

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



BASIC STEEL UPDATE ¹⁰

BIG WIN IN HEALTH CARE ¹³

DEFENDING VOTING RIGHTS ²³

TESTING FOR ATOMIC WORKERS ²⁴

“THIS DEBATE IS NOT ABOUT FREE TRADE, PROTECTIONISM OR IVORY-TOWER ACADEMIC ARGUMENTS. IT IS ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO REAL PEOPLE. NAFTA’S LONG-TERM IMPACT HAS BEEN DEVASTATING, AND REFORMS ARE SORELY NEEDED.”

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT LEO W. GERARD ON OCT. 1, 2018 AFTER THE RENEGOTIATION OF THE NORTH AMERICA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WAS COMPLETED.

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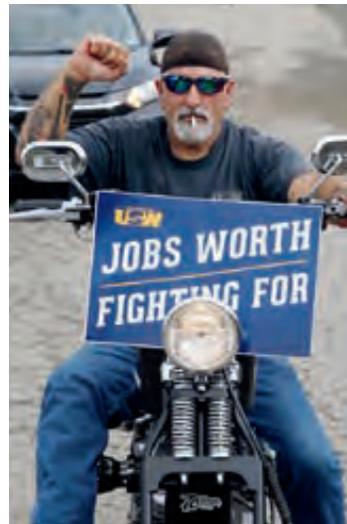
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ROBERT LAVENTURE

District 12

RUBEN GARZA

District 13



STEEL BARGAINING

The USW bargaining committee reached a tentative agreement with U.S. Steel. Bargaining continued with ArcelorMittal.

10



HEALTH CARE

The Alliance of Health Care Unions won across-the-board pay increases for 48,000 employees of Kaiser Permanente, including 7,300 USW members.

13



2018 ELECTIONS

USW members are working for political candidates who are dedicated to manufacturing and willing to fight for good-paying jobs.

19

FEATURES

SPEAKING OUT

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

03

TRADE WATCH

The United States reached updated trade agreements with Canada and Mexico, but more work is needed to protect the rights of workers and communities in all three countries.

18

NEWS BRIEFS

Time study classes are available. Labor unions regain popularity with public. A Colorado labor council put up billboards proclaiming Pueblo a “Union Town.” The USW condemns lockout at Bull Moose Tube in Georgia.

34

COVER

USW member Kenny Ramirez uses advanced equipment to make boxes at International Paper. USW photo by Steve Dietz. **04**

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

JIM McKAY Editor
WAYNE RANICK Director of Communications

AARON HUDSON AND GREG COLE Graphic Designers

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

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

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Proud Member

On this Labor Day 2018 with four days until my retirement, I wish to reflect upon my many years of being a dues-paying union member.

I come from a state that took away the right to negotiate a fair contract for our public workers. My state also implemented the divide and conquer scheme called “right to work.”

I may be unhappy to call my state home, but no one can take away my proud 42 years of union membership.

Stay strong.

*Harold Simon, Local 437
La Crosse, Wis.*

Union Man

Thank you for sending *USW@Work*. I have been proud of being a union man all of my life. I was a member of Local 1302 at Evinrude Motors.

What made me even more proud of being a Steelworker is reading about how much Steelworker locals have done to help victims of natural disasters in so many places in the southern part of America.

*Jim Sherwin
Delafield, Wis.*

Why Pay Dues?

Regarding the letter, “Why should I pay dues?” in the spring edition: There is a simple and very powerful reason to belong to a union and pay dues with a positive attitude.

Here is the thought experiment. Divide your dues for any period by the hours for that period. If the union was disbanded and the employer did not take back more than that value in wages and benefits, you are living on another planet.

Of course, if you can get all the benefits without paying the dues, you are a free-rider, which is equivalent to a scab. You will be playing into management’s hands, and soon you will be working for less.

*Jim Eshleman, retired Local 6014
Lancaster, Pa.*

Why Not A Labor Party?

With all of the problems we have with our two-party system, why is there no Labor Party like many other countries have? Can’t the major Internationals organize to create one?

This would be the ultimate way of showing the people that unions are there for their best interests with issues like health care, wage inequality, minimum wages, general wages, safety and more.

After being a member of Local 148-2 for over 46 years, having been involved as a local representative for over 12

years, I have asked this question of my International reps many times. I never got any meaningful responses other than to continue the union PAC programs. They don’t work. We are always outspent.

My solution to the problem is to join the fight with our own party and give the people another viable choice other than the dysfunctional Democrats and Republicans.

*Robert Saeger, Local 148-2
Black Creek, Wis.*

Read My Book

I have been a member of Local 1165 since June 1995. I am employed at Arcelor Mittal Steel as a plate grinder. I am a dedicated union member and will always stand strong with my union brothers and sisters.

I was challenged by a friend years ago to see if I could put my thoughts together and write an entire book because he got tired of reading the countless editorials I used to write. Lo and behold, I did it!

The book, *The Broken Circle*, is now available on Amazon. A few months ago, I had a book signing at my public library and donated the proceeds to a charity I feel strongly about, The National Conference for Community Justice (NCCJ).

The NCCJ is geared to end the racial divide in our communities, and unite everybody as one, as we do in the steel industry. Arcelor Mittal matched my donation, and that is something I’m very proud of since I am not in the corporate echelon.

*Terrence Forte, Local 1165
Coatesville, Pa.*

Don’t Forget Retirees

I know bargaining with U.S. Steel is an uphill battle always. Please don’t forget the retirees who built the business into what it is now. We gave the best years of our lives to the company, and we deserve to live in dignity.

Our health care is a disaster. Our costs have increased dramatically and benefits have decreased. There is enough money in that Carnegie Fund to allow all the retirees decent health insurance without having to decide between medicine, food or car repairs. Your efforts are appreciated.

*John Lambert, Local 1013 retiree
Collinsville, Ala.*

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

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



Low-Tech Product HIGH-TECH PROCESS

MEMBERS OF CALIFORNIA'S LOCAL 675 USE STATE-OF-THE-ART MACHINERY TO PRODUCE THOUSANDS OF BOXES EACH DAY

Photos by Steve Dietz



Marcus Rodela

The corrugated boxes that come out of the International Paper (IP) factory outside of Los Angeles may be simple products, but the work that Local 675 members do to make them is anything but low tech.

“This is some of the most advanced equipment in the country,” said Jose Lozano, who worked at the IP plant for 27 years and now serves as a field representative for the amalgamated local union.

Almost all of the machines that workers use at the IP corrugated box plant in Santa Fe Springs, Calif., are less than 12 years old, and many are far newer. Some of the equipment is so advanced that workers require multiple computers to operate it.

“Everything here is brand new to us,” said Local 675 member Rafael Núñez, who has worked at the plant for 18 years.

The 181,000 square foot facility, which has a “sister” site nearby that produces similar products, was built in 1957. About 92 hourly workers are members of the USW unit, part of a

local that includes workers at nearby oil refineries, recycling plants, industrial valve, galvanizing and metal coating facilities, mattress factories, car washes and other sites.

At the IP plant, USW members work on a three-shift, 24-hour, five-day-a-week schedule, with occasional overtime on weekends.

IP sells its boxes to a diverse array of customers, including beverage makers, grocery companies and online retailers. The company’s customer base is a mix of local and national accounts, said Angie Duvall, an HR generalist for IP.

The Santa Fe Springs plant, which produces tens of thousands of boxes each day, is one of many IP facilities in the region. The company operates nine plants in southern California and two others nearby in Arizona.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY, SAFETY

The kind of boxes USW members make in Santa Fe Springs date almost to the invention of paper in China more than 2,000 years ago. As more durable

forms of paper were developed over the years, the use of boxes grew more common.

Cardboard boxes were first mass produced as containers about two centuries ago. Box manufacturing follows the same basic process workers have used since those early days. The safety, efficiency and the level of physical strain on workers has changed.

“Technology has improved productivity and efficiency,” Lozano said. “It’s made the process easier, faster and safer.”

The process begins when enormous rolls of thick brown or white paper, some of which weigh nearly 10,000 pounds, are loaded onto machines called roll stands. The paper then travels through corrugators, which create the wave-like pieces that form the middle layers of the company’s box walls.

Sheets of flat paper are then glued onto the tops and bottoms of those fluted layers to form large corrugated sheets. Those are then cut and folded into various shapes and sizes to form the finished products.

PRECISION, CONSISTENCY REQUIRED

Along the way, USW members constantly test the pieces for quality control and recalibrate machines to match customer orders based on specific sizes and shapes.

Each step in the process requires precision to ensure quality and consistency, said Joe Esquibel, whose work places him at the beginning, or “wet end,” of the corrugator machine.

“If something goes wrong here, it’s going to show up at the other end,” Esquibel said.

That end is where Rafael Núñez works, in the plant’s tool and die room. He checks tooling before products reach the production area. He also reviews dimensions as well as any artwork or labels printed on the boxes to make sure they are correct.

About 90 percent of the boxes made in Santa Fe Springs contain some type of artwork, design or other identifying material, Núñez said.

NEW TECHNOLOGY, NEW WORKERS

The equipment at the plant is so advanced that once an operator registers an order, the machines can “remember” specifications and settings so IP can safely, quickly and easily fill future orders.

“We’re a bit ahead of other box plants in terms of technology,” said Edgar Velasquez, an 8-year IP employee who works as a maintenance mechanic.

Technology isn’t the only thing new at the plant – the work force also is relatively young. A wave of retirements in recent years has meant an influx of members with only a handful of years

on the job.

Despite their short tenures, young workers have a strong commitment to the union and its role at the factory, particularly on the subject of safety.

Kenny Ramirez has worked there for five and a half years. He said the USW’s presence at the plant helps to ensure that the jobs at IP allow workers to care for their families.

“You do what you have to do to provide for your family,” Ramirez said.

The union also works to ensure that members are treated fairly and that management can’t play favorites, said Alberto Franco, who has worked at the plant for six years.

“It keeps things fair and consistent,” Franco said.

Perhaps the union’s greatest contribution to the work environment in Santa Fe Springs is in the area of health and



Luis Salazar



Juan Romero

“ WE’RE A BIT AHEAD OF OTHER BOX PLANTS IN TERMS OF TECHNOLOGY. ”

- EDGAR VELASQUEZ



Rafael Herrera

safety, Núñez said.

The USW unit and the company hold monthly safety committee meetings and collaborate to solve any problems that arise, Franco said.

“Safety is a priority, both for the union and for the company,” he said. “You can see them taking action. It’s not just talk.”

That joint commitment has made the Santa Fe Springs plant one of the safest workplaces in what historically has been a dangerous industry. The factory recently went two years with only one minor incident.

In addition to regular joint safety meetings, the workers hold more informal daily discussions about their concerns. At the start of each shift, hourly workers and managers gather in a break room for what they call the “tailgate,” an open discussion of the previous day’s work.

“That’s where everything comes out,” Local 675 member Joe Esquibel said of those gatherings.

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

During a recent meeting, a USW member reminded his colleagues that every worker on the shop floor – including management – must have the same day-to-day commitment to safety. A manager standing nearby nodded in agreement.

The exchange was an example of the “teamwork” attitude that Esquibel said is present throughout the plant. That same approach helps both work on the shop floor and discussions at the bargaining table go relatively smoothly, Velasquez said.

Workers are covered under the USW’s master converters’ agreement

with IP, which includes 53 locations and more than 2,800 workers. That agreement sets economic conditions, but Local 675 and IP also have a contract that governs working conditions specific to the Santa Fe Springs box plant.

The plant was part of the Temple-Inland paper company until 2012, when IP acquired it in a \$4.5 billion merger. That acquisition improved labor-management relations at the factory, members say.

“We’ve been working toward a better relationship,” Velasquez said.

The joint commitment to safety is evidence that both the company and the USW value the people who work at the plant more than profits and production, Velasquez said.

“It’s not just talk,” he said. “They actually follow that, and they believe it.”



Eric Carrizosa

Joe Esquibel

Albert Franco

PROUD HERITAGE

**STRONG
FUTURE**



**OIL WORKERS SET
AGENDA**

NATIONAL BARGAINING TALKS BEGIN IN JANUARY

Local union delegates representing some 30,000 USW members who work in the oil industry at refineries, petrochemical plants, terminals, pipelines and as truck drivers approved an agenda for 2019 national contract bargaining.

The agenda, or national oil policy, was developed by more than 375 rank-and-file member delegates during a September meeting of the National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP) held in San Diego.

The current NOBP pattern agreement and related local contract agreements expire for most local unions on Feb. 1 at 12:01 a.m. Negotiations to replace them are expected to begin in mid-January.

Oil locals or oil units in amalgamated locals have 45 days following the meeting to present the new NOBP policy to their members, answer questions and conduct votes. The policy must be approved by at least 75 percent of the participating locals and units to take effect.

The delegates worked within 17 company councils to develop the proposals, which address wages, benefits and working conditions for USW members at 220 facilities across the industry. USW-represented workers produce about 64 percent of gasoline and related products in the United States.

Each proposal was vetted by an NOBP oil policy committee consisting of five elected rank-and-file members and five alternates. Changes were made as needed during the conference.

SETTING STANDARDS

The NOBP was established in 1965 by Al Gropiron, then president of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers (OCAW) union, as a way for oil workers to stand together and set industry-wide employment standards. Specifically, the NOBP established common expiration dates and a mandatory national oil bargaining policy.

The NOBP became part of the USW through the 2005 merger with the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE). OCAW merged with the United Paperworkers Union in 1999 to create PACE.

Once approved, the bargaining agenda will be discussed with Shell, the



**TEXT "OIL" TO
47486**
MESSAGE OR DATA RATES MAY APPLY

lead company this round, at a national table in January, while individual locals or units will meet with their employers over local issues, such as bidding rights and seniority.

International Vice President Tom Conway and NOBP Chair Kim Nibarger, a former oil refinery operator and union safety expert, have held preliminary discussions with Shell.

"We bargain for the greatest benefit of our members," Nibarger said. "Our goal is to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. We have a concise list of issues we expect to get action on."

In addition to setting policy, the delegates listened to presentations and participated in workshops. They also elected two new alternates to the oil policy committee – Kevin Herbein of Local 4-898 and Bryan Gross of Local 13-423. They are the alternates for NOBP regions A and E, respectively.

There were many new, younger faces at the NOBP meeting, an indication that

an upcoming generation is becoming involved with bargaining. The conference included presentations and educational workshops designed to familiarize newer members with the bargaining process, particularly those who may not have experienced a bargaining cycle or have been through only one round.

In addition, the Strategic Campaigns Department is holding kickoff sessions that include mobilization training, how to conduct effective contract campaigns, and how to use Communication Action Teams to inform and involve rank-and-file members of what's happening in bargaining.

A text message system will be used again in this round of bargaining and is being upgraded to allow targeted messages to individual councils. Members can join by texting OIL to 47486 and answering the prompts.

NO EXTENSIONS

Unlike previous rounds of bargaining, Nibarger told the delegates that he does not expect any "me too" agreements or contract extensions with the companies that are party to the negotiations.

"As we lead up to NOBP negotiations, we have received a number of contract extension requests from companies. This is not unusual. They were granted at times in the past, but so far this year, we have not entertained any such requests," Nibarger said. "This is a national pattern agreement, and all of the oil companies need to participate at one time."

Similarly, a prohibition on regressive contract language remains. No-regression language is part of a national agreement achieved some years ago by oil workers when they were part of OCAW.

Although NOBP negotiations occur at the national and local levels, Nibarger is trying to encourage USW company councils to act together in bargaining by putting proposals on the table at the same time or by coordinating information requests.

"It is my opinion we can accomplish more being united and moving in lockstep as a group than we can bargaining separately," he added. "That's why we need to bargain as councils. It makes sense to bargain as one group since we have many of the same interests."



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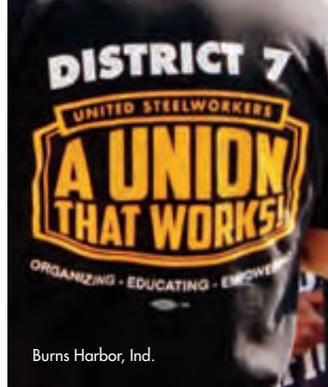
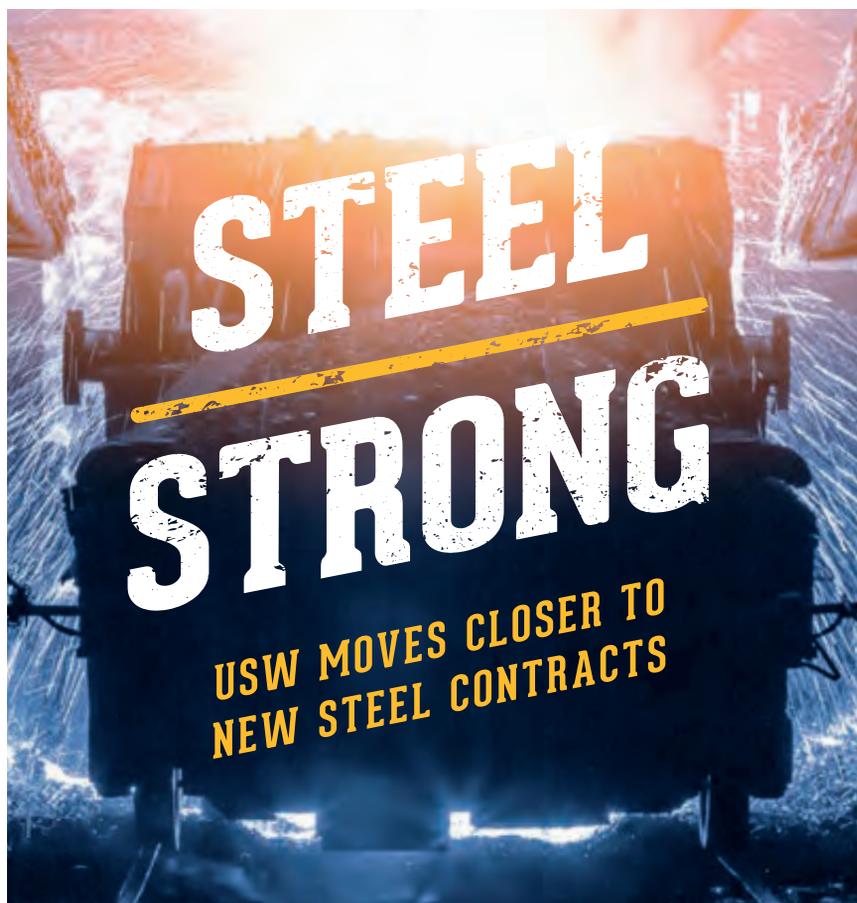
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THIS SIGN KILLS CORPORATE GREED
You should get one

WORTH FIGHTING FOR

USW LOCAL 1066
United We Bargain





As USW@Work went to press, members at U.S. Steel were preparing to vote on a tentative agreement while the union's Arcelor-Mittal bargaining committee also was making progress toward a new contract.

Those breakthroughs came after thousands of USW members at both companies voted unanimously to authorize a strike in September, a show of strength and solidarity that forced the two major steelmakers to back away from some of their most regressive demands.

The new agreements with the two companies will replace the three-year contracts that expired on Sept. 1. The union and the companies agreed to continue to operate under extensions of those agreements while bargaining continued.

INDUSTRY REBOUNDS

Talks began in July amid resurgence for an industry that had been struggling leading up to the prior round of bargaining in 2015. At that time, USW members recognized

the difficult position the industry was in -- brought on by massive Chinese overcapacity and a resulting flood of illegally traded imports -- and ultimately agreed to a three-year wage freeze while the companies regained their footing.

Both U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal rebounded and began to earn massive, even historic, profits. However, when bargaining for new contracts opened, they still came to the table demanding concessions.

"Steelworkers made sacrifices over the past several years that have allowed both ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel to be very successful," International President Leo W. Gerard said. "We came to the table seeking fair contracts that recognized

those sacrifices and allowed workers to have a share of that success."

Management opened bargaining with a different idea.

Both ArcelorMittal and U.S. Steel presented the union with concessionary proposals that sought to increase health care costs for members to heights that would have wiped

out any wage increases or bonuses that were offered. The companies' initial proposals also sought unnecessary work rule changes and other concessions that would have decimated decades of collective bargaining gains.

"We did not come to the bargaining table this summer looking for a fight," said International Vice President Tom Conway, who leads the union's U.S. Steel bargaining committee. "We came ready to work out an honest and fair agreement, but that is a far cry from what we saw in return."

MASSIVE SHOW OF SUPPORT

In the days leading up to the contracts' expiration, the USW held massive



Clairton, Pa.



Burns Harbor, Ind.



Burns Harbor, Ind.



Clairton, Pa.



Burns Harbor, Ind.

nationwide rallies that drew thousands of members and allies to plant gates and union halls across the country, generating an outpouring of community support for the union's bargaining position.

"These workers have gone three years without a wage increase," Gerard said. "In that time, they've seen the cost of everything go up; they've seen their employers report millions of dollars in profits; they've seen management pay themselves millions of dollars in bonuses. Now they are standing up and saying they've seen enough."

Still, even after the Sept. 1 expiration date came and went, the companies' greedy demands had changed little, and angry USW members scheduled strike authorization votes. Voter turnouts at USW union halls across the country were massive and the results were unanimous.

"These companies can easily afford to negotiate fair labor agreements with us, but they instead came to the table insisting on concessions," said District 1 Director David

McCall, who chairs the union's ArcelorMittal bargaining committee. "They demonstrated a fundamental lack of respect for the men and women upon whose shoulders rests their past, present and future success."

As the USW committees returned to the table following those votes, the companies' proposals showed signs that the union's solidarity was paying off. By late September, both companies had softened their most onerous demands.

TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH CLIFFS

The USW's position got a boost on Sept. 30 when the union reached a tentative agreement on a new four-year contract with iron ore mining company Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc., which operates facilities in Michigan's upper peninsula and Minnesota's iron range that employ about 1,850 USW members. Talks on that agreement began in early September.

The Cliffs agreement, which mem-

bers voted to approve by a 10-to-1 margin, included significant annual wage increases and none of the unnecessary concessions the other steel companies had sought.

The union's negotiations with ArcelorMittal cover about 15,000 members of 13 local unions while the USW's master agreement with U.S. Steel covers about 16,000 members of 24 local unions.

The ArcelorMittal facilities include: Burns Harbor, Cleveland, Coatesville, Conshohocken, Indiana Harbor East, Indiana Harbor West, Minorca Mine, Riverdale, Steelton, Warren Coke, Weirton, I/N Tek, I/N Kote, Columbus Coatings and Columbus Processing.

The U.S. Steel facilities include Clairton Works, East Chicago Tin, Fairfield, Fairfield Southern, Fairless Hills, Gary Works, Granite City Works, Great Lakes Works, Keetac, Lone Star Tubular, Lorain Tubular, Midwest Plant, Minntac and Mon Valley Works.



STRENGTH IN SOLIDARITY

KAISER ALLIANCE WINS CONTRACT FOR 48,000 HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Nearly five months of hard work and solidarity paid off for the 48,000 members of the Alliance of Health Care Unions (AHCU), as they ratified a strong national contract with Kaiser Permanente on Oct. 3.

The AHCU, which includes some 7,300 members of USW Local 7600 in Southern California, was able to secure across-the-board wage increases in each of the three years of the agreement with the health care giant. The alliance also was able to preserve strong health care benefits and language that protects workers from last-minute cancellations of their shifts, among other gains.

“Local 7600 leadership did a great job, both with engaging our members and keeping focus within the renewed alliance,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “It’s a diverse and active local, with thousands of members spread across more than a hundred facilities. Keeping everyone up to date and involved was a huge task, but our team made sure that together we were able to win this difficult fight.”

The negotiations, which began in May, were among the largest private-sector talks in the United States this year. The contract covers 32,100 in California; 6,300 in Oregon and Washington; 2,100 in Colorado; 2,200 in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia; 2,800 in Georgia and 1,900 in Hawaii.

Unity within the local and across the alliance was crucial to success.

“This contract would not have been possible without the unity and strength exhibited by every member of the Alli-

ance of Health Care Unions,” said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees USW bargaining in the health care sector. “We had six rounds of difficult bargaining, but our alliance stayed focused, and we walked away with a win.”

REFASHIONED ALLIANCE

Bargaining began last spring amid changes to the alliance of unions representing health care workers at Kaiser’s facilities across the country.

In March, Local 7600 left its previous coalition and, with seven other like-minded unions, formed the AHCU, which represents workers in hundreds of job classifications in nearly every geographic area Kaiser has a presence.

While these changes didn’t really shake members’ focus on negotiations, they were in the background as bargaining got underway, said Local 7600 President Valery Robinson. One of the committee’s key concerns was maintaining Kaiser’s funding for their Labor Management Partnership, even though the labor side of the partnership had shifted.

The new contract includes funding and a commitment to maintaining the partnership.

“It was really important that Kaiser committed to growing the partnership,” Robinson said. “Kaiser puts money into a trust fund, and it allows us to do things like our service work and trainings. It also funds our committees like our health and safety committee so that front-line workers have a chance to be

involved in making decisions on how their jobs are run.”

SOLIDARITY KEY

One of the crucial moments in negotiations came on July 8, when AHCU members boarded buses and traveled across Southern California to the city of Costa Mesa to rally at a hotel where the alliance and Kaiser were holding negotiations.

More than 2,500 members, including 500 members of Local 7600, took part in the rally, making it one of the largest, most successful solidarity actions in the 20-year history of partnership.

“There was this incredible energy,” said Melissa Knott, a licensed vocational nurse (LVN) who works at Kaiser’s Temecula Pediatrics office. “We were all there for the same reason: to show our solidarity and our commitment. But it didn’t stop there. We were able to take that enthusiasm and bring it back home into our workplaces.”

After the rally, alliance members distributed buttons and stickers, and established “union color days” where they each wore the colors of their union every Tuesday. They also gathered tens of thousands of signatures on cards and petitions to management, calling for a fair contract.

In the end, the group reached another standard-setting agreement.

“I think it was really important that we presented a united front,” said Local 7600 Vice President Liz Cuevas. “Every day, management saw that we were coordinated, and we were serious.”

RUBBER & PLASTICS INDUSTRY CONFERENCE



International Secretary Treasurer Stan Johnson



Photos by Van Tenpenny

The USW's 7th annual Rubber and Plastics Industry Council (R/PIC), held in Murfreesboro, Tenn., on Sept. 26, drew member delegates and staff from across North America.

International Secretary Treasurer and R/PIC Chairman Stan Johnson led the conference. District 9 Director Daniel Flippo hosted the meeting. Tennessee AFL-CIO President Billy Dycus, former president of Local 115L, welcomed the 68 delegates and guests.

The delegates were representing thousands of union members who work in the rubber and plastics industries making vehicle tires, inner tubes, hoses and belts, gaskets, packing and sealing devices, containers, and other consumer and commercial products.

The conference was an opportunity for delegates to review the state of the rubber and plastics industries, to discuss important health and safety matters, to share information about individual factory locations, common issues and problems, and to discuss the impact of trade.

Chad Apaliski, a USW senior technician, presented detailed industry and trade information important to the delegates and the rank-and-file members they represent.

Overall, economies around the world have been expanding at a steady if sluggish pace since pulling out of the global recession of 2008-2009.

"The reason this ought to concern us is the simple fact that for many years the U.S. has been the only major economy that has been growing," Apaliski said. "When that happens, and other countries lack internal demand, our lax trade laws mean that those goods (from paper, steel, glass and tires) need a place to go, and they land on our shores."

The tire industry is growing in this country, with new capacity being built in the southeast, where organizing has been traditionally difficult. Tire capacity is also moving to Mexico as more car makers open factories there.

Employment in the tire industry has declined since the late 1990s, taking a big hit during the Great Recession and hovering around pre-recession levels until this year. Original equipment tire shipments have been recovering faster than employment.

Since 1998, tire imports into the United States have almost tripled from 72 million in 1998 to 190 million last year while domestic tire shipments have largely remained steady.

Delegates also unanimously elected the following members to the R/PIC advisory board: Ken Frankforther of Local 207L, Brock Hatlevig of Local 715L, Jody Jaurez of Local 307L, Todd Hastings of Local 745L and Steve Vonk of Local 310L.



NATIONAL GRID WORKERS MARCH IN BOSTON

As the lockout of more than 1,200 USW members at National Grid approached its fourth month, workers marched through the streets of Boston to demand a return to work and to call on Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts to remove National Grid President Marcy Reed from the organization's board of directors.

"Marcy Reed made it clear by cutting off our health care – it means you have no heart, no soul," said Joe Kirylo, president of Local 12003.

National Grid discontinued health care coverage for the workers, members of Locals 12003 and 12012, on July 1, about a week after locking them out. The two locals had repeatedly offered to extend their contracts while bargaining continued, but the company refused.

"It's sad to see how little National Grid cares for its employees, their families and public safety," said John Buonopane, president of Local 12012.

Since the lockout began, more than 100 National Grid customers have reported safety concerns. As workers marched on Oct. 10, the company was forced to shut down service to more than 300 customers after non-union workers inadvertently over-pressurized the system.

The issue of over-pressurization was thought to have been the cause of a series of natural gas explosions and fires in mid-September that killed one and injured about 25 in a nearby suburb. Those lines were maintained by Columbia Gas workers.

Since the lockout began, state utility regulators also expressed safety concerns, citing National Grid's "persistent disregard for federal and state pipeline safety regulations."

In a letter to National Grid, the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities said the company has shown "a persistent pattern of poor management that has required the department's close scrutiny."

Dozens of Massachusetts politicians, including the entire Boston city council, have voiced support for the locked-out USW members.

U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey cited the lockout in calling for Congressional hearings after the September explosions.

"They're fighting for better wages and health care coverage. Steelworkers don't back down," Warren wrote on Facebook after joining USW members on the picket line.

To join the call for Congressional hearings, visit usw.to/NGhearing.





VOTERS REPEAL RIGHT TO WORK IN MISSOURI

Given a chance to vote on their future, the citizens of Missouri successfully derailed a right-to-work law this summer that was approved last year by the Republican-controlled state legislature.

Voters on Aug. 7 overwhelmingly defeated by a two-to-one margin a big-business bid to make Missouri the 28th right-to-work state in the nation. It was the second time in 40 years that Missouri residents voted against right to work. Ohio voters struck down a similar law in 2011.

Missouri was a rare opportunity for voters to directly weigh in on the misnamed right-to-work laws, which are typically enacted by partisan legislators. The Missouri results, labor leaders argued, revealed how little public support there is for the law.

The ballot measure helped to drive Missouri's largest voter turnout for a primary election in over a decade. One third of registered voters statewide cast ballots, the highest primary turnout since August 2004 when nearly 36 percent of voters considered a gay marriage referendum.

"Right-to-work policies win when decided by Republican politicians and right-wing judges," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "They lose when decided by voters – even in red states that went for President Donald Trump."

The unstated purpose of right-to-work laws is to make it harder for working people to form and join unions and collectively bargain for their future.

Most union members know that collective bargaining can be effective. Union workers make more money than non-union workers, are more likely to be covered by company-sponsored health insurance and are less likely to be injured on the job.

"The problem with trying to peddle right to work in the Show-Me State is that it has nothing to do with rights or jobs. Right to work is about power," Gerard said.

"Right-to-work states take power from workers and hand it to corporations, CEOs and wealthy shareholders. Right to work makes the rich richer. It makes workers poorer."

The resounding ballot victory was in sharp contrast to states like Indiana, Michigan and Wisconsin, where right-

to-work laws were pushed through by corporate-bought politicians with little or no public debate.

In Kentucky, the 27th state to adopt right to work, the legislation was approved in 2017 after Republicans won control of the general assembly for the first time since 1921. The state Senate voted in a rare Saturday session.

After the right-to-work law passed the Missouri Republican legislature and was signed by then Gov. Eric Greitens in 2017, union members and their allies gathered more than 310,000 signatures to stop the law from going into effect.

Thousands of people, including active USW members and retirees, partnered with a coalition of workers, students, seniors, and their families in a group movement, “We Are Missouri,” to defeat the referendum.

Together, they talked to their neighbors, friends and co-workers. Volunteers knocked on an estimated 800,000 doors, made more than 1 million phone calls, and discussed issues with working people at more than 1,000 job sites.

USW members explained the legislation to their co-workers, friends, and families. They held rallies and town hall style meetings and did presentations at district educational conferences.

“We had door knocks in every community where there are USW members, including large cities like St. Louis and Springfield, and in rural parts of the state,” said District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, whose region includes Missouri. “We had a pretty good ground game.”

For example, the officers of Local 11-6, which represents gas utility workers in St. Louis, made a point to visit all of their members at different crew locations and to explain the legislation and the necessity of voting no.

“We knocked on labor-friendly

doors. We did phone banking to labor-friendly folks affiliated with our union and other unions, and we worked the polls on the day of the election,” said Rod Herrmann, the local’s business rep.

“The voters were educated. They understood it, and that’s the reason it was voted down,” Herrmann said.

Ramirez thanked USW members who participated by talking to their



USW member John Powell (left) erects a highway sign with Bill Kraemer, a member of Laborers Local 830 and a candidate for state representative.

neighbors, co-workers and family members. He also praised the retired members who volunteered through the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

Retired members who belong to SOAR were involved in every aspect of the campaign. They collected petitions, gathered “Vote No” pledge cards, distributed yard signs and canvassed neighborhoods, said Bill Finkle, legislative chair for SOAR Chapter 34-3 in Kansas City.

The Proposition A initiative was originally scheduled to appear on the Nov. 6 general election ballot. Missouri Republicans wanted to avoid turning out labor voters in the crucial November elections, so they passed legislation moving the vote to the Aug. 7 primary.

“They (anti-worker legislators) thought they were smart when they moved the vote to Aug. 7,” Finkle said. “They thought union voters weren’t going to turn out to vote against it. We proved them wrong.”

Ramirez credited the USW’s Rapid Response Program for effective messaging. Rapid Response circulated InfoAlerts, ActionCalls and Feedback Reports and other materials.

“The thousands of miles and hundreds of union meetings really paid off,” said Bob Ryan, District 11’s Rapid Response coordinator. “It was a good feeling to see that win for working families.”

Voter registration was a key part of the Rapid Response efforts.

“Our members hit the ground running and took advantage of the state’s online voter registration by utilizing tablets in their workplaces and at local union functions to have their members check their voter status and then easily register online,” said Amber Miller, national Rapid Response coordinator.

“This was a different approach than we have typically taken

– but proved to be solidly effective. Because of their hard work, hundreds of our members were able to register after being purged – some without their knowledge. Others registered for the first time.”

John “Tiny” Powell, an industrial electrician who belongs to Local 16G at the Mississippi Lime Co. in St. Genevieve, Mo., took a leave to act as casual staff.

Working out of the union hall, Powell started by persuading as many people as possible to register to vote. He then coordinated door knocking, rallies and election information distribution.

“We kicked ass and kept everyone fired up. It was awesome,” Powell said.

Education was the key to victory, Powell said. Many people didn’t know that right to work is not at all what it sounds like, and were surprised to find that unions were required to represent workers who decline to pay fair-share fees.

“This wasn’t a battle fought only by the unions,” he said. “We led the charge, and I’m proud of that, but we had to have support from non-union workers to stop this law. There was no union versus non-union. It was a worker issue, and that’s what did it.”

MORE WORK AHEAD UPDATED TRADE AGREEMENT IS AN IMPROVEMENT, BUT FLAWS REMAIN

The United States reached agreements this fall with Canada and Mexico on an updated trade agreement that includes some significant improvements over the deal that has devastated U.S. manufacturing over the previous two decades.

Still, much more work is required before the agreement takes effect to protect the rights of workers and communities in all three countries.

The new agreement, called the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) would replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

“USW members have suffered from the devastating effects of NAFTA in both the United States and Canada,” International President Leo W. Gerard said following the announcement in October that the United States had completed its negotiations with both countries.

“This debate is not about free trade, protectionism or ivory-tower academic arguments – it’s about what will happen to real people.”

The original NAFTA agreement, which took effect in 1994, was devastating on a number of fronts. The deal led to the loss of more than 850,000 manufacturing jobs and the closure of 50,000 factories in the United States.

In addition, the U.S. trade deficit with Mexico swung from a \$1.7 billion surplus in 1993 to a \$61.4 billion deficit 20 years later.

Worse yet, the agreement created a “race to the bottom,” in which corporations were able to seek out locations where they could exploit the lowest possible wages and the most lax environmental and safety regulations in order to maximize profits. That led to massive

offshoring and resulted in lower wages for U.S. workers.

“The impact of the deal must be measured not only by what is in the final agreement, but also by what Mexico adopts legislatively to implement its commitments,” Gerard said. “Also, what will the administration and Congress do to ensure that the provisions of any final agreement are effectively applied, monitored and enforced?”

Early reaction to the agreement from Congress was hesitant. Some Republicans, notably Texas Sen. John Cornyn, said the agreement may not be good enough to survive a vote.

“People are still going through the details, but it’s not a foregone conclusion that it will get confirmation by the Senate,” Cornyn said.

Even if Congress ultimately approves the deal, the vote may not come until after the Nov. 6 elections and possibly

U.S. Trade Rep. Robert Lighthizer on what must be done to improve the agreement.

Those recommendations included:

- Elimination of rules that allow companies to freely offshore jobs.
- Enforceable controls on currency manipulation, illegal dumping and subsidization.
- Strong “rule of origin” policies that look not only at where materials are made but how they are made.
- Requirements that imported goods, including food, meet all domestic safety, right-to-know and environmental rules.
- An end to rules that give drug companies extended monopolies and ultimately drive up the cost of life-saving medicines.

“Reversing the negative impact of NAFTA has been a priority of the USW since the day Congress approved it nearly 25 years ago,” Gerard said.

“The USW and other labor groups have worked closely with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer since the United States initiated renegotiation of NAFTA. Labor has provided concrete and specific recommendations. Ambassador Lighthizer has worked diligently and seriously to resolve these issues.”

Gerard said the USW

“looks forward to continuing to work with the administration, Congress and our colleagues in Mexico and Canada to ensure that a final agreement and all of the implementing provisions promote broadly-shared prosperity for all workers in North America. We remain hopeful that the provisions will measure up and are committed to making this happen.”



AP photo / Eduardo Verdugo
Employees at work in the new multibillion-dollar Honda car plant in Celaya, in the central Mexican state of Guanajuato

could have to wait until 2019, depending on which party controls the new Congress next year. The entire U.S. House of Representatives and one-third of the U.S. Senate are up for election this fall.

Since the Trump administration took office last year with a plan to re-do the disastrous trade deal, the USW has provided concrete, specific recommendations to

STEELWORKERS *for* POLITICAL ACTION

USW MEMBERS CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown has without question fought for Steelworker jobs on the national stage in Washington, D.C., and on his home turf in Ohio. That's why USW member Tiffany McKee is fighting for his re-election.

In this year's mid-term elections, Brown is running to retain his crucial Senate seat from a challenge by U.S. Representative Jim Renacci, a Republican whose extreme right-wing views on domestic policies could not be more different than Brown's union-friendly attitudes.

"Sherrod Brown is our champion," said McKee, who is working full time this election season canvassing union households, leafleting union workplaces and making phone calls to union members in Ohio on behalf of Brown and Richard Cordray, the Democratic candidate for Ohio governor.

"It's important that we have labor-friendly, union-friendly voices in Washington and our state government," said McKee, a coordinator for the USW's Rapid Response and Next Generation programs.

The USW brought together a diverse group of members, young and old, to leaflet work sites, campaign door to door and phone bank in key races all over the country. Some are veterans at political work and others are brand new to the experience.

"The nation is at a turning point," former Labor Secretary Robert Reich told union members in a teleconference held with AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to promote election participation.

"We just can't go on with almost all of the economic gains going to a handful at the top and most workers getting very little," Reich said. "Our politics can't survive it. Our



“IT’S IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE LABOR-FRIENDLY, UNION-FRIENDLY VOICES IN WASHINGTON AND OUR STATE GOVERNMENT.”

TIFFANY MCKEE

society and our ideals of freedom and equal opportunity can't survive this, which is why you are so important – why unions are critical for the future.”

GETTING INVOLVED

Eric Licht, a USW paperworker from Wisconsin, has been secretly interested in politics over the years and decided this was the right time for him to get publicly involved.

“I kept my interest in politics to myself just because I didn't want to get into fights and arguments with family, friends and co-workers,” he said.

Licht hopes to persuade union workers of both parties to get behind candidates who support working families and heal the divisions that occurred during the 2016 election.

“With our own members it was just split,” he said. “Hopefully this time we can meet in the middle over issues and candidates who are going to help us as union brothers and sisters.”

Johnnie Robinson, a USW member from District 9, is



“HOPEFULLY, THIS TIME WE CAN MEET IN THE MIDDLE OVER ISSUES AND CANDIDATES WHO ARE GOING TO HELP US AS UNION BROTHERS AND SISTERS.”

ERIC LIGHT

participating for the first time. “I’m excited about it,” she said. “I’m going to get up and be a go-getter out there to make a difference.”

The USW, its campaign workers and volunteers are putting extra effort into political races in states like Ohio where the union has membership density and where there are races for both governor and the U.S. Senate. They include Pennsylvania, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada and Wisconsin, among others.

“We’re focused in places where our jobs are on the line,” USW Political Director Tim Waters said. “We’re pushing candidates that are dedicated to manufacturing, have a plan and are willing to fight for us and our jobs.

“It’s a huge map,” Waters said. “There are races at every level of politics, from the U.S. Senate all the way down to school board races in communities across the country that are important to us.”

“I’M EXCITED ABOUT IT, I’M GOING TO GET UP AND BE A GO-GETTER OUT THERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

JOHNNIE ROBINSON

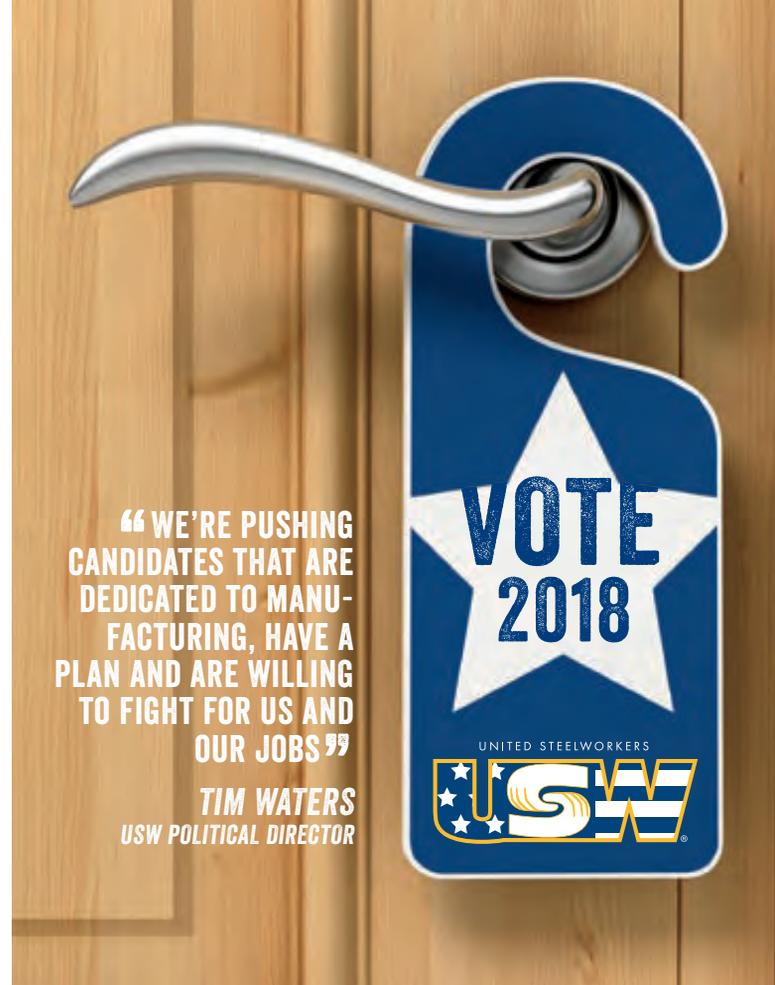


VOICE FOR THE UNION

A two-term incumbent, Brown represented Ohio’s 13th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives before he was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2006. He is now Ohio’s senior senator.

“Sherrod Brown is a leader for our union, a voice for our union,” Waters said. “He has a long track record, and we are really focused on that election.”

Cordray, a former Ohio attorney general, solicitor general and treasurer, is the underdog in the neck-and-neck race to succeed Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a Republican and former presidential candidate. Cordray’s opponent, Ohio Attorney General Michael DeWine, is a former senator whom Brown ousted in 2006.



“WE’RE PUSHING CANDIDATES THAT ARE DEDICATED TO MANUFACTURING, HAVE A PLAN AND ARE WILLING TO FIGHT FOR US AND OUR JOBS”

TIM WATERS
USW POLITICAL DIRECTOR

The union learned some valuable lessons in recent elections in Alabama, Pennsylvania and Virginia, Waters said.

In 2017, energized voters elected Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, a Democrat, as governor of Virginia over Republican Ed Gillespie. The voter turnout was the highest in 20 years for a Virginia gubernatorial election, with 47 percent of the constituency casting ballots.

In Alabama, Doug Jones, a respected former U.S. Attorney, narrowly defeated Republican jurist Roy Moore in a special election to fill the seat vacated by Attorney General Jeff Sessions. That win made Jones the first Democrat to be elected to the U.S. Senate from Alabama in 25 years.

In another major upset, Conor Lamb, a young, previously unknown Democrat, won a special House election in Pennsylvania’s 18th Congressional district, a typically Republican area that backed the president in 2016.

BUILD ON ENTHUSIASM

“The Steelworkers led these campaigns. What we learned is there’s a lot of enthusiasm out there, and our members especially understand the importance of making our voices heard, more this year than in any other off-year, mid-term election,” Waters said.

“We’re really focused on laying out the issues and the candidates in a detailed way to USW members and offering information to help them make their decision.”

It’s important to know where the candidates that get your vote stand on issues important to workers, retirees and their unions including fair wages, health care, retirement security

and the right to join or form a union.

“Workers’ rights, pensions, Social Security and affordable health care are all on the ballot this election,” International President Leo W. Gerard said in urging USW members to participate in the elections and vote. “We need to continue the battle to defend and expand workers’ rights and retirement security. People have a right to retire with dignity.”

Anyone who can’t volunteer to knock on doors or make phone calls should consider donating to the USW’s Political Action Committee (PAC) through local unions, and remember to vote on Nov. 6, general election day.

Those who don’t think their vote means anything should consider the 2017 election for Virginia’s House of Delegates, where a tied race determined which party would control the entire House, Waters said.

On Election Day, incumbent Delegate David Yancey, a Republican, appeared to win the race over Democrat challenger Shelly Simonds by 10 votes, but a recount put Simonds ahead by one vote.

The next day, a three-judge recount court ruled that a single ballot that had been discarded during the recount should be tallied for Yancey. The race was tied with each candidate having 11,608 votes.

To break the tie, their names were put in separate canisters and placed into a bowl. One name, Yancey’s, was randomly drawn, throwing the race and control of the chamber to the Republican Party.

PENNSYLVANIA

So-called right-to-work legislation is a looming concern in a number of states. The Republican super majority in Pennsylvania’s state House and Senate, for example, has a right-to-work bill ready to push through after the Nov. 6 election.

In Pennsylvania, the USW is backing incumbent Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, who is facing former state Senator Scott Wagner, a Republican businessman who has endorsed right-to-work legislation.

Wagner singled out labor unions for sharp attacks during his four years in the state Senate. During the primary campaign, he said he supports right-to-work legislation, which is strongly opposed by labor unions for banning fair share payments from nonmembers, or free riders who would benefit from union-negotiated contracts without paying dues or fair share fees.



“THERE’S A LOT AT STAKE. WE’RE KNOCKING ON DOORS, MEETING WITH LOCAL UNIONS, LOCAL PRESIDENTS, AND RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS.”

BILL SYCKLE

“Right to work is a huge issue for Steelworkers,” Waters said. “And there is just one person standing between us and right to work for the whole state of Pennsylvania, and that’s Tom Wolf,” Waters said.

The USW is also backing incumbent U.S. Senator Bob Casey Jr., a Pennsylvania Democrat, in his reelection bid against challenger U.S. Representative Lou Barletta, co-chair of President Trump’s 2016 campaign in Pennsylvania.

“MOST PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY REALLY SUPPORTIVE OF THE MESSAGE WE’RE BRINGING.”

CHAD SULLIVAN



MICHIGAN

In Michigan, USW members are working to reelect U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, a Democrat, to a fourth term, over Republican opponent John James, a Detroit businessman.

Pollsters say James, whose family business specializes in transportation and warehousing, faces an uphill battle against the veteran Stabenow, who is well-liked and known to voters.

All of Michigan’s 14 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are up for election this year. Incumbent Gov. Rick Snyder was term limited and could not run for a third term in office.

Democrat Gretchen Whitmer, a former prosecutor who has served in both Michigan’s Senate and House of Representatives, is running for governor against Republican Attorney General Bill Schuette, a mainstay in state Republican politics.

“There’s a lot at stake. We’re knocking on doors, meeting with local unions and local presidents, and recruiting volunteers,” Bill Syckle, a member of Local 2-540, said in describing long days on the campaign for Whitmer and other Democrats. “If what I’m doing helps in November, it will be worth every minute.”

TEXAS

USW members Chad Sullivan and Emir Hinojosa knocked on doors in suburban Houston for Beto O’Rourke, a Texas Democrat and former musician running against U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, a Republican presidential candidate in 2016.

O’Rourke, a U.S. Congressman who until recently was largely unknown outside of Texas, started out as an underdog against Cruz, a senator since 2013, but significantly improved his standing while visiting all of the state’s 254 counties.

“I really am excited because I want Beto to lead the charge in Texas,” Sullivan said. “We’re knocking on doors, talking to people and getting them to move on Beto.”



“ WE WERE KNOCKING ON DOORS EVERY DAY UNTIL THE STORM HIT. ”

JOE SMITH

Sullivan and Hinojosa also promoted Sylvia Garcia, a Houston Democrat who won a crowded congressional primary election in March to succeed retiring U.S. Representative Gene Green, a friend of labor, in a district with a predominantly Hispanic population.

“Most people are actually really supportive of the message we’re bringing,” Sullivan said. “It’s been working out well.”

NORTH CAROLINA

Labor’s effort to loosen Republican control of North Carolina’s state government was diverted to disaster relief in September by Hurricane Florence, which left behind death and massive destruction in the Carolinas.

Republicans held a super majority in North Carolina’s General Assembly, allowing them to override vetoes by Governor Roy Cooper, a Democrat, and limit what Democratic legislators can do.

“We were knocking on doors every day until the storm hit,” said election volunteer Joe Smith, who was working with another USW member, Joe Shelley. After that, their immediate attention turned to relief work.

With many roads still washed out, labor volunteers did outreach over the phone. They asked union members how they were coping in the aftermath of the storm and if they needed help before reminding them they can use absentee ballots if necessary.

MINNESOTA

USW member Tuan Vu, a health care worker, was

pounding the pavement and talking to union voters in Minnesota, where the ballot for the November election is unusually busy and consequential.

“The members we’re talking to are supportive,” Vu said.

There’s an open race for governor between Congressman Tim Walz, a member of the state’s Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and Republican legislator Jeff Johnson. Both U.S. Senate seats are on the ballot, along with a number of highly competitive contests for the U.S. House of Representatives and state government.

Former Lt. Gov. Tina Smith, a Democrat appointed to the Senate to fill Al Franken’s remaining term, is running against Republican Karin Housley, a state senator, in a special election for a full term.

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat, is defending her seat against Republican Jim Newberger, a three-term state representative and a former paramedic.

Vu was particularly pushing for Walz, Smith and Joe Radinovich, a former state legislator and labor organizer who is running as a Democrat for Congress in Minnesota’s 8th district, an at-risk seat covering Duluth and the state’s iron range. Radinovich is facing a well-funded Republican, Pete Stauber, a former hockey player, police officer and a commissioner in the district’s biggest county.

“I’m pushing for Joe, Tina and Tim Walz,” Vu said. “We can’t be apathetic. If we keep this momentum going, if we keep working hard, we’ll do well in November and have good results.”

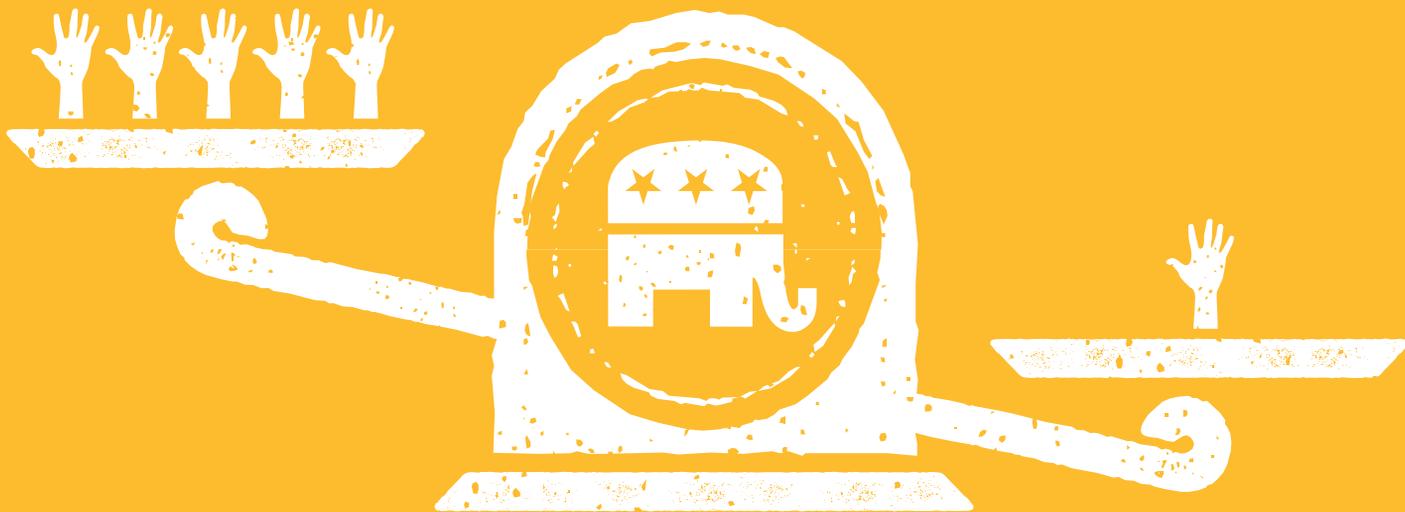
“ WE CAN’T BE APATHETIC. IF WE KEEP THIS MOMENTUM GOING, IF WE KEEP WORKING HARD, WE’LL DO WELL IN NOVEMBER AND HAVE GOOD RESULTS. ”

TUAN VU



JoAnn Loncar
Local 512T





Over the past several U.S. election cycles, conservatives have stepped up their efforts to suppress the vote from those who oppose their Wall Street-driven agenda. These attacks have been hardest on the elderly, the young, and on primarily African-American communities.

The attacks have come in the name of protecting us all against “voter fraud.” The only problem is this: They are all based on a lie. The fraud that these laws are supposedly designed to protect us from doesn’t exist.

A study by News21, an investigative reporting project funded through the Carnegie-Knight Initiative, included reviews of thousands of public records, court documents and media reports into election fraud in each U.S. state. Their findings: Out of hundreds of millions of ballots cast across the United States since the year 2000, there were only 633 incidents of fraud. That’s less than one instance of voter fraud per state per year.

Still, Republicans love to scare American voters into believing that in every election, cheaters are swarming U.S. polling places, casting thousands of fraudulent ballots to swing elections to Democrats. Stoking these irrational fears has allowed the GOP to institute some of the most restrictive voting laws our country has seen since the days of Jim Crow.

Republicans used this phantom “fraud” to purge voter rolls by the thousands, to curtail early voting favored by poor people who often have trouble getting time off to vote on election day, to cut the number of polling places in

THE ATTACK ON VOTING RIGHTS IS AN ATTACK ON US ALL



**BY FRED REDMOND,
INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT**

less affluent neighborhoods, requiring excessively specific types of identification to vote, and gutting the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Not only that, they’ve redrawn the borders of voting districts across the country, packing poor people, people of color and working-class voters into a small number of districts to tilt the scales in favor of wealthy Republicans.

It has been a coordinated, state-by-state effort to reduce the number of

Democrats who could cast ballots and to reduce the number of Democrats who hold office, all in the name of protecting us from fraud that barely exists.

The idea of voter suppression isn’t new of course. In 1980, Republican activist Paul Weyrich was telling the truth when he said that Republicans do better when fewer people vote.

“Our leverage in the elections, quite candidly, goes up as the voting populace goes down,” Weyrich said.

And this Republican effort to hijack our democracy hasn’t gone unnoticed. This past summer, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a 498-page report documenting and condemning voting restrictions and calling on Congress to correct the problem. Of course, what the commission calls a problem, Republicans in Washington call a solution. So they’ll likely do nothing.

Paul Weyrich was right about one thing – there are more of us than there are of them. When we work together – people of color, the poor, the working class, young people, and elderly people – we can’t lose. That’s why the only hope the GOP has is to stop us from exercising our rights.

There is one thing we can do to stop them, the one thing they are trying desperately to keep us from doing, and that is to vote. This Nov. 6, the entire U.S. House and much of the U.S. Senate will be on the ballot, along with governors and state legislators across the country.

If we get out and vote in greater numbers than we ever have before, we can show the power of collective action and perhaps spark a movement to retake our democracy from the one percent.

When USW member Loretta Moses retired from the Idaho National Laboratory, a Department of Energy (DOE) site known for nuclear research, she signed up for a free physical and a test for early detection of lung cancer.

That act saved her life.

A CT or CAT scan, a special X-ray that produces cross-sectional images of the body, located a nodule on her lung that looked suspicious. A follow-up biopsy confirmed a diagnosis of lung cancer.

“I had successful surgery, and afterwards follow-up scans showed no cancer was left in my body,” said Moses, whose doctors credit her success to early detection. “I was feeling great before I was diagnosed with cancer. I had no symptoms, and now I feel like I was given a new lease on life.”

Through the years, particularly in the Cold War era, DOE workers like Moses were exposed to hazardous and unsafe conditions that have led to cancers, respiratory diseases and other serious ailments.

As part of the 1993 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress directed the DOE to provide free screening to detect and address health problems of DOE workers and retirees.

Both the physical exam and the CT scan that alerted Moses to her cancer are offered free of charge through the Worker Health Protection Program (WHPP), one of four regional and two national programs set up to screen former DOE workers.

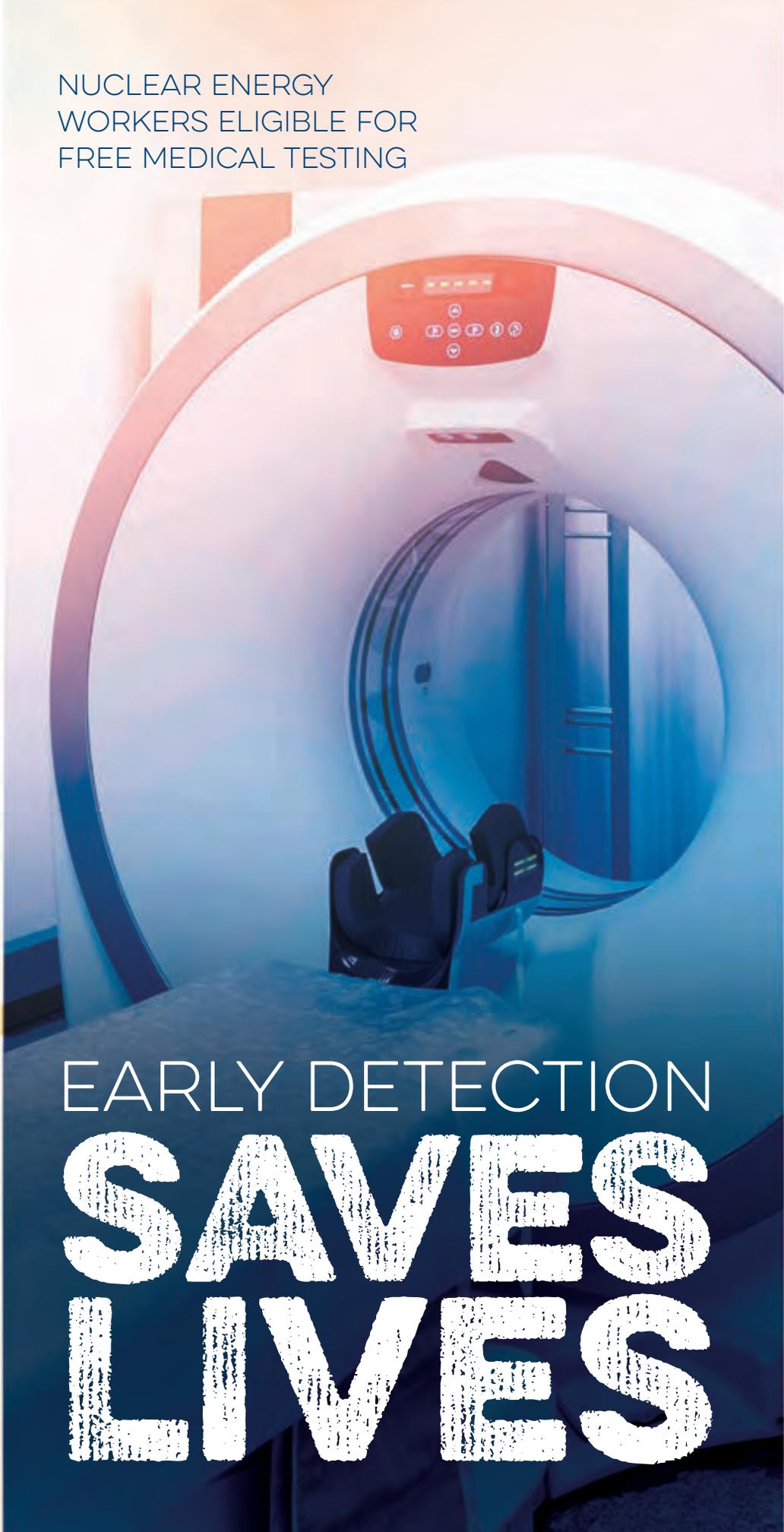
The WHPP is administered by Queens College of the City University of New York (CUNY) in partnership with the USW and the Atomic Trades and Labor Council in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The USW’s Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health, Safety and Environmental Education oversees the federal funding of the USW component of the program.

UNIVERSITY OVERSIGHT

To ensure objective and credible medical examinations, the medical evaluations are offered by providers in communities where the DOE operated atomic sites. The evaluations are overseen by the occupational medicine physicians at Queens College.

“When we started the program in

NUCLEAR ENERGY WORKERS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE MEDICAL TESTING



EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES

1998, we realized that DOE workers had spent decades exposed to harmful workplace agents but had little or no access to knowledgeable physicians who were ready to tell them whether their health was affected by those exposures,” said Dr. Steven Markowitz, who directs the WHPP program. “We filled that gap and still do. We are especially focused on chronic lung disease, lung cancer, beryllium-related disease and hearing loss.”

Dr. Markowitz is an occupational medicine physician and epidemiologist, as well as an adjunct professor of environmental and preventative medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

More importantly, he chairs the Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The board advises DOL about the nuclear weapons workers’ compensation program.

Since 1998, the WHPP has screened over 33,000 DOE workers and conducted over 64,000 exams at 14 DOE sites in eight states. The USW is involved with five of them: the Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho Falls, the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (GDP) in Kentucky, the Portsmouth GDP in Ohio, the Oak Ridge K-25 GDP in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and the closed Mound Laboratory in Dayton, Ohio.

Former workers from these facilities, as well as current workers from the three GDPs who worked at least 30 days, are eligible for the occupational health physical component of the exam, while a high-risk subset of this group may also qualify for annual low-dose CT scans for the early detection of lung cancer.

USW members or retirees who were exposed to hazardous substances at other DOE sites or have moved away from the DOE communities where they worked may be eligible to participate in the DOE’s National Supplemental Screening Program (NSSP) run by Oak Ridge Associated Universities.

COMPENSATION PROGRAM

A separate Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program (EEOICPA), funded by the Department of Labor, was authorized in 2000 to provide financial benefits to employees of DOE and their survivors or contractors who became ill as a result of exposure to

radiation or other toxic substances.

John Jenkins was happy to land a job at the gaseous diffusion plant in Portsmouth, Ohio, in 1989. He knew there were dangers, but the job paid well, and he could stay in the area rather than move for work.

Portsmouth was one of three large GDPs in the United States initially constructed to produce enriched uranium to support the nation’s nuclear weapons program and, in later years, for use by commercial nuclear reactors.

**“I WOULD
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D.O.E. WORKERS.
IT HAS BEEN A
TREMENDOUS
HELP.”**

From 1954 to 2001, the 3,777-acre site produced enriched uranium, including weapons-grade uranium, for the U.S. Atomic Energy program and U.S. nuclear weapons programs. After the Cold War, weapons-grade uranium enrichment was suspended, and production facilities were leased to the private sector. Enrichment operations were discontinued in 2001. Portsmouth is now in the process of being decontaminated and decommissioned.

“As time went on, I was involved in many different projects and worked throughout all the buildings within the plant,” Jenkins said. “My respiratory function declined with every year I worked, but I was in denial that my lung condition was related to the chemicals that I worked with every day.”

The CT scan provided by WHPP found lung and breathing problems. Jenkins also developed skin and bladder cancer, which was discovered through the WHPP physical exams. After his diagnosis, Jenkins applied for compensation through the EEOICPA.

“Thankfully, the medical procedures covered by the EEOICPA have resulted

in the remission or removal of all my cancers, including skin cancers, which continue to be removed as they develop,” Jenkins said. “I would highly recommend this program to all former DOE workers. It has been a tremendous help.”

LOCAL COORDINATORS

The WHPP employs a small network of former and current DOE workers as local coordinators to conduct outreach at community events and assist with program operations. They are often the first point of contact with program participants and serve as a key contact for follow-up questions.

Outreach activities have been successful in spreading awareness of the program, and attracting people to participate. Coordinators answer questions about the medical screening program, assist participants in filling out questionnaires and other paperwork, and guide those who are eligible through the compensation program.

“There are many, many people who have worked at these DOE facilities that do not know they are covered under the law,” said Jeanne Cisco, one of the coordinators at the Portsmouth facility.

In most DOE facilities, workers were not permitted to discuss what they did at work, leaving spouses and other relatives in the dark about what happened to make their loved one ill.

The Portsmouth plant was a family affair for Cisco, who is also the benefits representative for Local 689. She worked at the Portsmouth facility for 44 years in uranium processing, as did her husband, Steve. Her sister and her sister’s husband worked there in cleanup.

Cancer was discovered in Steve Cisco after years of participating in the program. Jeanne credits the professionals at Queens College for saving his life by accurately reading his records and test results and confirming cancerous locations in his body that other doctors missed.

“My husband would be dead if it wasn’t for Queens College,” she said. “Even when I retire, I will still do this. I can’t stand the thought of someone not having the help that they need.”

If you’re a former USW DOE worker who would benefit from a medical screening or a 3-year follow-up rescreen examination, please call the following toll free number: 1-888-241-1199.



variety
the children's charity®



Photos by Steve Dietz
From left to right: Liam Trefelner, Callie Rose, Colleen Skelley, Sienna Winfield, Ariel Winfield, Jen Winfield, Tyler Winfield, Nolan Przybysz, Cilla Leverknight, Tyler Winfield, former Vice President Joe Biden, USW International President Leo W. Gerard and Charlie LaVallee

Partners **WITH** Variety



USW HELPS SPECIAL CHILDREN LIVE FULLER LIVES

After a year of exhausting cancer treatments, one big bright spot in 12-year-old Gabby Laufer's life is a bicycle that allows her to zoom around her neighborhood in Erie, Pa., with her twin sister and their friends.

It's not an ordinary bicycle, but an adaptive bike – a large three-wheeler built especially for Gabby and donated to her family by Variety, the Children's Charity (of Pittsburgh), with financial and other help from the United Steelworkers.

In addition to individually customized adaptive bicycles, Variety provides eligible kids with adaptive strollers for easy mobility, and customized devices that give a voice to children with communication disorders through programs called *My Bike*, *My Stroller* and *My Voice*.

More than \$500,000 was raised to support Variety's programs, mostly from USW employers around the country, by International President Leo W. Gerard.

"I can't think of anything more precious than giving a child and that child's family the freedom that comes with being able to ride a bike or go in a stroller or use a communication device," he said.





Since 2012, more than 2,500 adaptive bikes, adaptive strollers and communication devices have been sponsored for eligible kids throughout Variety's 54-county service area in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Gabby led a normal, happy child's life until June 2017 when a visit to the doctor's office for a persistent cough uncovered a cancerous tumor in her left lung that was spreading to her right lung.

"Her world came to an immediate stop. Ever since, it's been trips in and out of the hospital with chemotherapy," said her mother, Carmen Laufer. "Gabby missed her entire sixth grade school year. She can't do anything she did before."

Cancer and the treatment left Gabby's legs and ankles numb. She gets dizzy from the powerful prescription drugs, and the threat of moving or damaging a chemo port installed in her chest stops her from the bruising activities that she used to do without fear.

"There are so many other things she can't do – gym class, volleyball, basketball, water slides, contact sports, anything like that," her mother said, noting that a weakened immune system meant no cool dips in nearby Lake Erie on hot days this summer.

"This bike gave Gabby her life back," she said.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Outfitted with leg braces, Gabby went back to school on Aug. 28 as a seventh grader. She was strong enough to ride her bicycle a few days later in Pittsburgh's annual Labor Day parade, joining more than 160 special kids, their parents and supporters all wearing red Variety T-shirts near the front of the parade.

This year's parade marshal was former Vice President Joe Biden, who lost a son to cancer and has formed a nonprofit organization, the Biden Cancer Initiative, to accelerate anti-cancer research.

"Thanks to Leo, I was able to tell Vice President Biden how Gabby bravely fought off cancer and still stayed so sweet," Variety Pittsburgh CEO Charlie LeVallee said after the parade. "It was a touching moment when VP Biden gave her a kiss on the cheek."

LaVallee, who likes to call himself Variety's chief excitement officer, said the joy he sees in the children whom Variety and its sponsors help has changed his own life.

"What I've learned is their joy changes all of us, to see how happy they are over a bike," he said. "Sometimes the things we take for granted are transformative for them, and they change us."

Most of the Variety children participating in the parade were riding adaptive bikes or strollers. Some were carry-

ing computer tablets that are adapted to help nonverbal children communicate.

Amy Dobkin, a Variety board member, watched approvingly. "For me, beyond freedom and joy for the kids, riding is about giving them opportunities. It means inclusion for all the families and they all get to do it together."

WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

As the parade marched through Downtown, 7-year-old Tyler Winfield proudly held up his end of a large Variety banner. A few years ago, Tyler, who is autistic, could only speak a word or two, leaving his parents and siblings frustrated that they did not know how he felt or what he wanted to eat for lunch or wear to school.

For kids who have communication disorders, Variety works with speech language experts to assess them and prescribe communication applications installed on restricted iPads that allow them to express their needs, desires and how they feel by pressing picture buttons or typing in words.

A first-grader, Tyler got his communication device a year ago last June. He learned to spell words and practice what he wanted to say. Now, he can speak confidently in full sentences to the delight of his mother, Jennifer, and the rest of his family. Tyler's father, Nathan Winfield, is a member of the In-



Photos by Steve Dietz
 From left to right: Emilee Alan, Sierra Fagan, Liam Trefelner, Noah Ondrey, Colleen Skelley, Evan Buchheit, Ariel Winfield, Jacob Buchheit, Sienna Winfield, Gabby Laufer, Carmen Laufer, former Vice President Joe Biden, Steven Pander, Carmen Laufer and Gabby Laufer



ternational Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART). “It means the world to us,” Jennifer Winfield said while waiting with Tyler to join the parade. “We didn’t think he would talk. To have him here saying full sentences, telling me what he wants, is amazing.”

Variety has donated all three available devices to Vinnie Beavers, a 16-year-old from Western Pennsylvania with a seizure disorder that limits his mobility and has robbed him of much of his vocabulary. His father Keith is an officer of Local 1138 at an Allegheny Technologies Inc. (ATI) facility.

The communication device permits Vinnie to interact and make friends at school, said his mother, Rachelle. Although he can only speak 15 or 20 words on his own, the device holds four pages of words that he can use to express himself.

“At school, it’s great,” Rachelle said. “It’s kind of a bridge between him and other students who weren’t quite sure how to communicate with him.”

The stroller, an expensive item, was donated to the Beavers family around the same time that ATI locked out 2,200 USW members in six states for six months in 2015 and 2016 over a picket captain.

“Variety is an amazing organization, and I would encourage USW members and the entire community whose children could benefit to apply for the program and use their services,” he said. “It’s really not too good to be true.”

SENSE OF FREEDOM

Jacob Buchheit, 22, who has a seizure disorder and is partially paralyzed from childhood, also uses all three pieces of equipment that Variety provides. He rode in the parade with his brother, Evan, and his mother, Eileen.

“Variety has impacted our lives tremendously,” Eileen said.

Jacob’s blue bike, the first personal adaptive equipment he received from Variety, allows him to participate in fund-raising events as a Variety Ambassador and join his family on scenic bike trails around Pittsburgh.

“It gives him a sense of freedom to go out and ride and have fun with us,” Evan said.

The bike is both fun and practical for Jacob, who has limited speech and mobility. The exercise he gets from riding the bicycle has helped him keep up the strength he needs to get through the day.

“The communication device gives him a voice,” Eileen, his mother, said. “It allows him to show his personality and connect with people who would never

get a chance to hear the personality he has, and how funny he actually is.”

Much lighter than a wheelchair, the stroller, which folds up like an umbrella and can fit in the trunk of a car, allows Evan to take Jacob to Penguins hockey games, the movies and walking around the mall.

One day about four years ago, Evan, who played club hockey at the University of Pittsburgh, noticed people getting off the ice who had wheelchairs, crutches and prosthetics waiting for them.

It turns out they were members of the Mighty Penguins Sled Hockey, which fields four teams of varying ages that give physically challenged children and young adults the opportunity to play competitive ice hockey.

The Buchheit brothers signed up to play. Jacob uses a stationary stand that came with his adaptive bike to maintain his core strength in order to play sled hockey.

Because Jacob is partially paralyzed, he can’t use his two sticks to push off. But he’s allowed under USA Hockey rules to have someone push him. Evan went through a certification process and trained to be Jacob’s pusher.

“They play together as one unit,” Eileen said. “It’s very cool.”

FIGHTING FOR SAFETY

USW, MINERS UNION CHALLENGE REGULATORY ROLLBACK

The USW and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) have joined forces to challenge a regulatory rollback of an Obama-era rule that required mines to inspect work sites for safety hazards before the start of every shift.

The USW supports a strong regulatory and enforcement approach to mining in the United States, and knows from experience that mines are safer when operators, regulators and the union work continually to improve conditions.

Federal law has long required underground coal mines to conduct pre-shift inspections. The USW, UMWA and other workplace safety advocates believe that similar rules should apply to what MSHA calls “metal and non-metal” mines – that is mines other than coal mines.

Mandatory Inspections

In the closing days of the Obama administration in 2017, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) significantly strengthened rules requiring mandatory inspections for metal and nonmetal mines. MSHA, however, changed course this year. Under pressure from an industry seeking regulatory relief, the agency loosened the very same inspection requirements it had enacted a year earlier.

The USW represents some 13,000 miners at metal and nonmetal mines and processing facilities in 31 states that are subject to the rule changes. They produce iron ore, copper, nickel, silver, salt, stone and gravel, among other materials.

In addition to coal miners, the UMWA represents miners at metal and nonmetal mines in North Carolina, Kentucky and New Mexico that produce a range of products including feldspar, limestone and perlite.

The rollback was announced by MSHA on April 9, and the changes took effect on June 2. In May, the USW and the UMWA filed a petition against MSHA in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Dis-

trict of Columbia Circuit seeking a review of MSHA’s administrative action.

The initial rule released in 2017 would have required metal and nonmetal mine operators to identify and correct adverse mining conditions before the beginning of a shift and make a record of the hazardous conditions.

Under the modified rule, mining operators may conduct the safety inspections “as miners begin their work” rather than before they start a shift. That change leaves it up to mine operators to decide the timing of safety inspections, potentially exposing workers to injury.

“You ought to know about hazards before the shift starts – not three hours later,” said Mike Wright, director of the USW’s Health, Safety and Environment department. “Inspecting a mine as work begins is like inspecting a ladder while you are climbing it.”

MSHA also modified a provision that had required metal and nonmetal mining companies to document workplace hazards during inspections. As long as the hazards are quickly corrected, documentation is no longer required.

That change, the USW believes, will make it more difficult to detect patterns of dangerous conditions in a mine, or to determine if operators failed to do enough to correct hazards they knew about.

OSHA Rollbacks

The USW has also pushed back against the rollback of safety standards overseen by another federal agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), created in 1970 to assure safe and healthful working conditions by setting and enforcing standards.

In July, OSHA announced its intention to repeal injury reporting requirements for large non-mining employers that were included in a rule adopted by OSHA in 2016, during the Obama presidency. The provisions were meant to promote the identification and correction of workplace hazards with the aim of preventing work-related injuries,

illnesses and fatalities.

The USW joined health experts, academics, and medical, scientific and labor advocacy organizations in asking OSHA to maintain the provisions of the rule as adopted in 2016. The USW and many other stakeholders submitted comments to OSHA in September.

The employer information sought by the original rule was intended to help OSHA allocate its scarce resources for compliance assistance and enforcement, and to help industry, researchers and worker representatives to identify hazards and halt preventable work injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

Valuable Data

In its original comments to OSHA for the rule, the USW cited an example of a local union safety committee at a tire plant that routinely reviewed OSHA injury and illness data and used the information to help identify a repetitive shoulder injury among tire builders. A pneumatic wrench installed on tire machines eliminated the hazard and the repeating injury.

The USW has also fought what the union called “unnecessary delays” by OSHA in implementing enforcement of a new standard for occupational exposure to beryllium, a toxic metal with many high-tech applications. The USW represents the majority of unionized workers exposed to beryllium.

Last year, the USW likewise fought a three-month delay in enforcement of a new OSHA standard enacted to protect workers from respirable crystalline silica. When workers cut, grind, or drill materials that contain crystalline silica they can be exposed to very small silica dust particles that can cause silicosis, an incurable and sometimes deadly lung disease.

“We have a clear and consistent policy no matter what administration is in power,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “We support them when they’re right and oppose them when they’re wrong.”

WIN FOR USW MEMBERS

COURT ORDERS EPA TO IMPLEMENT CHEMICAL DISASTER RULE

Tens of thousands of USW members work in the chemical, oil refining and paper industries, where they daily face the possibility that a catastrophic event at work could put them, their families and communities in harm's way.

This is why the USW is vigorously fighting attempts by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to delay or completely eliminate enforcement of safety standards for facilities that use or store large quantities of hazardous chemicals.

In a win for USW members and families who work in and live around these facilities, a federal appeals court this summer ordered the EPA to end delaying the implementation of previously-approved regulations that strengthen the agency's Risk Management Program, also known as the Chemical Disaster Rule.

Court Ruling

In its Aug. 18 ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit directed the EPA to immediately implement the rule, which aims to reduce risks associated with hazardous chemicals to owners, operators, workers and communities by enhancing the safety and security of chemical and other facilities.

While the ruling was a victory for the USW and its allies, it does not end the threat that the EPA may, in the future, seek to appease the chemical industry and eliminate all or most of the rule's protections.

"This is but a battle in the war as the union and community groups have seen an almost continuous onslaught against protections designed to help not only communities but also, ultimately, workers.

"What benefits workers in the plant helps improve the environment for communities outside the plant, and the reverse holds true," said Kim Nibarger, who directs the USW's National Oil Bargaining Program.

"The fact that these are among the richest corporations in the world tells

you they have a huge bankroll to fight against legal challenges they see as impeding them in any way."

Common sense actions

The updated rule requires common-sense actions, including improving coordination and information-sharing with first responders and local governments, involving employees in determining the root cause of incidents and near misses, and increasing information made available to surrounding communities about chemical risks.

Approximately 30,000 USW members work in the chemical industry at about 300 locations across the United States, according to International Vice President Carol Landry, who oversees that sector. The rule also impacts many of the 30,000 USW members who work in oil and petrochemicals.

One of the most important issues in the case before the appeals court was legal standing – whether the USW or other community and environmental groups have the legal right to be involved in the case.

The court's ruling strongly supported the union's standing, and made clear that labor unions have the right to defend their members, not only in the workplace, but in the community as well.

"When a number of groups combine as intervenors, a standing decision for one applies to all of the community and environmental groups. They achieved standing through us, a fact that may help in future coalition building," said Mike Wright, director of the USW's Health, Safety and Environment Department.

The new rule was initially set to take effect in June 2017, but former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt delayed it until 2019 as part of his overall agenda of EPA deregulation.

Reacting to Disasters

Reacting to a series of catastrophic chemical incidents— including a 2013 explosion at a fertilizer plant in West, Texas, that killed first responders and onlookers—the EPA promulgated the new regulations toward the close of the

Obama administration.

The chemical industry fought the new rules, and when the current administration took over the White House in 2017, the industry petitioned the EPA to delay and then eliminate them. Pruitt obliged with delays and reviews.

The USW and a number of environmental groups, community groups and state attorneys general challenged the delays as plaintiffs or intervenors. On the other side, industry groups and Republican-led states intervened on behalf of the EPA.

The EPA first promulgated accidental release prevention regulations in 1996. In July 2012, the USW joined a coalition of community organizations, environmental groups, and health care workers in petitioning the EPA to develop a rule that would require the use of inherently safer technologies, where feasible, by facilities that use or store hazardous chemicals. The petition cited damages from chemical releases caused both by accidents and terrorist attacks on U.S. facilities.

Chemical Incidents

Soon afterward in 2013, several chemical incidents occurred that received significant public attention and became subjects of investigations by the Chemical Safety Board. They included the West, Texas, event and an explosion at an olefins plant in Geismar, La., that killed two people and injured 167.

The Texas disaster involved a fire and explosion that crushed buildings and sent projectiles into neighboring communities, killing 12 first responders and two members of the public. More than 160 people were injured. Some 150 buildings were damaged or destroyed.

In August 2013, President Obama issued an executive order establishing a working group to study chemical facility safety and security.

In March 2016, the EPA announced its proposed amendments to regulations written to address chemical releases that the agency said caused \$247.7 million in on-site damages.

A photograph of Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, a man with a goatee and dark hair, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and patterned tie. He is speaking at a wooden podium with two microphones. In the background, a Mexican flag and a golden bust are visible. The image is partially overlaid with a dark blue box containing white text.

“WITH YOUR
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LEO W. GERARD

LONG EXILE OVER

NAPOLEÓN GÓMEZ RETURNS TO MEXICO AS SENATOR

Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, president and general secretary of Los Mineros, the Mexican steel and mine workers union allied with the USW, has returned home to Mexico as an elected senator after 12 years of exile in Canada.

Gómez received his Mexican Senate credentials on Aug. 28 and took the oath of office on Aug. 30. A USW delegation headed by Canadian National Director Ken Neumann was in attendance.

In the general elections on July 1, Gómez was on the winning Morena party ticket of newly elected President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who won the election with vows to end Mexico's culture of corruption, its high poverty rate, and inequality.

International President Leo W. Gerard welcomed Gomez's return to Mexico.

"With your swearing-in to the Senate, a new world of possibilities begins for Los Mineros and the working class of Mexico. For the first time in decades, there is a real opportunity to transform the structures of worker representation, industrial justice and economic decision-making to make democratic representation, real collective bargaining, decent wages and pro-worker policies available to Mexican workers," Gerard said.

"This transformation would benefit not only workers in Mexico, but also their sisters and brothers in Canada and the United States who have suffered the unfair competition resulting from wage suppression in Mexico," he added.

Len McCluskey, general secretary of Unite the Union in Great Britain and Ireland, a partner with USW and Los Mineros in the international union Workers Uniting, praised Gómez for resisting the efforts of the Mexican government and its largest corporations to destroy him and his union.

"Napoleon's return to Mexico to be sworn in as a senator for the Mexican republic is not only a victory for his and Los Mineros' courageous and dignified campaign, but for global solidarity in the face of injustice," McCluskey said.

"Unite is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with Napoleon and his union. His fight is our fight and we wish him every success in transforming Mexico in the fight for a better world."

REFUGE IN CANADA

Gómez and his family were forced to leave Mexico and seek refuge in Canada in 2006 after the government of then Mexican President Vicente Fox stripped him of his legal certification as leader of the union and filed bogus criminal charges when he protested the deaths of 65 workers in an explosion at Grupo Mexico's Pasta de Conchos mine.

Rescue efforts at the Pasta de Conchos mine were stopped after only five days, unlike the collapse of the San Jose mine in Chile four years later, when 33 miners were found alive after 17 days trapped underground.

Before the disaster, Gómez had warned of the dangerous conditions in the mines and asked that production be stopped

until conditions improved.

Following the tragedy, Gómez strongly condemned Grupo Mexico and the Mexican government, accusing them of industrial homicide for neglecting to correct health and safety violations in the mine.

In retaliation, the Mexican government removed Gómez as union leader and imposed a puppet leader as acting general secretary of Los Mineros. The move sparked a worldwide outcry, and international labor organizations launched a global campaign in support of Gómez and union autonomy in Mexico.

After receiving death threats for criticizing Grupo México, Gómez and his family fled Mexico in March 2006 with the aid of the USW. Later that month, the Los Mineros rank-and-file membership voted overwhelmingly in favor of Gómez as their general secretary.

SHAM CHARGES

Gómez was then persecuted through the courts on sham charges of corruption. Gómez successfully contested the accusations eleven times until a federal court finally put an end to the case in 2014, denouncing the charges as baseless and unconstitutional.

In 2013, Gómez was finally taken off Interpol's red alert list of wanted suspects after Interpol's own internal review board heavily criticized the Mexican government for using Interpol for its own political purposes. This meant Gómez was able to leave Canada for the first time since 2006.

Los Mineros leaders were targeted and imprisoned by authorities, including Juan Linares, who was illegally incarcerated for more than two years. Actions by global unions and their affiliates helped to secure his release from prison in 2011.

In the years after the Pasta de Conchos tragedy, the Mexican government continued its attacks on Los Mineros by freezing its financial accounts, imprisoning union leaders on false charges, attempting to eliminate the legal right to strike, and using police and military force in violent attacks on workers, resulting in the deaths of at least four union activists and injuring many more.

Yet despite this, Los Mineros has continued to be the most successful trade union in Mexico. From Canada, Gómez successfully concluded collective bargaining agreements, negotiating the highest wage increases of any union in the country.

With his return to Mexico, Gómez said he intends to reopen the investigation into the Pasta de Conchos tragedy, and fight for the rights of Mexico's trade unions. In his first week in the Senate, Senator Gómez led the vote to approve Convention 98 of the International Labor Organization on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, which has been waiting for ratification for 62 years.

As President of the Senate's labor commission, Gómez will also play a key role in drafting labor law reform legislation to end employer-controlled unions and allow workers to vote on their contracts.



USW Condemns Bull Moose Tube Lockout

The USW condemned the Aug. 22 decision by Bull Moose Tube in Trenton, Ga., to lock out 56 members at the specialty piping factory, a subsidiary of London's Caparo PLC., over contract negotiations.

"All workers deserve family-supporting wages, affordable health care and respect on the job. That is what these workers are seeking at the bargaining table," said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo.

"The company, sadly, would rather force their own hard-working employees out on the street than negotiate a fair contract that meets those fundamental needs," Flippo added.

"We call on Bull Moose Tube to immediately reverse this ill-advised decision, put these hard-working people back on the job, and return to the bargaining table to negotiate a new agreement that treats these workers with the respect they deserve."

New Contract for Medical Staff

Some 50 members of Local 4950-11 in Ishpeming, Mich., ratified a new contract in August, increasing wages and maintaining benefits.

The negotiations with Bell Physician Practices were difficult, but the membership, composed of LPNs and staff handling billing, medical records, reception and more, stayed strong and united and finally ended up with wage increases in each of the contract's five years.

Notable contract provisions include increased pension contributions, stronger language for new-hire orientations, as well as maintaining a buyout option for members who elect not to use company health insurance.



Billboards Proclaim Union Town

The Southern Colorado Labor Council raised money from t-shirt and button sales to honor union members in Pueblo, Colo., with three billboards proclaiming the city a "Union Town."

Labor unions, including the USW and the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), came up with the idea after a successful teacher's strike galvanized community support.

The teachers' strike revived memories of an historic Steel-worker dispute against the former Colorado Fuel & Iron, now known as EVRAZ Rocky Mountain Steel, from 1997 to 2004. SOAR activist Joel Buchanan, a veteran of the CF&I dispute, helped organize the striking teachers, one of whom was his son, and pushed for the billboards.

Two billboards were placed on Interstate 25 which runs north and south. A third was erected on Santa Fe Avenue, a main thoroughfare.

Watching Brazilian Elections

International Vice President Fred Redmond led a union delegation to Brazil to observe the first round of presidential elections on Oct. 7.

Joining Redmond were Clayola Brown, president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and staff members from the USW and the United Auto Workers.

The U.S. union delegation visited a polling place and met with leaders of Brazilian and international political parties. Brown and Redmond also met with Afro-Brazilian union leaders to discuss ongoing joint work to fight racism and develop black labor and community leadership.

"We can't allow the advances we have made for racial equality and justice over the past 50 years to be destroyed," Redmond said. "We have to stand strong and fight together."

Workers' Party candidate Fernando Haddad won 28 percent of the votes in the first round, and far-right politician Jair Bolsonaro won 46 percent. A second round of elections was scheduled for Oct. 28.

Haddad entered the race after former president and union leader Lulu da Silva, the overwhelming favorite in the polls, was imprisoned on fabricated corruption charges and disqualified.

Bolsonaro, who has support from business, corporate media and the military, has threatened to roll back human and civil rights laws and empower police to shoot to kill. He has publicly disparaged women, Afro-Brazilians and LGBT people.

Labor Unions Regain Popularity

Labor unions are regaining popularity with the American public and now hold a 62 percent approval rating, up from an all-time low of 48 percent in 2009, a recession year.

Gallup, the polling company, said the rate of approval for labor is the highest it's been since 2003, when 65 percent of the public thought positively of labor and George W. Bush was president. This year's rate is consistent with the 61 percent approval last year and is up from 56 percent in 2016.

Current support for unions is fairly high across the United States, Gallup said, with majorities of all major gender, age, education and geographic groups, approving of unions.

At the same time, union approval varies sharply by political affiliation. Democratic approval of unions has held fairly steady over time, while the approval levels of independent voters and Republicans have fluctuated.

This year, Gallup said 80 percent of Democrats approve of labor unions versus 45 percent for Republicans. The approval rate among Independents falls squarely in the middle at 62 percent.

Not Without a Fight

Leaders of Local 2-482 persuaded delegates at the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO convention on Sept. 26 to join them in a global solidarity action with the USW Kimberly-Clark council, UNI Global Union and IndustriALL.

Despite record profits, Kimberly-Clark announced plans to significantly scale back its worldwide operations and close its flagship plant in Neenah/Menasha, Wis., where Local 2-482 represents the work force.

Local 2-482 President Dave Breckheimer and District 2 Staff Representative Sally Feistel described to the delegates the fight with the company over its decision. Wisconsin public and private unions support the USW.



Bea Lumpkin and SOAR executive board member Scott Marshall

At 100, Bea Lumpkin Has No Plans to Slow Down

Bea Lumpkin has seen her share of difficult times for workers, but she also has seen plenty of reasons for hope.

The key to turning the tide is simple, she says: organizing. “None of us should ever give up,” Lumpkin said. “There’s always a way out if we unite enough people together.”

Lumpkin, a longtime USW activist and SOAR member who recently celebrated her 100th birthday, knows it can be done because she has seen it before, in the Great Depression and the rise of fascism that preceded World War II.

Legislation that established Social Security and the minimum wage and eased restrictions on union organizing came as a result of those struggles.

“FDR didn’t just give us the New Deal. He did it because workers kept pushing him forward,” Lumpkin said. “We have to give immigrants a lot of credit for that – there were a lot of people in the immigrant community who were very early labor organizers. They are a source of hope.”

The massive organization of workers following the Depression led to decades of prosperity. That same kind of activism today can turn the tide, Lumpkin said.

“The urgency of building and strengthening the labor movement has kept me going and given me a lot to live for,” Lumpkin said.



Students watch assistant instructor Steve Tilley of Local 851 L simulate basic assembly.

Time Study Member Education Available

The USW offers a time study education program for those local unions with employment contracts that include production rates or incentive-based pay systems.

Typically found in manufacturing industries like tires, pottery and mattress building, incentive-based pay systems can be complex and difficult to understand, yet they should maintain the basic premise of a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay.

“The USW’s time study program gives our members an opportunity to gain an even stronger voice in the workplace,” International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson said. “Having a qualified time study representative within the local union can be an incredibly powerful tool.”

The USW offers two levels of training starting with a one-week course for first timers. This entry-level course gives participating members a basic understanding of how incentive rates are established and calculated.

The course covers time study vocabulary, how to prepare for a time study, how to properly record and analyze data and how to draft effective contract language. Graduates will be able to perform a time study and make sense of time study data presented to them.

An advanced class brings together experienced time study representatives, and provides opportunities for local union participants to ask questions and discuss relevant topics while improving their time study skills and networking.

More than two dozen participants were expected to attend time study classes scheduled this year for Murfreesboro, Tenn., in early October.

If your local is interested in receiving time study training, requests can be made to the International through your district director or staff representative. All applicants must pass an entry exam that covers basic mathematic skills.

Wanted: USW-Made Goods!

Do the members of your local union make a consumer product that other USW members can buy? If so, let us know! *USW@Work* wants to help our brothers and sisters across the country purchase union-made goods. Email us at editor@usw.org, and tell us your name, your local union number and location, and the product(s) that you make so we can encourage other union members to support you.

Have You Moved?

Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

USW Membership Department,
60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



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SEE PAGE 8