fight to protect and expand our Social Security and Medicare benefits. As reported in a previous issue of *SOAR Eyes*, if they regain the House and Senate in November, Republicans, led by Senator Rick Scott of Florida, have pledged to “reform” both senior programs.

## President of Alliance for Retired Americans Tells Senate Committee Social Security Must Be Expanded

By David Blank, Deputy Communications Director





# Beware the GOP's Plans for Social Security if Republicans Retake the Senate

By Robert Roach, Jr.

**August 14 marked the 87th anniversary of Social Security, a program that helps not only seniors, but also persons with disabilities, widows, and children who have lost a parent.**

Recent numbers from the Social Security Trustees Report in June were encouraging — the Social Security's Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) Trust Fund is strong and solvent, with enough money to cover full benefits and expenses until 2034, one year later than reported last year. However, we could still see cuts to the program if Florida Republican Senator and former Governor Rick Scott, the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC), gets his way.

The NRSC recruits and supports Republican candidates for the United States Senate, so Sen. Scott's plans matter.

He wants to require Congress to "sunset," or potentially end, Social Security and Medicare after five years, and then vote every five years thereafter on whether or not to continue the programs.

Senator Scott isn't the only one. Other leading Republicans are again talking about "entitlement reform"—which is code for cuts to Medicare and Social Security. In June Senator Lindsey Graham said, "Entitlement reform is a

must for us to not become Greece." which faced threats to its economy in the early 2000s.

That's nonsense, of course. The tax cuts for the wealthy the Republican Party shoved through during the Trump years ballooned the deficit, and will continue to do so for the next several years. Senator Graham's ideas for our earned benefits include "tweaking" the income cap and eligibility age for Social Security and Medicare. That's just another way of saying "cut."

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), before he rebuked Sen. Scott for putting these unpopular, extremist plans in writing, also supports cutting our earned benefits. As has Florida's other Republican Senator, Marco Rubio, and a host of other candidates and elected officials.

Retirees, beware. Republican candidates have declared their intent to cut the Social Security and Medicare benefits we've earned over a lifetime if they regain control of the Senate.

*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).*



**Robert Roach Jr., president of the Alliance for Retired Americans, testified on June 9 at a Senate Budget Committee hearing focused on expanding Social Security for all beneficiaries.** Entitled "Saving Social Security: Expanding Benefits and Demanding the Wealthy Pay Their Fair Share or Cutting Benefits and Increasing Retirement Anxiety," the hearing laid out the case for increasing benefits as millions of seniors struggle to make ends meet.

The testimony came on the same day that Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, chair of the Senate Budget Committee, and other Democratic legislators put forward new Social Security legislation that would increase benefits by \$200 per month and extend the system's solvency past the year 2096 by ensuring that the

wealthiest Americans pay their fair share of Social Security taxes.

Sanders' legislation, the Social Security Expansion Act, which the Alliance strongly supports and has formally endorsed, addresses the challenges seniors face by:

- ▶ **Expanding Social Security benefits across the board** for current and new beneficiaries by \$200 per month, or \$2,400 per year.
- ▶ **Increasing cost-of-living adjustments** by adopting the consumer price index for the elderly.
- ▶ **Updating the special minimum benefit for Social Security recipients** by making it easier to qualify, which will help low-income workers stay out of poverty.

"We need improvements because older Americans today are hurting,"

said Roach at the hearing. "And I have seen examples for myself firsthand. I have observed on many occasions seniors at the supermarket checkout who had to put food back because the grocery bill was more than they had. Seniors are having to make decisions between food and medicine on a daily basis."

In addition, the Alliance has endorsed Rep. John Larson's (Conn.) legislation in the House of Representatives: Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust (H.R. 5723). It also strengthens Social Security and repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset, both of which unfairly claw back the Social Security benefits of workers or their spouses or survivors if they worked for a period of time in jobs not covered by Social Security.



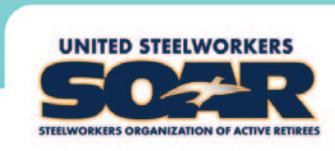
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