

# USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers

**THE UNION WAY  
OF LIFE** <sup>04</sup>

**PAPERWORKERS  
PLAN FUTURE** <sup>14</sup>

**HEALTH CARE  
AT THE TABLE** <sup>19</sup>



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**"BECOMING A UNION MEMBER IS A LIFE-CHANGING MOMENT, AND IT'S GOOD TO SEE THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTS THAT. THE SUREST WAY TO PROMOTE GOOD JOBS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR THE WORKING CLASS IS TO GROW UNION DENSITY ACROSS ALL SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY, FROM SERVICE JOBS TO BLUE COLLAR JOBS TO WHITE COLLAR JOBS AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN."** USW MEMBER AMANDA PARKS, JUNE 21, 2021

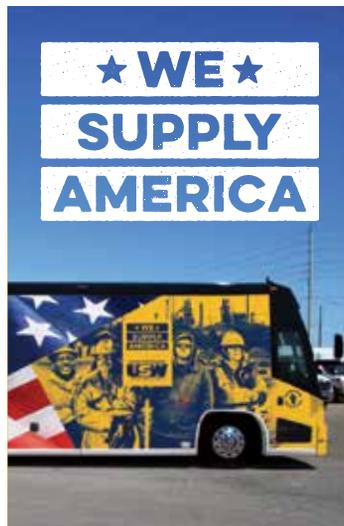
CURRENT



**MAJOR VICTORY FOR ATI WORKERS**

Unwavering solidarity on the picket line pays off for workers at ATI, who have a new four-year contract after a three-month strike.

**12**



**INFRASTRUCTURE PUSH HITS THE ROAD**

The USW is taking its "We Supply America" campaign on the road, with a nationwide week of action that includes a bus tour of union locals.

**10**



**EXXON LOCKS OUT MEMBERS IN TEXAS**

More than 650 USW members at the ExxonMobil refinery in Beaumont, Texas, are still on the picket line after the company locked them out in May.

**20**

FEATURES

**SPEAKING OUT**

USW members, retirees 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**

Tire workers win relief from unfairly traded imports. The new U.S. trade representative calls for worker-friendly trade policies. Labor leaders push Mexico on workers' rights under USMCA.

**24**

**NEWS BRIEFS**

Members earn respect at ArcelorMittal. Vote set for University of Pittsburgh faculty. Pride 2021 goes digital. USW joins call for change at CSB. Members keep pushing pipeline issue.

**30**

COVER

Zach Harris is a member of Local 7014 at McWane Ductile Pipe in Coshocton, Ohio. Photo by Steve Dietz.

**04**

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## Gratitude for Union Scholarship

It is difficult to sum up my gratitude to my dad and USW Local 1743 for helping me with my education by awarding me a scholarship 50 years ago this June.

My dad learned to be a machinist in the Navy during the Korean conflict. Later, he went to work as a machinist for Republic Steel. I can remember how fervently he supported his union, especially during the terribly long steel strike of 1959. For a time, my mom had to wash his work outfits. They would be completely black and filled with metal shavings. She magically removed all the grime and turned them back into clean blue uniforms.

A good father sacrifices for his family in so many ways. Whatever may have led to his premature death in 1982, I know that he cared deeply for his family and his friends. Some of his co-workers, pallbearers at his funeral, were doubly saddened then because that was the weekend Republic Steel in South Buffalo also died, closing for good.

With the help of the scholarship and a NYS Regents award, I was able to complete my bachelor's degree in chemistry from Canisius College. For the next 20 years I worked in the field of powder coatings, developing formulas that primarily served to preserve and protect steel from corrosion, among other properties.

I want to thank all those union members who contributed. Some may still be with us, but to those who are gone now, I want to let the children and grandchildren of those Steelworkers know that their hard work and sacrifice did not go in vain and let them know how much it was appreciated.

*Peter A. Figlioti Jr.  
Buffalo, N.Y.*

## Remember, Our Nation is a Union

I just received the spring issue of *USW@Work*, and have been reading it cover to cover. That takes hours.

We receive your publication because my wife was a USW member for 16 years and a union rep for five years.

In 1979, I proudly became a member of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW) Local 318 in Pomona, Calif.

At the time, they laughed at my proposal to double union dues to build more power against President Ronald Reagan. I was shocked at how many people in our union voted for him. When I tried to explain to one young man that the Republican Party was only for the rich, he replied, "not anymore."

Today, there are more than 300 bills in 47 states trying to take away people's right to vote. Now is the time to take real action. The fight is set for November 2022 and November 2024.

I like to tell people that we live in the United States of America. The original states formed a union to fight the greedy British, just as now we must unite to fight the greedy Republicans.

The United States was born of a union. Unions are in our DNA.

*Greg Harman  
Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.*

## Remembering the Memorial Day Massacre

Despite the pandemic, Southeast Chicago SOAR Chapter 31-9 safely gathered to commemorate the 84th anniversary of the Memorial Day Massacre.

We held a live-streamed outdoor gathering and a rose-laying ceremony at the memorial site to commemorate the events of May 30, 1937, when police killed 10 unarmed demonstrators and injured dozens more at Republic Steel in Chicago during the Little Steel Strike.

Speakers at the event included Dr. Rev. Zaki L. Zaki, senior pastor of the United Methodist Church, Bill Alexander, president of Southeast Chicago SOAR, and Sue Sadlowski Garza, alderwoman of the 10th Ward and daughter of the late district director Ed Sadlowski.

The Women of Steel also gave a dramatic presentation that highlighted the martyrs' sacrifice. Women dressed in black called out the name of each martyr, told how each was killed (in most cases by a bullet in the back) and draped each of the 10 crosses in black.

I also had the privilege of speaking at the memorial. I was a CIO organizer in 1937, and my questions now are the same as they were then: Who was punished? Who went to jail for these murders? The answer: Nobody.

The SOAR chapter also marked the anniversary by publishing a video about the 1937 event and other deadly attacks on workers. The video can be found at: [usw.to/3vjb](http://usw.to/3vjb). I encourage all USW members to watch it.

*Bea Lumpkin  
Chicago SOAR member*

## Proud of Our Essential Workers

I am so proud and thankful for the members of USW 10-00086 in West Point, Pa. We have 2,000 union members at the Merck site that have been deemed essential. We worked through the pandemic making life-saving vaccines for the world.

It wasn't easy. We had some members get sick and even lost a brother to COVID-19. I myself got sick servicing our members during this once-in-a-generation pandemic.

But we are glad to have had the opportunity to help rid the world of COVID-19 by making the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as a contractor. We are proud USW members who always stepped up to meet the challenge and never failed. The world works best when we say "Union Yes!"

*Daniel Peterson  
Treasurer, Local 10-00086  
West Point, Pa.*

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



Amber Jenkins (left)  
Ryan Hoop (right)  
Photos by Steve Dietz

# The UNION WAY OF LIFE

OHIO PIPE MILL ILLUSTRATES NEED FOR  
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

**T**ony Ashcraft has worked at McWane Ductile Pipe in Coshocton, Ohio, for more than 23 years. It's his third job, and the third time he's been a union member.

"Every job I have had, there has always been some type of union," he said. "I don't know if I could work in a non-union facility."

Ashcraft, president of Local 7014, learned a long time ago the difference that the union makes for the workers at his plant and at other USW-represented facilities, fighting for better wages and benefits, secure retirements, safer workplaces and other protections.

## 'We Supply America'

Now, besides securing those important contractual benefits, the USW has launched a plan of action – known as "We Supply America" – to enact a massive, nationwide federal infrastructure program that will provide a foundation of tens of thousands more good union jobs for decades to come. It's another USW member-led fight of which Ashcraft is proud to be a part.

"To me, it's very important because it will keep us working," Ashcraft said of the "We Supply America" effort. "It keeps American products and American companies here."



★ WE ★  
 SUPPLY  
 AMERICA  
 #USWMADE #USWVOICES



Local 7014 members make some of those vital products at their factory in Coshocton. The McWane facility produces ductile iron pipe used in water infrastructure, as well as utility poles used to provide electrical power to communities throughout the United States.

From the beginning, when raw, mostly recycled, materials are melted down, through the casting machines and annealing oven, to the finishing area where pipes are put through tests, painted and prepared for shipping, USW members play a central role throughout the pipe-making process.

**American Jobs Plan**

The Biden administration’s infrastructure proposal, known as the American Jobs Plan, includes billions of dollars to rebuild highways and bridges and to upgrade airports, seaports and transit systems.

The plan also would modernize the

nation’s water systems, revamp electrical grids and ensure high-speed internet access for all Americans, among many other initiatives.

The water and power system upgrades are the parts of the plan that would most directly benefit Ashcraft, his USW co-workers, and their neighbors.

**Financial Ripple Effect**

The McWane factory employs about 500 workers, including 320 USW members, but that number doesn’t begin to illustrate its importance to the people of Coshocton, a small town in eastern Ohio about halfway between the state capital of Columbus and the Pennsylvania border.

“These are good jobs,” Ashcraft said. “And in this town, there aren’t too many factories like this left.”

Chris Balo, who at 43 years of service is one of the plant’s most senior workers, said the strong union contract at McWane delivers the kind of wages and benefits that allow members to support their families, while also creating an economic ripple effect that provides a base for other businesses in town to thrive.

“At McWane, they do their best to keep us working even through the slow

times,” said Balo, the local vice president. “That helps us all out around this little town of ours.”

**Aging Infrastructure**

An infrastructure investment of about \$1.2 trillion, like the bipartisan agreement Biden has been negotiating this summer with members of Congress, would help out even more, workers say, both to rebuild the American economy and to bring the nation’s utility systems and other essential services fully into the 21st century.

“Our water system was built at the turn of the last century,” said Tom Crawford, vice president and general manager of the Coshocton facility.

Many Americans take their water supply for granted, he said, but the age of the nation’s water system makes it less reliable than it once was and puts the United States behind other first-world countries in terms of quality.

“Everything gets older,” said Local 7014 member Stephanie Adams. “Nothing lasts forever.”

Rebuilding the nation’s water delivery and wastewater infrastructure likely would mean a significant uptick in business for McWane, which already has been running near full capacity as communities begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economists with Moody’s Analytics estimate that the American Jobs Plan would create at least 2.7 million more jobs over 10 years than the current



economy is projected to create without such a plan.

“When the infrastructure plan does take off, we’re definitely going to need more people to keep up with the demand,” Ashcraft said.

### **Made in the USA**

A crucial piece of any infrastructure legislation, USW members say, is to ensure that the materials used in rebuilding the country are made in the United States by union workers.

“It helps us, but it helps everybody else too,” said Jay Dawson, who has worked as a mold machinist in McWane’s maintenance department for more than 20 years.

Unfairly traded foreign-made products have been a major challenge for companies like McWane for decades. Overseas competitors have historically dumped cheap products into the U.S. pipe market in a bid to undercut domestic producers and claim a greater share of business for themselves.

The Biden infrastructure plan would make that fight easier by requiring materials used in federal infrastructure projects to be made in the United States and shipped on vessels staffed by American crews.

The fight to secure those kinds of protections has led Dawson and other Local 7014 members to travel to Washington, D.C., over the years to seek support for

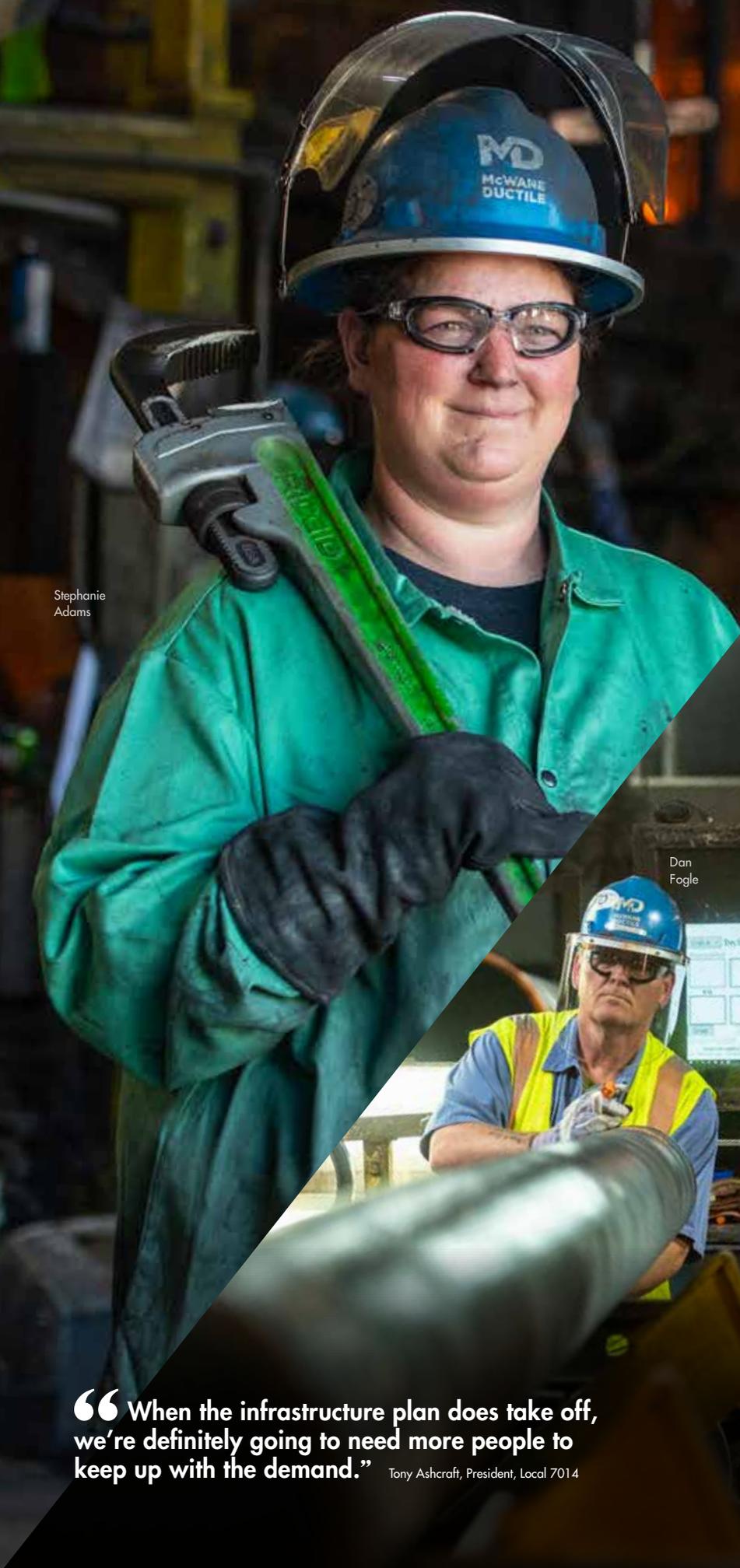
Buy American programs and fair trade remedies.

“We have competitors, obviously,” Dawson said. “But not only are we competing with them, but we’re fighting with foreign companies too, and we don’t need that.”

### **Workplace Safety**

Besides standing up for fair trade, another subject on which USW members and management at





Stephanie Adams

Dan Fogle

**“When the infrastructure plan does take off, we’re definitely going to need more people to keep up with the demand.”**

Tony Ashcraft, President, Local 7014



McWane see eye to eye is in the area of workplace safety.

The company buys into the USW’s painstaking commitment to maintaining a healthy and safe work environment, said Dawson, who serves on the plant’s safety committee.

“They want to go forward, not backward,” Dawson said.

That means ensuring proper training for workers, supporting them when they raise their voices about potentially unsafe situations, and constantly being vigilant about the equipment and processes they employ to reduce the possibility of dangerous situations.

“Without the union here, that wouldn’t happen,” Ashcraft said.

### **Steelworkers’ Pride**

That commitment to looking out for each other also extends to the products they make. That’s why the pipes that come out of the McWane facility are some of the best in the world, said Local 7014 member Scott Terrell.

“We take pride in what we make and send out the gate,” he said.

With that pride comes a commitment to top-of-the-line quality that USW members bring to the job each day.

“This is the hardest-working work force that I’ve ever worked with,” Crawford said.

Because of that hard work, McWane pipes – whether they are used to deliver water or electrical power – will stand the test of time, Balo said.

“This pipe will be in there for 100 years or better,” he said.

And, by extension, the workers at McWane hope that their facility will be there for the next 100 years continuing to serve the nation’s infrastructure needs.

To ensure that future, though, Congress must act quickly to put the

American Jobs Plan in motion.

There's been enough talk about infrastructure in recent years, members say. Now it's time to get it done.

"If we don't get something started now, I think it's going to be too late," Balo said. "I don't think we'll ever get caught back up with it."

USW members must put pressure on their senators and representatives to vote for a comprehensive infrastructure plan that prioritizes good-paying, family-supporting union jobs like the ones at McWane, said District 1 Director Donnie Blatt.

"Factories like McWane are part of the backbone of this country," Blatt said. "We need to support them and others like them so that we can build a strong, sustainable base for our economy for generations to come."

It's up to working people to make their voices heard on the issues of infrastructure and Buy American so that leaders inside and outside of Washington, D.C., get that message, Balo said.

"People have to wake up," Balo said. "If they don't, there may not be any jobs like this anymore."



Laura Frazee



Debbie Birkhimer



Dave Rhodes



Dan Fogle



Shawn Bordenkircher



Ryan Rinkes

# USW APPLAUDS BIDEN'S WORKER TRAINING PLANS

After landing a job at U.S. Steel's Granite City Works, Nick Kessler obtained a skill he long wanted but couldn't afford to learn.

Free training through his USW contract enabled Kessler to become an electrician, boosting his job security and helping him provide a better future for his family.

Millions of others also need opportunities to enhance their skills so they can compete in a high-tech economy and build back the U.S. manufacturing base.

That's why the USW welcomed President Joe Biden's proposal to invest billions in worker education and training programs similar to those the union provides to members.

Biden proposed the investments as part of the American Families Plan, his blueprint for rebuilding the middle class, and the American Jobs Plan, his strategy for upgrading infrastructure.

Under Biden's initiatives, every American would be eligible for two years of tuition-free community college. He also envisions more pre-apprenticeship opportunities and the addition of a million new apprenticeship slots.

"Your education is something that nobody can ever take from you," said Kessler.

Many USW contracts enable members to learn skills to advance at their workplaces. But they also take those skills with them wherever they go, said Marshall McElroy, training coordinator for Local 1899.

"How can you pass that up?" he said.

For decades, employers and the government skimmed on training programs. That resulted in shortages of skilled workers and left the country scrambling to fill jobs in emerging industries like electric vehicle production. It also hurt workers who needed to start over after losing jobs.

"Investment in work force and education programs is a crucial component of empowering workers," the National Skills Coalition observed in a 2019 report. It add-

ed that current U.S. funding levels "pale in comparison to the investment other industrialized countries are making."

Biden's proposals would make training a priority, as the USW has done.

"We've been sailing that ship for a long time," said McElroy, noting that programs like the one that benefited Kessler are among many ways the union helps to educate members.

The union offers members, retirees and their families the free community college education that the president wants to provide to all Americans.

The Free College Benefit ([freecollege.usw.org](http://freecollege.usw.org)) covers tuition and fees for many associate degrees and offers discounted rates on other fields of study through Eastern Gateway Community College. USW members and their relatives also can complete some bachelor's degrees for free through Ohio's Central State University.

"It was a stress-reliever. I didn't have to worry about money," observed Destini Mott, who used the benefit to earn an associate degree. Mott qualified because her boyfriend, Tyler Bennett, was a Local 419M member at Homer Laughlin China Co. in Newell, W.Va.

Besides those programs, the union offers the contractually negotiated Institute for Career Development (ICD) at 60 workplaces.

The ICD ([icdlearning.org](http://icdlearning.org)) offers \$2,500 in tuition assistance each year to members who want to learn trades, pursue degrees or take enrichment classes. Members gain the flexibility to change careers, moonlight or start businesses.

"I figured, 'It was a benefit we fought for. I should use it,'" recalled Emily Bombich, a member of Local 6115 at Cleveland-Cliffs' Minorca mine near Virginia, Minn.

Through the ICD, she received \$4,500 to complete a bachelor's degree and another \$4,500 for a master of business administration program.

"I would never want to lose the benefit," said Bombich.



Emily Bombich,  
Local 6115

The ICD gave member Laurie Blair a chance to switch careers but still remain a USW member.

Blair, who experienced periodic layoffs as a member of Local 7150 at ATI's titanium plant in Albany, Ore., used the benefit to help her become a licensed practical nurse at the newly organized Oregon Veteran's Home in nearby Lebanon, Ore. The members there reached their first contract agreement in June.

As Biden champions the need for at least a million new apprenticeship slots, the USW is at work creating some of them.

Local 675 partnered with electric vehicle maker Proterra and Jobs to Move America to recruit and train workers for the company's California factory. The programs will give workers the skills they need while ensuring the company has a reliable workforce.

Lindsay Patterson, business representative for Local 286 in Philadelphia, hopes Biden's education and skill-building investments will boost his efforts to establish training programs with some of the 50 employers where his union represents workers.

Patterson said many companies remain unwilling to invest in training, even though they cite a need for skilled workers and "know the answer is right here in front of them."



# ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE

USW members are taking the union's campaign to enact a major infrastructure program on the road this August, with a nationwide week of action including a bus tour with stops at six USW locals.

The events are intended to highlight the countless ways that USW members contribute to the nation's infrastructure and to call on Congress to agree to large-scale, long-term investments that will create jobs and rebuild the foundation of the country for the next generation.

"We need infrastructure that keeps us safe, that is modern, that keeps our supply chains stocked with the materials we need, and keeps the country moving in the right direction," said International President Tom Conway. "As a union, we

are fully invested in it, and we have the skilled work force to do it."

## A Campaign Issue

Throughout his campaign, President Joe Biden talked about the need for the next infrastructure plan to be larger in scope than any one that came before it.

Conway said that Biden, unlike his predecessor who also campaigned heavily on promises of rebuilding infrastructure, is serious about actually getting the job done. And after more than four years of inaction, there is no time to waste, Conway said.

Still, despite a strong commitment from the White House, the plan's fate in Congress is not yet certain. That's why the USW is putting the campaign at the forefront of its agenda.

"Our infrastructure is in such ill repair," Conway said, "and it's been in place for such a long time."

Conway said that the need to update the nation's public utilities goes beyond maintaining roads and bridges to water delivery and treatment, dams, electrical grids, railways, airports, schools, health care, communication and broadband networks and other systems.

Upgrades to all of those important segments of American life will create jobs, will improve the lives of millions of people, and ultimately will save money, said International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn.

"Businesses will be more efficient; transportation will be more efficient," said Shinn. "Education will improve; health care will improve. These things are all connected and are all part of our infrastructure. The investments we make will be investments in people."

## Major Projects Nationwide

From the catastrophic failure of two dams in Michigan last year, to the widespread power outages this past winter across Texas, to the closure of the Hernando de Soto Bridge between Tennessee and Arkansas that caused extensive delays and detours this summer, examples of the urgent need are in the news nearly every day.

In addition, supply chain problems throughout the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated how ill-prepared the nation was to deal with a major crisis, and in-

## USW WEEK OF ACTION ON INFRASTRUCTURE

USW members are spearheading a nationwide week of action beginning Aug. 15 – including a bus tour of local unions – to call for robust invest-

ments in our vital infrastructure, and to highlight the contributions Steelworkers make, both in obvious and more inconspicuous industries.

The USW is calling on Congress to pass legislation to secure large-scale, long-term infrastructure investments that will create good jobs and rebuild communities.



vesting in long-neglected industries can ensure that the nation never experiences such difficulties again, said International Vice President David McCall.

“We of course think of things like steel and concrete when we think of infrastructure, but it goes far beyond that,” he said. “Everything that Steelworkers make and everything that we do contributes in some way to strengthening our nation and improving our quality of life.”

### Town Hall Meetings

USW officers held a series of virtual town hall meetings this year to talk to rank-and-file workers about how they all contribute to the “We Supply America” idea.

At one of those events, Mike Noll of Local 1237 in Newark, Ohio, who works at Packaging Corporation of America (PCA), asked about how non-steel-related industries, such as health care or his own paper industry, fit into the bigger picture.

“People don’t often think of paper as being part of infrastructure,” said International Vice President Leeann Foster, who oversees bargaining in the USW paper sector. “But really, it is a critical component.”

Paperworkers are essential to the supply chain for basic necessities, particularly boxes for shipping goods, which makes them a critical component of the nation’s infrastructure.

“Just about everything that is shipped across our nation that goes into infrastructure comes in packaging of some sort that is made by us, and that includes a lot of paper,” Foster said.

“When we think of infrastructure, there are a lot of less obvious ways our companies need it to remain competitive.”

Highways, tunnels, seaports, airports and railways all contribute to the nation’s economic well-being, Foster added.

“Traffic congestion, vehicle wear and tear from bad roads, and inefficient waterways all mean lost time and money,” she said. “This hurts our competitiveness, domestically and globally.”

### ‘Human Infrastructure’

Health care workers also are a vital piece of the nation’s “human infrastructure” because keeping workers healthy and safe is essential for them and their employers, said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the union’s health care sector.

Biden’s “American Jobs Plan” would support that sector by providing billions in new funding to upgrade veterans’ hospitals and clinics, expand home- or community-based health care, and increase wages and benefits for home health care workers.

“We can’t talk about infrastructure or about rebuilding this nation without putting our health care workers at the forefront,” Redmond said.

In late June, President Biden and a

bipartisan group of senators reached an agreement on a framework for an infrastructure bill after lengthy negotiations.

While many more hurdles remain before Congress passes a bill, the agreement was a sign that Biden’s commitment to enacting a bold, worker-friendly agenda was paying off.

“For me, investments in our physical and human infrastructure are inextricably intertwined,” the president said.

“Both make us better off and stronger.”

Still, USW members and their allies have more work ahead to ensure that the plan brings all Americans fully into the 21st century, Conway said.

“The pandemic made it clear that we must invest heavily both in restoring our nation’s manufacturing capacity and in keeping the American people safe,” he said. “That means never having to look overseas for essential goods. It means training new generations of workers, and it means supporting union organizing so that the jobs we create can support families and communities.”

Ultimately, every worker in every U.S. state will benefit, said International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who oversees the union’s legislative and political efforts from Washington, D.C.

“It will spur jobs and job growth in communities across the country and bring meaningful economic opportunity to people in all of our neighborhoods,” Brown said. “That is what infrastructure can do.”



★ **HOW YOU CAN HELP** ★

Contact your senators (877-607-0785) and representatives (866-202-5409) and urge them to support long-term infrastructure investments.

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# VICTORY AT ATI!

## USW MEMBERS' SOLIDARITY LEADS TO NEW FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT

After more than three months of unwavering solidarity on their picket lines, USW members at nine ATI facilities voted in July to ratify a new four-year contract.

"The unity of USW members at ATI has proven that we can accomplish great things when we fight together for the respect and dignity of a fair contract," said International Vice President David McCall, who served as the chair of the union's bargaining team.

More than 1,300 workers in five U.S. states launched an unfair labor practices (ULP) strike on March 30 following ATI's disrespect for USW members, families and communities, the company's bad-faith bargaining, and its repeated efforts to divide the union and force workers to agree to unnecessary concessions.

### Solidarity Works

McCall said that the unity and solidarity of USW members across the country kept the pressure on ATI's management throughout six months of bargaining and three months on the picket lines.

The USW's previous contract

with ATI expired on Feb. 28, 2021, after the two sides agreed to a one-year extension in 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Despite management's repeated attempts to divide and conquer its workers," McCall said, "we showed once again that our solidarity is a tremendously powerful force."

That solidarity was essential to overcoming the relentless demands by ATI that would have reversed decades of progress that members have fought for at the bargaining table.

"Our members showed tremendous strength and solidarity, beating back demands for concessions that would have hurt generations of workers," said International President Tom Conway.

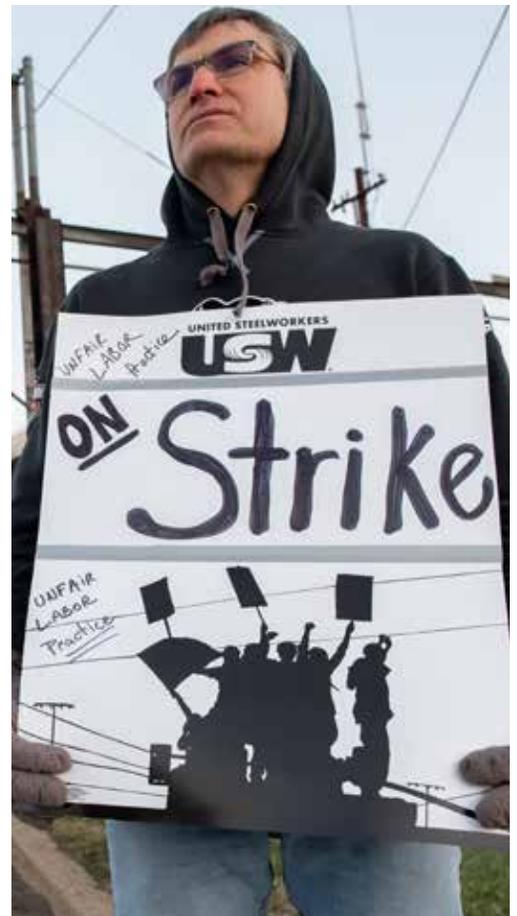
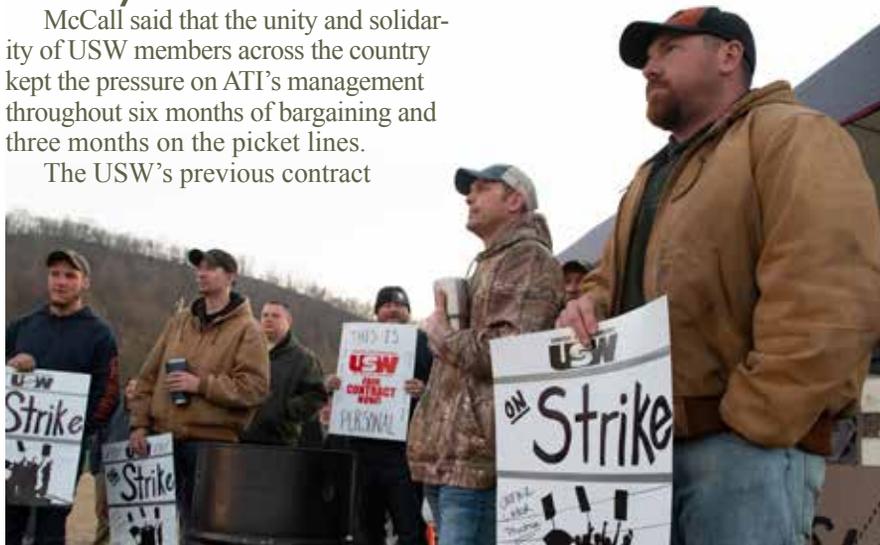
"This contract reflects how truly powerful working people can be when we fight together."

Among other concessions, ATI sought to impose significant out-of-pocket premiums for health care and reduce funding for the voluntary employees' beneficiary association (VEBA).

These demands came as ATI continued to reap large profits and as the company was sitting on half-a-billion dollars in cash reserves.

"I am proud of my fellow brothers and sisters on the line," said John Camarao, grievance chair for Local 1357 at the ATI plant in New Bedford, Mass. "What we're fighting for is not only for our future but for the future of new hires and our retirees' benefits."

Photos by Steve Dietz





## Community Support

Members had help in that fight from fellow Steelworkers, other union members, neighbors and local politicians throughout their communities. Teachers, nurses, autoworkers, carpenters and others showed up at picket lines, delivered food, and held rallies and fund-raisers to help strikers and their families.

In New Bedford, city council members voted unanimously in June to send a letter to ATI headquarters calling for the company to negotiate a fair contract.

“We want to see ATI succeed and continue to create jobs in New Bedford, and we believe that resolving this contract negotiation as soon as possible is the best way to move forward,” the letter stated.

In the end, USW members and their allies triumphed over ATI’s greed, achieving a new agreement that provides a signing bonus of \$4,000, periodic lump-sum payments totaling

\$3,000 and wage increases of 9 percent, and maintains a premium-free health insurance plan for union members.

Following the vote, workers began returning to their jobs in late July. The new contract is retroactive to March 1 and runs through Feb. 28, 2025.

## Lockout in 2015

The 2021 strike marked the second time in less than six years that ATI has tried – and failed – to achieve deep concessions and divide the USW membership.

When bargaining began in 2015, ATI presented union negotiators with a list of 145 permanent contract changes that would have erased decades of progress. When members rejected those unnecessary demands, instead of negotiating in good faith, the company decided to lock them out of their jobs for six months.

ATI followed up that decision with a well-funded campaign of intimidation and manipulation that included hiring

scabs and private security.

Eventually, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) filed a lengthy ULP complaint against ATI alleging that the lockout was illegal and that the company bargained in bad faith. Soon after that decision, the company ended the lockout.

## Years of Sacrifice

Following that experience, and years of sacrifice that included working through the COVID-19 pandemic and forgoing wage increases, USW members entered bargaining this time around determined to make progress.

“The company came into these negotiations in January looking for unfair and unnecessary concessions,” said McCall. “Our members deserve a deal that reflects their contributions to the company’s success. This contract achieves that goal.”

# 'NOTHING CAN STOP US'

## USW PAPERWORKERS SET BARGAINING, SAFETY AGENDA

USW paperworkers laid out an ambitious agenda for their bargaining and safety goals over the next two years at this summer's USW's Paper Sector Bargaining Conference.

Hundreds of USW members across the continent took part in the conference, which was held virtually due to the continued threat of COVID-19.

"Getting everyone together and on the same page regarding our bargaining agenda and safety issues allows for greater solidarity across the union," said James DuBois, president of Local 12-237, who has worked at the WestRock mill in Tacoma, Wash., for about 15 years. "Hearing ideas from everyone helps to broaden our perspective."

### Facing Challenges Together

For DuBois and other local leaders in the sector, the conference provided a chance to hear from fellow paperworkers following a tumultuous two years that included a global pandemic, supply chain issues, and an industry that continued to face pressure from consolidation and unfair global trade.

Making sure all workers in the sector are facing those challenges together makes the problems easier to tackle, DuBois said.

"The more locations that are on the same page in the industry when it comes to bargaining keeps us all at a high standard," he said. "It shows the companies we aren't going to allow them to single out places to treat differently."

In addition to setting a bargaining and safety agenda for the coming years, the conference also prepared local activists to achieve those goals by offering a wide selection of training sessions, town hall meetings and

panel discussions on subjects including infrastructure, health and safety, the union's founding principles, building effective negotiating skills, nurturing new union activists, internal organizing, the Women of Steel and NextGen programs, and other subjects.

### Rising to the Challenge

International Vice President Leeann Foster, who oversees bargaining in the paper sector, said she was hopeful that the hundreds of participants in the conference would take those skills back to their workplaces and employ them in the day-to-day work of strengthening the USW.

"The next few years are going to be important for our industry, as we push for major improvements to our infrastructure, invest in manufacturing, and look to expand economic opportunity to long-neglected communities," she said. "These are all opportunities for paperworkers to play a key role in building up the labor movement and positioning our industry to thrive for the next generation."

The conference also included the presentation of this year's Boyd D. Young Safety Award to Locals 731 and 988 at the Pixelle Specialty Solutions mill in Chillicothe, Ohio.

As the conference – themed "Nothing Can Stop Us" – came to a close, the delegation reviewed the USW's national paper bargaining policy agenda and the union's action plan for making and converting paper safely, formed in meetings in May and June with more than 30 company bargaining



“By staying true to who we are, we have come through it stronger, smarter and better prepared for our future.”

Leeann Foster,  
International Vice President



councils and their elected policy committee members.

Those plans will help the USW continue to set industry standards for wages and benefits and also help members make improvements on the vital issue of safety, as well as in other areas such as training, time off and overtime.

“Maintaining that work-life balance is so important,” Dubois said.

The ambitious bargaining agenda members set this summer will position the union – already a global leader in the paper industry – to be even stronger as the world emerges from the pandemic and the economy continues to expand, Foster said.

“Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our members never stopped working to serve each other, never stopped building solidarity,” Foster said. “By staying true to who we are, we have come through it stronger, smarter and better prepared for our future.”

In addressing the conference, International Vice President Fred Redmond expressed optimism that the work members are doing now will help them secure that future.

“USW paperworkers have faced their share of difficulties over the past few years, but one thing that hasn’t changed is their strength and solidarity,” Redmond said. “That’s how we know that we can overcome any challenge before us.”

## Beyond Bargaining

For members like Kennette Ruth of Local 1754 at the Georgia-Pacific box plant in Mount Wolf, Pa., the importance of events like the paper sector conference goes far beyond bargaining and safety issues.

Members also need to be on the same page with labor issues such as investing in infrastructure and passing the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which a bipartisan majority in the U.S. House approved but which faces an uncertain future in the U.S. Senate.

As social distancing became standard practice through the COVID-19 crisis, social media became an even more valuable tool in talking to other paperworkers about such issues, she said.

“I’m waiting to see what happens,” Ruth said. “People need to see the bigger picture.”

International Vice President Roxanne Brown helped to provide a view of the bigger picture when she spoke to conference participants about the USW’s “We Supply America” infrastructure campaign.

“This union is the backbone of our national supply chain,” Brown said. “Every one of our industries – from steel and aluminum to paper and boxes and everything in between – is essential to the future of our union and of our country.”



## GEORGIA-PACIFIC MEMBERS RATIFY CONTRACTS

Two-year Master Extension Agreements Cover 5,700 Workers

Members who work at Georgia-Pacific facilities voted overwhelmingly in May to ratify two-year extensions of the master agreements covering about 5,700 workers at 14 GP mills and 16 converting sites.

The contracts include 5 percent wage

increases over the life of the agreements, the continuation of the company match on health savings accounts and pension enhancements.

The company also agreed to work with the USW to address wage issues in its mills and excessive mandatory overtime

in its box plants.

Due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns, bargaining was held virtually, but that fact did not diminish USW members’ solidarity throughout the process, said Julius Boston, president of Local 9-950 at GP’s Naheola mill in Pennington, Ala.

“The hard work and effort that was put into the negotiations bore the fruits of everyone’s labor,” Boston said. “This extension gives us the much-needed time to prepare for what is certain to be another very challenging upcoming round of negotiations.”



# STUDY: COVID HIT HEALTH CARE WORKERS HARDEST

**A** study of the first year of the spread of COVID-19 in the United States found that health care workers bore the brunt of the pandemic, with more than 3,600 succumbing to the disease and thousands more falling ill and dealing with lingering effects.

“It unfortunately comes as no surprise that the workers on the front lines, particularly those in health care who directly confronted the coronavirus every day, suffered the most from this pandemic,” said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the USW’s Health Care Workers Council, which includes more than 50,000 members across North America.

Nurses were the workers most likely to fall victim to the virus, with members of that profession accounting for about one-third of the 3,600 deaths, according to the results of the investigation, conducted by Kaiser Health News and The Guardian newspaper.

“We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the front-line nurses and others who made tremendous sacrifices and put themselves in harm’s way to help us combat this deadly virus,” Redmond said. “We also owe it to them to do everything in our power to make sure that this does not happen again. We will face another health care crisis someday, and we must be better prepared to respond and to keep workers safer the next time.”

## Three Times the Risk

Health care workers were more than three times as likely as other workers to contract COVID-19 during the first year of the pandemic, according to the report.

Tragically, the study also found that many of the COVID-related deaths could have been prevented. Widespread shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies, including masks, gowns and sanitizer, contributed to the increased spread of the disease in health care facilities.

“They are true heroes and heroines,” said Dr. Anthony Fauci, chief medical



Armie Apura-Ready and Imelda Tapel of Local 2009, Langley BC. (left) Thousands of members at Essentia Health and Kaiser Permanente are bargaining new contracts. (right) See page 19.



“We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the front-line nurses and others who made tremendous sacrifices and put themselves in harm’s way to help us combat this deadly virus,” Redmond said.

adviser to President Joe Biden and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, “by putting themselves in harm’s way, by living up to the oath they take when they become physicians and nurses.”

Besides supply chain issues, the lack of contact tracing, a shortage of reliable testing, inconsistent messaging from public officials, and lax workplace safety standards from employers and government regulators all played a role in the virus’ spread, the report said.

## Unions Useful in Fight

One way to fight back against many of those workplace-related problems in the future, Redmond said, is for more workers to join unions.

USW locals across all professions, but especially those on the front lines, fought vigorously for expanded health and safety protections from the very beginning of the pandemic.

Even before COVID-19, polling showed that tens of millions of Americans would join unions if they could, not only for the higher wages and better benefits

# OSHA ISSUES TEMPORARY COVID-19 STANDARD

More than a year after COVID-19 began to spread across the United States, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in June issued an emergency temporary standard for U.S. health care workers and updated guidance for other employers.

OSHA estimated that the new standard covers about 10.3 million people working in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted-living facilities and other health care sites.

USW leaders called the decision a major step forward while lamenting the fact that it took so long for federal regulators to protect workers on the front lines when labor organizations and others began calling for swift action in March 2020.

“After more than a year of advocacy and organizing, health care workers will finally have enforceable work-

place protections against the spread of COVID-19 thanks to OSHA’s new emergency temporary standard,” said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the 50,000-member USW Health Care Workers Council. “Health care workers made deep, personal sacrifices every day of the pandemic caring for the sick and vulnerable. They deserve to know they will be as safe as possible while doing this vital work.”

At the same time that OSHA released its emergency temporary standard for health care, the agency updated its guidance for other employers on preventing COVID-19.

Although not enforceable like a standard, the new guidelines proved useful as the “Delta variant” of the coronavirus began to spread this summer and some communities struggled to reach the 70 percent rate of vaccination

experts say could lead to the end of the pandemic.

The new guidance, even though it doesn’t carry the same weight as an enforceable OSHA standard, is especially crucial for USW members who work in the mining or atomic sectors or in other workplaces where employees must gather in close quarters with others.

“There is still much work ahead in the fight to keep workers safe on the job, including extending the standard to all workers and making it permanent,” said International President Tom Conway. “The updated guidance provides a base on which to build, but we must keep up the momentum.”

For OSHA’s guidance and suggestions for unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk workers, visit <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>.

but because labor organizations fight for safety standards, sufficient PPE, hazard pay, sick leave and other protections that may not exist at non-union facilities.

And last year, a Gallup poll showed that 65 percent of Americans – the most in almost 20 years – approved of unions. Support soared as the labor movement successfully fought for protections against the spread of COVID-19 in their workplaces and communities.

Besides providing health and safety protections during the pandemic, unions also fought to protect jobs during the ensuing recession. Because they had a voice on the job, union members were far less likely to be laid off than their nonunion neighbors, according to a study from the Economic Policy Institute.

## More Workers Organizing

Still, as the nation began to emerge from the pandemic, more American workers were fighting for unions in their

workplaces so that – in the future – they could have those same protections.

Last fall, as the pandemic reached the six-month mark, health care workers at Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C., voted to unionize by more than a two-thirds majority, despite the fact that their state has one of the lowest rates of unionization in the country.

In May, workers at Imperfect Foods, a California delivery service, voted to join a union to address unpredictable schedules, growing workloads and other pandemic-related concerns.

Teachers at several California charter schools and the Latin School of Chicago also voted to form unions, saying the pandemic showed them the need to work together to fight for better lives for their families, their students and their communities.

It’s a trend the USW hopes to continue as the union steps up its own

organizing efforts and the economy rebounds from the pandemic. Rank-and-file workers across the United States and Canada have been campaigning hard in recent years to bring new members from a wide variety of workplaces into the Steelworkers family.

Growing the union for the next generation and beyond fulfills one of the stated goals International President Tom Conway put forward when he took office in the summer of 2019.

“The pandemic taught us many lessons – one of those lessons is that the old ways of doing things may not work as well as they once did. We need to reinvigorate our organizing efforts and try new ideas,” Conway said. “This country is at a turning point. Young people especially know they’ve been handed tough times. The country is ripe for organizing, and we’re going to do it.”



“To me, it’s all about building the power for working people. In our union, in our movement, everyone is in.”

Sabrina Liu, Local 3657, APALA Pittsburgh Chapter President



“It was great seeing what the local organizing people have been doing to build a local AAPI movement.”

Michelle Loo, APALA National Program Coordinator

## LABOR TOOLKIT TO COMBAT RACISM ➔

Learn about how to combat anti-Asian hate by downloading APALA’s recently released labor toolkit on anti-Asian racism. Visit [apalanet.org](http://apalanet.org) to access the digital guide.

## #STOPASIANHATE

# AAPI WORKERS STEP UP IN FACE OF MULTIPLE EPIDEMICS

When the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered the world in 2020, another epidemic swept through the United States and across the globe as anti-Asian rhetoric flooded social media, television networks and radio airwaves.

Acts of hate against Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) people skyrocketed. Data released this spring revealed that the number of anti-Asian hate incidents — which can include shunning, slurs and physical attacks — nearly doubled from March 2020 to March 2021.

Immigrants and people of color have also been uniquely impacted economically by the pandemic in America, as many worked in industries that were hard hit by closures, like hospitality and food service.

All of these compounding pressures haven’t held down AAPI activists, however, including those with the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), the AFL-CIO constituency group and the first and only national organization of AAPI workers.

Over the past year, APALA activists across the

country have stepped up like never before in the face of these challenges. Sabrina Liu, founder and president of the Pittsburgh chapter of APALA, is one of these leaders, and is a member of USW Local 3657.

“To me, it’s all about building the power for working people,” said Liu. “In our union, in our movement, everyone is in.”

In recent months, Liu has helped more than 1,000 people, mostly immigrants, get vaccinated against COVID-19.

“Getting these high-risk workers access to vaccines is a basic worker safety measure,” Liu said. “It’s also a matter of solidarity.”

APALA Pittsburgh also partnered with two local organizations to distribute more than \$65,000 in cash assistance and reusable masks to 77 families who were excluded from the federal COVID-19 relief package.

APALA activists took quick action in Seattle and established networks that reached out directly to their members to make sure they knew how to gain access to unemployment if needed.

Michelle Loo, who works

on APALA’s national staff as its program coordinator, was able to tap into these networks the local chapters created to get members the help they needed.

“It was great seeing what the local organizing people have been doing to build a local AAPI movement in their communities,” said Loo.

Loo, who has a passion for fighting for low-wage and otherwise often overlooked workers, also mobilized throughout 2020 to harness support for workers in India and other Asian nations plagued by sudden factory shutdowns due to the pandemic.

APALA is currently organizing an online fundraiser for striking workers in Myanmar who have fallen victim to a brutal military coup. All contributions will go directly to the labor organizations on the ground in Myanmar and will cover costs such as lost wages, masks, meals and water, safety materials and other strike-related items. Current funds raised, as of June 24, were \$44,534 out of a goal of \$50,000.

Learn more and donate at <https://gofund.me/4e9c3c68>.

# HEALTH CARE WORKERS SHOW

# SOLIDARITY

Thousands of USW health care workers demonstrated their solidarity this summer as they fought for new contracts at Minnesota's Essentia Health and California-based Kaiser Permanente.

Two USW agreements with Essentia expired in June, while the union's contract with Kaiser, which Steelworkers in Local 7600 negotiate as part of the 21-member Alliance of Health Care Unions, is set to expire in October.

The USW represents about 7,500 workers across dozens of Kaiser Permanente locations and nearly 2,000 workers at Essentia hospitals and clinics in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Negotiations with the two health care giants came as the nation was beginning to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, which took a particularly heavy toll on workers in hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities.

Members who work for both companies said that management's initial contract proposals did not reflect the dedication they showed throughout the pandemic.

"We feel very undervalued by the company," Local 9460 President Deana Hughes said of Essentia. "I think that Essentia needs to recognize that the community is behind their health care workers because these people out here are the ones who take care of all the patients in the community."

Hughes' comments came as more than 100 of her colleagues and allies in the Duluth, Minn., community took to

the streets for an informational picket this summer as bargaining got under way and Essentia's contract offer included raises of less than 3 percent over a three-year period.

Their efforts began to pay off as the weeks passed, with a group of more than 1,000 Essentia nurses, environmental services employees and other workers reaching a tentative agreement as *USW@Work* went to press, and a second group of about 800 technical workers making progress as bargaining continued.

while ignoring any mention of quality care and suggesting workers' wages were too high.

"Their response comes at the heels of the most difficult 16 months our members have experienced," said Eric Gill, Financial Secretary-Treasurer of UNITE HERE! Local 5 and an alliance member. "It's unbelievable how quickly KP has forgotten about the front-line workers who risked their lives every day they went into work."

The company made \$16.3 billion in net profits between 2018 and 2020, said pediatric nurse Jodi Barschow, president of the Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals.

"It's been frustrating to see the company place a higher value on their bottom line than they do on the people who are working every day to provide top-quality care," said Michael Barnett, president of Local 7600.

"We intend to continue to push Kaiser Permanente to invest in its patients and in the people who care for them."

International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the USW's 50,000-member health care council, said that the pandemic proved how essential health care workers are to the well-being of the nation and the economy, and employers must treat them with respect.

"Our front-line workers put their very lives on the line over the past 18 months, and we owe them everything," Redmond said. "It's sad to see that their employers, who called them heroes during the pandemic, have a different tune when they get to the bargaining table."



MEMBERS AT ESSENTIA, KAISER PERMANENTE FIGHT FOR NEW CONTRACTS

Meanwhile, at Kaiser Permanente, members of Local 7600 and others in the alliance held a series of solidarity actions this summer, including button and sticker days, as a show of strength during what has proven to be a difficult start to their negotiations.

Later in July, the Local 7600 executive board voted unanimously to pause the union's participation in labor-management partnership activities with Kaiser, if necessary, to send a message of dissatisfaction with the lack of progress at the bargaining table.

While the union introduced proposals to raise wages, expand benefits and strengthen standards, Kaiser management instead stressed "affordability"



Carlos Soto

Adam Benavides

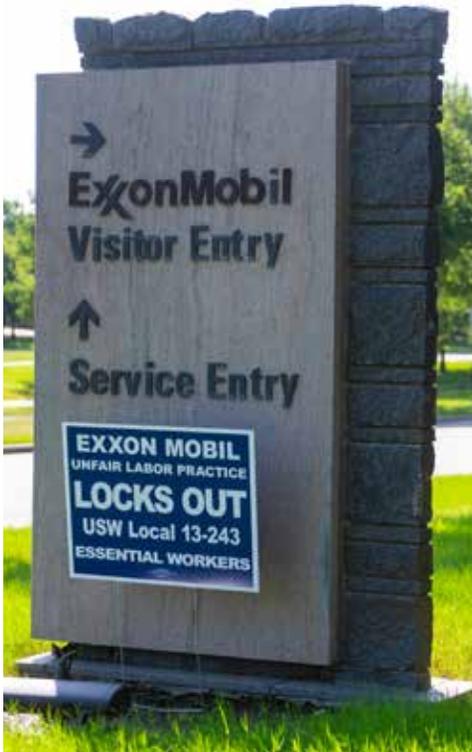
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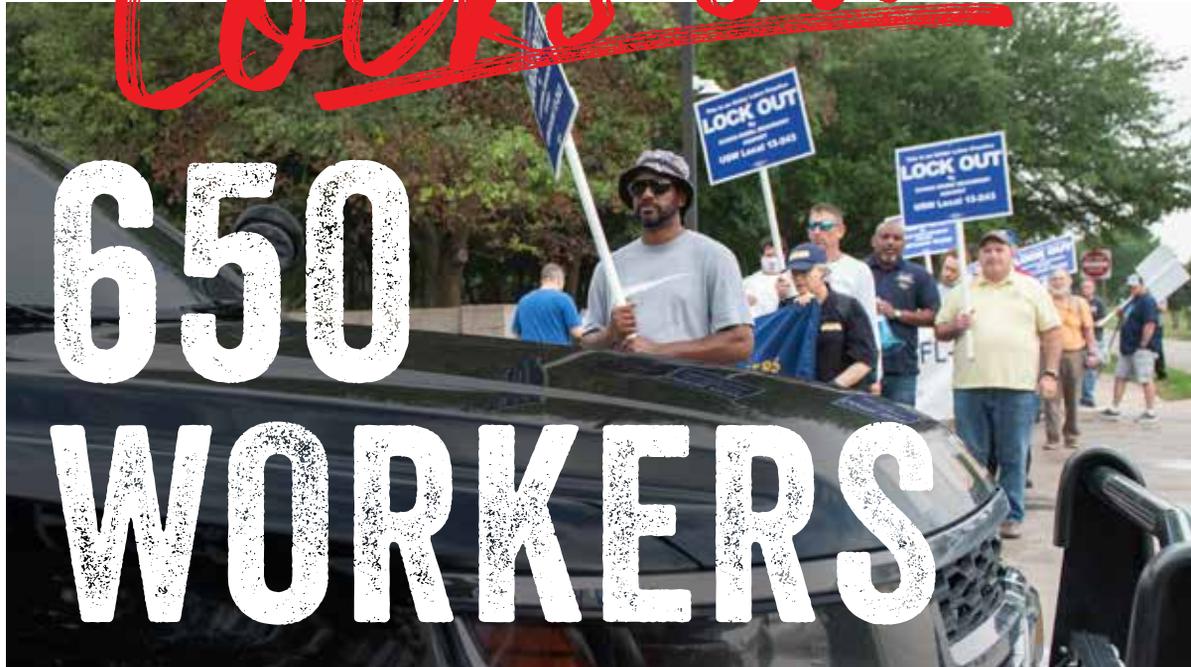
Mark Morgan



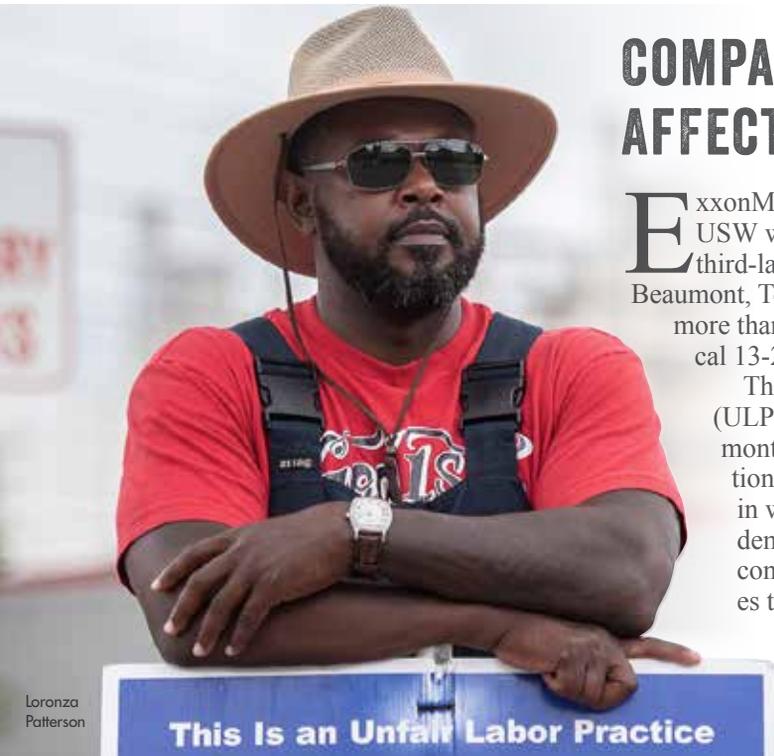
Photos by Steve Dietz

# EXXON MOBIL

*Locks out*



# 650 WORKERS



## COMPANY PROPOSES MAJOR CHANGES AFFECTING SAFETY, SENIORITY

ExxonMobil locked out the USW work force at its third-largest U.S. refinery in Beaumont, Texas, in May, forcing more than 650 members of Local 13-243 onto the picket line.

The unfair labor practice (ULP) lockout followed months of tense negotiations, beginning in January, in which the company demanded numerous major contract language changes that would dismantle members' safety, security and seniority.

"These negotiations are not about

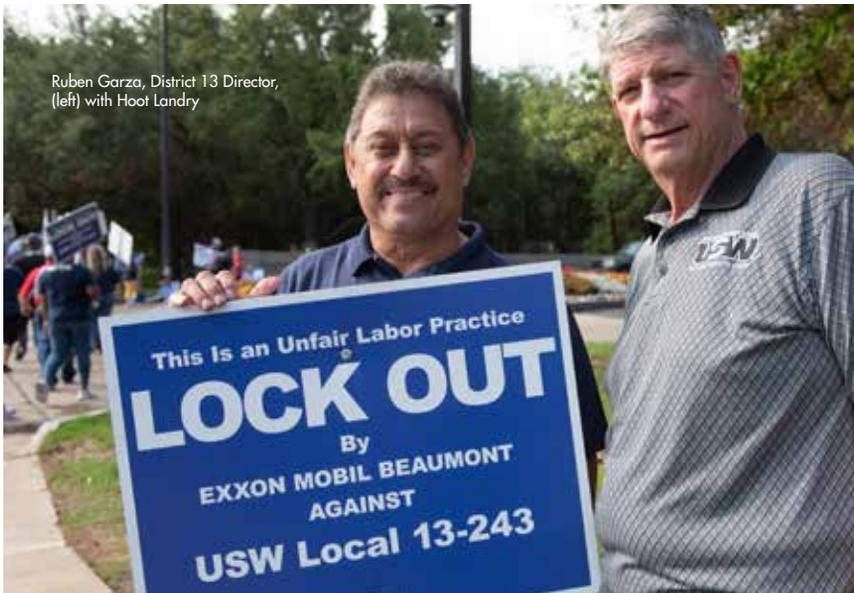
wages," said Darrell Kyle, president of Local 13-243. "Our greatest concern is making sure our lives and our jobs are safe and secure. Safety in our workplaces also protects our families and communities."

While the company is using buzzwords like "flexibility" and "competitiveness" to attempt to publicly justify its demands that workers needlessly give up seniority and job security rights, USW members say they can see through the corporate-speak.

"It's just to break the union," said Local 13-243 Unit Chair Mark Morgan. "The only reason the company is fighting the way they are is to break the union."

Loronza Patterson

This Is an Unfair Labor Practice



Ruben Garza, District 13 Director, (left) with Hoot Landry



## 'Now it's Personal'

Morgan said that company negotiators told members of the USW bargaining committee that the decision to lock out the work force was “just business.” But for the union members, their families and their neighbors, it’s about far more than that.

“Once you put my family out on the street, once you put my 650 brothers and sisters on the street, and their families,” he said, “now it’s personal.”

As they showed up each day to support each other on the picket line, USW members made it very clear that their top priority was to reach a settlement that would ensure the safety of their co-workers and their community.

“This is not a money deal. It’s about the safety of our fellow people,” said Local 13-243 member Lee Ozment. “It is a fight worth fighting, and we need to take it to them.”

The membership in Beaumont, along with allies throughout the labor

movement and community, have done just that, taking the fight directly to ExxonMobil over the past few months through a series of high-profile demonstrations in an effort to hold the company accountable for its actions.

## Shareholder Resolution

One of those efforts included USW members and their allies pushing in May for ExxonMobil shareholders to approve a resolution calling for the company to disclose which organizations it supports in its lobbying efforts. The move was intended to promote greater worker safety and corporate accountability in the wake of the lockout.

“Shareholders face a dark money blind spot when the company fails to disclose its trade association payments used for lobbying, especially when these lobbying efforts contradict with ExxonMobil’s public position,” said Ricky Brooks, a member of another Texas unit, Local 13-2001, who introduced the resolution on behalf of the USW and seven co-filers.

Brooks, whose local represents workers at the ExxonMobil chemical plant and refinery in Baytown, Texas, was representing the USW ExxonMobil union council. He confronted ExxonMobil for discretely backing a number of organizations and positions that were inconsistent with their stated goals, including supporting the Western States Petroleum Association, which has sued the state of California to stop a program that would make oil refineries safer.

“Disclosure of the company’s payments to trade associations and social welfare groups that influence public policies will allow shareholders to assess the company’s management of risks,” Brooks said.

During the shareholders’ meeting, the USW challenged the company’s positions on other issues, including its unfair labor practice lockout.

“This is something that the company chose to do,” said Local 13-243 member Corey Pokraka.

## OIL BARGAINING:

The USW will be preparing for national oil bargaining over the coming months, beginning with the 2021 National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP) Conference, which will be held virtually Aug. 9-13.



# "THIS WORK FORCE IS UNITED IN SOLIDARITY."

Ruben Garza, District 13 Director



Vince Clark

Ricky Brooks

## 'Essential Workers'

Kyle pointed out that the USW work force continued to show up throughout a series of recent natural disasters, including working throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Over the past year, the company was perfectly willing to tell us we were essential as we performed our jobs through the pandemic, hurricanes, floods and most recently an unprecedented freeze," Kyle said. "Now, it's rewarding our hard work and sacrifice by forcing us off our jobs."

In addition to attacking seniority, safety and job security, the company's concessionary proposals represent an attempt to divide the union work force by creating separate contracts for refinery and lubricant plant workers.

"Our only goal throughout this whole process has been to bargain a fair agreement," Kyle said. "It's deeply disappointing that ExxonMobil would take such a drastic step."

The union's six-year contract proposal included a first-year wage freeze to be followed by increases as determined by the national oil bargaining pattern agreement, for which negotiations are set to begin in January 2022.

"This work force is united in solidarity," said District 13 Director Ruben Garza. "The entire union is committed to fighting side by side with them until we reach a fair and equitable contract."

## Relying on Donations

The company has attempted to continue operating the 2,700-acre facility through the lockout using members of management and contractors to produce the gasoline and motor oil normally made by USW members.

Members say they feel betrayed by the company's attacks.

"It has really hurt my heart that they have shut the doors in so many members' faces," said Local 13-243 Secretary Treasurer Karla Konning.

Meanwhile, Local 13-243 members now must rely on the generosity of their union siblings and neighbors in the community to help them care for their families with donations of food and other necessities.

"It's a struggle," said Local 13-243 member Nikki Hill, whose husband is also locked out. "But to know that we have something like this is a blessing."

Still, even as the pain of the lockout stretches into the late summer, the members of Local 13-243 say remain committed to negotiating in good faith in an effort to reach a fair and equitable agreement.

"We are going to stick together and we're going to fight," Morgan said. "We're going to get to the table, we're going to get a fair contract and we're going to get back in this plant and take our jobs back."





# TRADE WATCH

# A BIG WIN FOR TIRE

MEMBER-LED CAMPAIGN SUCCESSFUL IN GAINING RELIEF ON IMPORTS

A yearlong campaign by USW members for relief from unfairly traded tire imports proved successful this summer when the International Trade Commission (ITC) issued final affirmative determinations on dumped and subsidized passenger vehicle and light truck (PVL) tires from Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

“Time and time again USW members lead the fight to protect their jobs and their communities from the devastating effects of unfair trade and ensure a level playing field for domestic producers,” said USW International President Tom Conway. “This case was no different. I’m proud of all the hard work our members do every day, not just in making high-quality tires but also in safeguarding this vital industry.”

The USW filed antidumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) petitions against the four countries in May 2020. Seven representatives of the USW, including Conway, testified in support of the petitions at an ITC hearing on May 25, 2021.

“We’re grateful that the ITC affirmed what USW members see every day: a deliberate effort to undercut our domestic industry and overtake our market,” Conway said.

## Seeking Long-Term Solution

Kevin Johnsen, who chairs the USW’s Rubber/Plastics Industry Conference, said the ITC’s final decision, handed down on June 23, was an important step toward leveling the playing field for domestic tire makers, but it must not be the last.

“We need long-term, sustainable solutions for bad trade,” said Johnsen, who also testified at the ITC hearing. “While we are grateful for the work of both the ITC and the Commerce Department, our current system is clearly broken. Before we can get remedies, we must demonstrate harm in the form of lost jobs and reduced market share. By that time, American workers are already suffering. We can and must do better.”

The USW is the largest North American union in tire manufacturing, representing workers at the following U.S. PVL tire

plants: Cooper Tire’s plants in Findlay, Ohio, and Texarkana, Ark.; Goodyear’s plants in Fayetteville, N.C., and Topeka, Kan.; Michelin’s plants in Fort Wayne, Ind., and Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Sumitomo’s plant in Tonawanda, N.Y.; Yokohama’s plant in Salem, Va.; and Kumho Tire’s plant in Macon, Ga.

Local leaders from a number of those plants joined Conway and Johnsen at the ITC hearing in May to sound the alarm over the harm that unfair trade has inflicted on them and their co-workers over the years.

## Production, Plants Lost

Members told the ITC that they have seen production, hours, jobs and, in the case of Goodyear’s Gadsden, Ala., facility, even entire plants lost as a result of illegally traded PVL tires.

Mickey Ray Williams, who served as president of Local 12L, represented workers at the Gadsden plant. He said the closure was “a major blow to our members, their families, and the entire community of Gadsden.”

“The Gadsden plant first opened more than 90 years ago, in 1929. It was a pillar of the local economy for decades,” Williams said. “One of the main reasons our plant became less competitive was that it could not survive the growing volumes of low-priced, unfairly traded imports flooding into the U.S. market.”

Other local leaders joining Williams in testifying at the hearing were Terry Brewington of Local 959L at Goodyear’s plant in Fayetteville, N.C., Brian Brubaker of Local 207L at Cooper Tire’s plant in Findlay, Ohio, Kerry Halter of Local 752L at Cooper’s plant in Texarkana, Ark., and Terry Cunningham of Local 715L at Michelin’s BF Goodrich plant in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Together, the leaders at the hearing represent more than 5,000 workers in the passenger vehicle and light truck tire industry.

Each member shared stories of how illegal trade has harmed their co-workers, and of how strict enforcement of trade rules has helped preserve good jobs.

# WORKERS

“Chinese producers were determined to regain access to our attractive U.S. market,” Brubaker said as he explained how new plants in other nations, including Taiwan and Vietnam, resulted in cheap imports pouring into the United States and damaging the market for U.S. manufacturers.

“As a result, all of the improvements in our plant ground to a halt,” he said. “As a result of declining production, we had substantial unused capacity. About 18 percent of our curing presses were simply sitting idle.”

## Trade Relief Successful

Still, after the Commerce Department’s preliminary affirmative determination and the ITC’s preliminary duties last summer, “imports retreated, and domestic plants rushed to fill the gap, bringing back workers, adding hours, raising prices, and making new investments,” said Johnsen.

Trade enforcement remedies have already helped USW members elsewhere in the industry, including at Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga., where newly organized members of the USW will reap the benefits of a \$22 million investment that will boost production in Georgia by half a million tires per year.

Other USW members have also witnessed a turnaround in recent months.

“Since preliminary relief was imposed on imports from Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam at the end of 2020, the company’s forecasts for demand are twice as high as they were six months ago, and prices for our tires are increasing,” said Cunningham. “We are now aiming to hit a production level of 16,500 tires a day by this fall – above where we were in 2019 before COVID hit. We have recalled everyone that was laid off and are currently on a hiring spree, seeking approximately 100 people.”

Johnsen said that, given a level playing field, American tire workers can be the best in the world.

“We are very optimistic about the future of our industry,” Johnsen said. “We know our employers are as well, as evidenced by their new willingness to invest in new equipment and increased production when the market is free from unfair imports.”

As the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA) reached its one-year anniversary in July, a new bilateral plan to enforce labor standards was a sign that the deal, which replaced the failed NAFTA pact, would do more to protect workers in all three countries.

“If we are to succeed in protecting workers’ rights at home, we must ensure that those rights will not be undermined by exploitative labor practices and violations of collective bargaining rights around the world,” said U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh following the announcement of a comprehensive plan to allow a fair union vote for workers at a General Motors facility in Silao, Mexico.

Stronger labor rights standards, along with strict enforcement, were among the commitments Mexico made during the NAFTA renegotiation process in 2018. That commitment came after labor leaders and Democrats in Congress vowed that they would not support a new agreement that did not contain those measures.

The July deal between the United States and Mexico, the first labor enforcement action under the “rapid response” mechanism in the USMCA, followed an initiative spearheaded by the AFL-CIO to hold Mexico accountable for recent violations of labor standards from two employers – GM in Silao, and Tridonex at its Matamoros auto parts factory.

“One of the hard-fought victories of the USMCA was that it provided a rapid response mechanism that allows the United States

to take action against individual factories that violate workers’ rights,” International President Tom Conway said. “Workers in Mexico, like all workers, deserve the opportunity to choose representation by an independent union and negotiate for a fair contract that reflects their needs and priorities.”

The GM complaint came following reports of workers’ rights abuses during a union vote at the company’s Silao plant. Another complaint involved allegations that Tridonex had denied workers at its plant in Matamoros their rights to elect their own leaders or ratify their contract, and that the company fired hundreds of workers for union activity.

Susana Prieto Terrazas, a labor attorney who was imprisoned last summer in Mexico on trumped-up charges related to her activism, has led the campaign to protect the Tridonex workers.

The GM case resulted in an investigation and subsequent agreement, announced in July, that Mexico would ensure that a new union vote, with 32 inspectors present to monitor the process for fairness, would be held at the facility by late August.

“Fully implementing and enforcing the USMCA not only helps workers there, it also helps American workers by preventing trade from becoming a race to the bottom,” said U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai. “Our agreements must be more than words on a page, and the United States will use every avenue to protect workers and ensure that Americans compete on a level playing field.”



## U.S. PUSHES MEXICO ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

# TRADE WATCH KEEP SECTION 232

STUDY SHOWS TARIFFS HAVE HELPED ALUMINUM INDUSTRY

The USW called for continued relief for U.S. aluminum producers this summer following a report that showed that the industry has rebounded under Section 232 import measures.

“Global overcapacity, in conjunction with other illegal trade practices, put severe strain on our ability to produce aluminum, a product vital to our national defense and other critical infrastructure,” said International President Tom Conway. “As USW members experienced firsthand, this cost our country thousands of good, community-sustaining jobs.”

Conway’s comments came in response to a report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), which studied the benefits that the Section 232 measures provided to the

U.S. aluminum industry and its workers and determined that there was a continuing need to keep them in place.

Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 gives the president the authority to take action against imports that pose a threat to national security. Using that authority, in March 2018, the administration imposed 25 percent tariffs on most steel imports and a 10 percent duty on most aluminum imports.

Those actions, for which the USW advocated for many years, were successful – for now – in helping to stem a sharp decline in the U.S. aluminum industry. Between 2010 and 2017, 18 of 23 domestic aluminum smelters shut down production, eliminating roughly 13,000 good jobs, the

## NEW USTR SEEKS ‘WORKER-CENTERED’ TRADE POLICY

American workers must be at the center of U.S. trade policy-making so that those decisions ensure that they share in the nation’s economic prosperity, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai told union members at a June 10 AFL-CIO virtual town hall meeting.

“We want to make trade a force for good that encourages a race to the top,” Ambassador Tai said as she laid out what she called a worker-centered vision for the Biden administration’s trade policy.

“The first step to achieving this goal is creating a more inclusive process,” Tai said. “In order to understand how trade affects workers, we want to come meet with, listen to, and learn from them.”

That approach has already achieved results, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said as he introduced Tai. Prior to her appointment as USTR, Tai served as chief trade counsel for the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, playing a key role in fighting for strong worker protections in the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA).

“She was on our side in the trenches every single moment of that fight,” Trumka said.

While the USMCA is not perfect, Tai said, it is a far better deal than its failed predecessor, NAFTA, because it included significant input from working people. That process can serve as a template for the Biden administration to follow as it pursues future trade policies that put people first, she said.

“By bringing workers from all backgrounds and experiences to the table, we will create inclusive trade policy that advances economic security and racial and gender equity,” Tai said. “We want to lift up women, communities of color, and rural America – people that have been systematically excluded or overlooked.”

The focus on lifting up workers rather than on maximizing profits will ensure that the United States doesn’t continue its failed policies of the past, Trumka said.

Those policies resulted in cheap foreign products dumped in the United States, illegal subsidies that unfairly undercut U.S. producers, currency manipulation, offshoring of jobs and other practices that harmed U.S. manufacturing workers and destroyed communities, he said.

“There are consequences of failed trade policies, and we can’t repeat the mistakes

# MEASURES

EPI report noted, a drop that was largely the result of unfair competition from dumped and subsidized imports.

The report also found that there was no evidence the tariffs had significant adverse effects on customers or other industries, an argument that has been used by critics of the duties in calling for them to end.

“The Section 232 measures are allowing the domestic aluminum industry to regrow and add jobs,” Conway said. “This includes new investment not only in aluminum production, but downstream as well. We cannot jeopardize our fragile economic recovery by lifting them prematurely.”

of our past,” Trumka said. “Today marks the start of a new era. Ambassador Tai values workers’ voices and truly believes in workers’ rights.”



Katherine Tai

Following Tai’s opening remarks, she took questions from several rank-and-file union members, the first of which came from Kameen Thompson, president of USW Local 9462 at the Cleveland-Cliffs steel mill in Conshohocken, Pa.

Thompson questioned Tai on how the administration would make sure American workers – and Steelworkers in particular – benefit from the growing

Among its conclusions, the EPI study found that:

- Aluminum is essential for national defense, and the industry’s decline poses a major risk of costly supply chain disruptions. Today, there is only one U.S. smelter capable of producing high-purity aluminum needed for a number of military and aerospace applications.
- Since the implementation of the tariffs, the aluminum industry has begun to recover, with at least 55 new and expansion projects in downstream aluminum industries employing nearly 4,500 workers and nearly a million metric tons of annual rolling and extrusion capacity.
- U.S. production of primary aluminum has increased, reaching an annual rate of 1.14 million metric tons before the COVID-19 pandemic, up from 741,000 metric tons in 2017.

## US-EU Trade Talks

This May, as the United States Trade Representative announced talks with the European Union (EU) aimed at addressing global overcapacity in aluminum and steel, the USW urged caution, noting that the U.S. currently has more than three dozen unfair trade relief measures in place against EU steel and aluminum products that resulted from dumping and subsidies

targeting the U.S. market.

“The EU is an important ally, but in the past, it has been part of the problem, not part of the solution,” Conway said. “As we continue to work toward a permanent multilateral solution for global overcapacity, we must maintain and strengthen trade relief measures so that we can rebuild our communities and safeguard our national security.”

promise of the expanding renewable energy industry.

As Thompson pointed out, generating power by harnessing solar and wind energy sources requires the use of a significant amount of steel.

Tai said the Biden administration would continue to work with labor leaders and global allies to address overcapacity in the steel industry and craft policies at home that promote strict Buy American provisions, in green energy initiatives and other industries.

“The steel industry is critical to our economy and our national security. It’s also a crucial component in solar and in wind,” she said. “We will be better able to respond to overcapacity if we consult closely with the United Steelworkers and partner with our allies.”

Fred Thomas, a member of the United Autoworkers in Lansing, Mich., also questioned Tai on an issue of importance to USW members – the “rules of origin” requirements in the USMCA, an important mechanism to ensure that not only vehicles, but also their components, are produced in the United States.

Rule of origin requirements under the USMCA are significantly higher, and enforcement more strict, than they were under NAFTA, Tai said.

“I want to build off of this work while I’m at USTR,” she said, “and make sure that trade policy increases wages, strengthens our supply chain and supports the livelihoods and opportunities for workers like you.”

In addition, Tai said, the administration must continue to pursue other policies to lift up struggling Americans, such as the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, tax reform that eases the burden on working people, and a platform to advance racial and gender equity.

The people-first vision that Tai laid out on behalf of the Biden administration is one that “workers have yearned for years to hear,” Trumka said.

Tai, who took office as the U.S. Trade Representative in March following unanimous confirmation in the U.S. Senate, said that she looks forward to continuing her outreach to workers as she works to reform U.S. trade policy.

“It is still the early days, and we have far more to do,” she said. “By working together, we will achieve a trade policy that prioritizes the dignity of work and workers, that promotes shared prosperity and racially inclusive, equitable economic growth here at home and abroad.”



Vice President Kamala Harris and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, right, joined USW members Amanda Parks, left, Wynne Lanros, center, and Rachael Davis in Pittsburgh.

# WHITE HOUSE SEEKS TO SPUR UNION ORGANIZING

## Task Force, Made-in-America Push Among Efforts to Grow Labor Movement

Following a campaign in which he vowed to be the most pro-labor president in American history, President Joe Biden's administration is doing its best to live up to that promise with a series of actions intended to boost union membership and reinvigorate U.S. manufacturing.

"For too long corporations have leveraged their political influence to increase their profits and erode workers' rights, resulting in stagnant wages and rampant economic inequality," said International President Tom Conway. "It's past time that we reset the scales."

### Federal Task Force

Conway made that statement in response to the Biden administration's announcement this spring that it was creating the first White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, led by Vice President Kamala Harris, to advance a strong pro-worker agenda.

The task force, also led by vice chair and U.S. Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh, includes 12 other Cabinet secretaries and 10 high-level federal administrators tasked with taking a whole-of-government approach to expanding collective bargaining.

The ultimate goal is to make it easier for unions to bridge the gap between the two-thirds of Americans who support them and the 6 percent of private-sector workers who belong to them.

### Reversing a Trend

That large gap is a result of decades of anti-union policies from legislators in Washington, D.C., and state governments across the country that have empowered union-busting corporations and hindered the ability of labor groups to organize new members.

"It could make a very big difference in this space to have a president who uses the bully pulpit to make this a front-and-center preference," according to Jared Bernstein, a member of the president's Council of Economic Advisers.

The formation of a federal organizing task force represents one of the most concrete steps a president has taken to encourage worker participation in the labor movement since the days of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Conway said.

"We applaud President Biden's initiative to help empower workers through the executive branch," he said. "Union membership helps keep workers safe on the job, affords greater access to retirement and health benefits and provides a ticket to the middle class through higher wages and greater job security."

Even before the Biden administration took office, the USW had begun to devote more resources than ever to organizing new members, particularly in the American South, home to thousands of unorganized workers – including many in the rubber and tire industry.

That effort has had some successes already. In 2019, about 320 workers at Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga., voted to join the USW despite years of relentless bullying and intimidation on the part of their employer. Those workers are now in the process of bargaining their first contract.

This summer, the USW launched another organizing drive a few hours to the north of Macon at Giti Tire in Richburg, S.C. The drive was spurred, in part, when the company pocketed \$10 million from the Paycheck Protection Program – intended to keep Americans on the job during the COVID-19 crisis – and then threw about 100 employees out of work.

### Barriers to First Contracts

The Biden administration, through the task force and other initiatives, wants to bolster those organizing efforts. To further that goal, Harris and Walsh and other administration officials are taking time this summer to speak directly to rank-and-file workers about their experiences with anti-union employers. That objective brought them this summer to Pittsburgh, where they met with members of seven unions, including Steelworkers.

One of those members was Amanda Parks, who works for Google contractor HCL. Like their siblings at Kumho, Parks and her colleagues were still fighting for a first contract this summer, two years after voting to join the USW.



HCL faced National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) complaints for its failure to bargain in good faith.

Parks said she and her colleagues never lost their determination to win at the bargaining table, despite HCL's deliberate delays, a common tactic companies employ – often without repercussions – to thwart unions even after a majority of workers vote for them.

Just a few weeks after the visit from Harris and Walsh, USW members reached a tentative agreement with HCL on a first contract. Members voted in late July to ratify the agreement with an overwhelming majority.

“Becoming a union member is a life-changing moment, and it's good to see that this administration supports that,” said Parks. “The surest way to promote good jobs and economic security for the working class is to grow union density across all sectors of the economy, from service jobs to blue collar jobs to white collar jobs and everywhere in between.”

## Pro-Worker Agenda

Biden's organizing task force is the most concrete, but hardly the first, pro-labor move the president has made in the early days of his term. Soon after taking the oath of office, he fired the NLRB's anti-union general counsel Peter Robb. A few weeks later, he made a statement of support for the drive to unionize an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala.

The president has called on the Senate to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would remove unnecessary barriers to union organizing, make it easier to negotiate

first contracts, and increase punishments for employers who illegally attempt to block workers' collective efforts.

The legislation would make it harder for unscrupulous employers like HCL, Kumho and others to thwart the will of their workers to gain a voice on the job.

The U.S. House approved the PRO Act with a bipartisan vote in March, but it faces a filibuster from Republicans in the Senate.

Biden has also spoken out in favor of raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 and signed an executive order establishing that baseline for federal contractors. The administration also has backed efforts to provide for 12 weeks of paid leave for new parents and workers who need to care for sick parents, spouses and children.

Besides those policy initiatives, the president has proposed a major infrastructure program with Buy American provisions that would revitalize the nation's manufacturing sector, rebuild communities and create good, family-supporting jobs for thousands of new union members.

Taken together, all of those efforts represent the most pro-worker White House agenda since the New Deal of the 1930s created the minimum wage and expanded workers' rights to organize under the National Labor Relations Act.

In a fact sheet the White House released in conjunction with the announcement of the organizing task force, the administration touted the many benefits union members enjoy, such as significantly higher wages, better health care, secure retirement

plans, and lower incidences of workplace injuries. In addition, the fact sheet acknowledged that union contracts help to ensure fair treatment for women and people of color.

“Workers have allies in the White House and throughout this administration,” said USW member Wynne Lanros, one of the workers at HCL who recently reached agreement on a first contract after two years. “It's heartening to know that we have leaders who do more than just talk about supporting working people. They actually back up that talk with action to support them and their voices.”

Workers can help the cause by contacting their senators and urging them to bring the PRO Act to the floor for a vote, Conway said.

“There's still a great deal of work to do to make President Biden's vision a reality,” he said. “We urge Congress and the president to keep workers and their families at the forefront so that we lift up all Americans.”

## THE PRO ACT

USW members can help the labor movement thrive by calling on their senators to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize [PRO] Act. The legislation would remove barriers to union organizing and make it easier for workers to bargain collectively for better wages, stronger benefits and safer workplaces.

Please call your senators at: **877-607-0785**. [Remember, you have two senators, so be sure to make two calls.]

# NEWS BRIEFS

## BISHOP NOA WORKERS RATIFY FIRST CONTRACT

Workers at Bishop Noa Home in Escanaba, Mich., ratified their first contract July 15 after negotiations that at times were bitter and contentious.

The approximately 55 certified nursing assistants and dietary, environmental services and laundry workers at the senior living center will form two new units of Local 2-21. Members of Local 2-21, many of whom work at the nearby Verso paper mill, showed steadfast solidarity with Bishop Noa workers throughout their campaign to beat back major concessions and reach an agreement.

Bishop Noa workers first organized nearly four years ago. They came to the table committed to negotiating a fair deal but were subjected to repeated attempts to break their resolve, including management bringing in an out-of-town union-busting lawyer who tried to bully workers into submission.

Even without a contract, the union was able to prevent wide-scale layoffs over the course of negotiations and advocate for the workers during the pandemic, including securing across-the-board hazard pay.



## STARBUCKS WORKERS BREW UP FIRST CONTRACT

USW members voted unanimously to ratify their first contract at a Starbucks drive-through location in Victoria, B.C., this summer.

The contract includes lump-sum bonuses, wage increases and health and safety provisions, including language aimed at preventing workplace violence and harassment. The USW also secured 10 paid days of leave for members facing situations of domestic violence.

“We are excited now that the contract is done and to see the workplace changes that will come along with it,” said Sarah Broad, USW bargaining committee member. “It felt like a really big battle to bargain with a company like Starbucks, but I am very happy that we did and I cannot wait to see the impact that the changes will bring not only for us but for other baristas too.”

The workers voted to unionize in August 2020 after reaching out to the USW.



## PRIDE GOES DIGITAL IN 2021

Every June, LGBTQ+ people and their allies commemorate Pride Month with a variety of vibrant celebrations across the country and the world, from marches through cities to festivals in fields.

This year, many events were still scaled-down or held virtually in the wake of the coronavirus, but that didn't stop the community from honoring their history and diversity.

The USW has been working since early 2019 with the union's LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee to address issues related to contract language, expand

the union's education curriculum to be inclusive and intersectional, and decrease incidents of harassment against LGBTQ+ members.

This Pride season, the union unveiled a host of digital resources curated from this work for LGBTQ+ union activists and their allies now available at [usw.org/steelpride](http://usw.org/steelpride).

Among these resources is sample language from actual union contracts in areas crucial to LGBTQ+ inclusion provided by our partners at Pride@Work, the AFL-CIO constituency group.

The Steel Pride webpage also

## CHEMICAL SECTOR COMING TOGETHER

USW chemical workers began building a sector-wide network with a virtual meeting this spring, the first full gathering of members in the industry since before the 2005 USWA-PACE merger.

“This sector-wide meeting began the process of joining all of our chemical groups,” said USW Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn, who leads the union’s chemical sector. “Many of them are small locals or units of amalgamated locals and they don’t belong to a council because their companies only have one or a few sites.”

The USW’s chemical sector includes more than 20,000 members in about 328 local unions and units. Shinn said one challenge in the sector is the size of some of the units. Most contain an average of 55 workers and are spread throughout the United States. Only five sites have more than 300 members, and only 14 locations have more than 200.

Also, only a few chemical companies have more than five units. This presents a challenge when forming a sector-wide council. The USW has chemical councils for BASF, 3M, Evonik and Solvay workers and is part of the Dow-DuPont North American Labor Council, which includes workers from Dow, DuPont, Chemours and other spin-off companies from the Dow-DuPont merger.

While some chemical locals are members of other councils that overlap with the chemical industry, such as in the oil and pharmaceutical sectors, the spring meeting provided an opportunity for all the locals – some of which had never attended an international event – to get acquainted and share information and resources.

“This was my first time having anything to do with the

includes a mini glossary of commonly used terms, a union guide to discussing LGBTQ+ issues, and a list of recommended books for activists.

“All of these resources are great for starting productive conversations about what this community needs and also what they provide to the labor movement with their unique experience,” said USW Civil and Human Rights Director Amanda Green-Hawkins.

Pride@Work also went digital with its annual Pride Month event, Celebrating Solidarity, which they hosted on Facebook Live on June 24.



### Stay Connected

Members can sign up for the Chemical Solutions newsletter at [usw.to/ChemicalSolutions](https://usw.to/ChemicalSolutions), receive mobile updates by texting the word CHEMICAL to the phone number 47486, and check out the USW Chemical Workers Facebook page at [facebook.com/chemicalworkers](https://facebook.com/chemicalworkers).

chemical sector,” said Michael Shore, Local 7110 president at Evans Chemetics LP in Waterloo, N.Y. “I found it helpful to know that our company is like so many other chemical manufacturers, but at the same time, we are so different.”

“Being a local with only 40 members, we seem to forget that many of our siblings are going through or have already been through things we deal with,” Shore said.

Shinn told the members that regardless of the size of their units, they all do vital work.

“The products chemical workers produce interact with every sector we have in our union, from food and drugs to oil, plastics and transportation,” he said.

Shinn said that chemical workers are an “under-organized” group, with about 600,000 non-union workers in the United States, a situation that presents an opportunity for the USW.

“I thought it was interesting that a majority of bargained-for chemical locations are relatively small units,” said Local 12075 President Kent Holsing, who works at Dow Chemical in Midland, Mich. “It shows all the potential organizing opportunities that exist out there.”

Members Dustin Pietricone of Local 4-277 in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and Carmine Frangella of Local 13-750 at Shell Oil Chemical in Norco, La., said they looked forward to being more involved in the USW and learning from their fellow members during future sector-wide events.

“I believe we need to have a mixture of face-to-face and virtual meetings to keep open communication between the international and our members,” Frangella said.

Shinn said that in the future he hopes to mix virtual council meetings with in-person, joint district chemical meetings.

This year’s celebration honored Carmen Berkley, former AFL-CIO Civil, Human and Women’s Rights director, as well as the United Auto Workers (UAW), who recently announced they are forming their first official LGBTQ Caucus.

“The struggle continues but together, we definitely rise,” said Pride at Work Co-President Shellea Allen during the event’s virtual toast that capped off the evening. “And we all know that when we fight, we win.”



Check out the USW’s Solidarity Works podcast to hear from

labor author and organizer Anne Balay. Her work, which includes the groundbreaking book *Steel Closets: Voices of Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Steelworkers*, is part of the inspiration behind the union’s LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee. Listen and learn more at [usw.to/podcast](https://usw.to/podcast).

## MEMBERS CONTINUE ACTIVISM TO KEEP PIPELINE RUNNING

USW members continued their activism this spring and summer in calling on Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to halt her state's efforts to shut down the Enbridge Line 5 pipe that passes through the Great Lakes.

In May, members of Local 912 at the Toledo Refining Co., provided testimony to the Michigan House and Senate and held a public demonstration outside the capitol in Lansing, where they displayed 300 hard hats, representing the USW jobs that could be lost as a result of the decision. They then delivered a hat to each legislator's desk along with information about the importance of continuing the operation of the pipeline.

In July, the members held a similar action and rally near their Ohio workplace as a show of gratitude to the Ohio House and Senate, both of which recently passed resolutions calling for Line 5 to continue operating.

Line 5, which carries oil, natural gas and other utilities through the upper Midwest and Canada, is vital to the continued operation of the Toledo refinery, as well as to ensuring good jobs and affordable energy for residents of Michigan, Ohio and elsewhere.

"This pipeline is vital to our economic and environmental future," said Local 912 President Justin Donley. "The closure of Line 5 could prove to be disastrous for thousands of residents of Michigan, Ohio and the entire region."



## ATOMIC LOCAL RATIFIES FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT

Local 12-652 members at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory (INL) overwhelmingly ratified a five-year agreement on June 15 that contained major wage increases and contract language improvements.

The contract with Battelle Energy Alliance covers 24 different work classifications in maintenance and operations for about 380 members who work on the Advanced Test Reactor and the nuclear research and development side of INL.

The contract is the best the local has negotiated in years, said Local 12-652 President Matt Chavez, who has worked 39 years at INL and negotiated contracts for over 20 years.

He said at least 280 workers received substantial raises, with some receiving as much as an 18.9 percent raise over the contract term to bring them in line with wages of similar workers in the region. The other 100 workers received market-level wage increases.

Contract language improvements included getting into the agreement the extra compensation for certain jobs—making these payments part of a worker's base pay—mandating personal protective equipment, making it harder to subcontract USW work, enabling the local to have more than one full-time health and safety representative and having a lead position in every job classification.

## USW SEEKS SWIFT ACTION IN VIRGIN ISLANDS

The USW is urging officials of the U.S. Virgin Islands to quickly hammer out a plan for paying back wages to government workers subjected to illegal pay cuts during the financial crisis a decade ago.

Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. and the Legislature have promised to pay the public servants, including about 2,000 USW members, but they have advanced plans with different timetables.

"It's essential that Gov. Bryan and legislative leaders come to agreement on a payment process as quickly as possible," stressed USW District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, who leads thousands of Steelworkers in the Virgin Islands and seven Southern states.

"The dedicated workers who keep the government of the Virgin Islands running day in and day out already have waited 10 long years to receive wages that never should have been taken from them in the first place," Flippo noted. "That's money that they need to pay mortgages, educate their children and meet other expenses. Further delay compounds the injury to their families."

The government arbitrarily slashed workers' pay by 8 percent from 2011 to 2013, violating collective bargaining agreements with union members.

The USW sued, and in 2016, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the wage cuts illegal.

## STEELWORKERS EARN RESPECT FROM ARCELORMITTAL

Throughout their strike against global steelmaking giant ArcelorMittal, 2,500 Quebec Steelworkers focused on two unwavering demands: respect from their employer and greater economic benefits to their communities from the extraction of their natural resources.

After a 29-day strike this spring, the members achieved a decisive victory with a four-year contract that makes impressive gains and reflects the slogan they used throughout the dispute: “Our resources for our economy.”

The 2,500 members of five USW local unions along northern Quebec’s iron range bargain jointly. They went on strike on May 10 after voting by overwhelming margins to reject a company proposal that ignored their concerns.

“Our members fought not only for better working conditions at a time when their employer is enjoying huge profits, but also for the economic fabric of the region, and all of Quebec,” said District 5 Director Dominic Lemieux.

Beyond monetary issues, workers and the community had a long list of complaints about ArcelorMittal, including a lack of investment in workers’ housing, health and safety issues, a worker’s death in 2019, unsanitary temporary mining camps and food poisoning among workers.

“There was a lot of bitterness and even anger from our members towards the employer, who had made promises during the previous negotiations in 2017 and had not kept them,” said Nicolas Lapierre, spokesperson for the union’s 29-member negotiating committee rep-

resenting Locals 5778, 6869, 8664, 7401 and 7401-FP.

The members made their concerns clear during an extraordinary three-hour meeting between the union’s bargaining committee and Lakshmi Mittal, ArcelorMittal’s executive chairman, shortly before the strike began.

“During this meeting and throughout the strike, our members sent a clear message to the employer, that he owes his profits to his workers, their families and the communities where his operations are located, and that these people and communities deserve respect,” said Lemieux.

The results were unequivocal. The new, four-year contract will improve working conditions and generate an additional \$178 million in payroll, providing an annual 14 percent boost to the local economy.

Gains include annual wage increases of more than 3 percent, average annual pension increases of 3.75 percent, indexed pension benefits, premiums for some workers of as much as \$1,200 per month, and maintaining community-based jobs rather than increasing the use of fly-in workers.

“Throughout the dispute, our members received strong support in the community. People understood that the entire region would benefit from our fight. Now it remains to be seen whether this employer will change its ways and become a better corporate citizen,” said Lapierre.

Last year, Cleveland Cliffs acquired ArcelorMittal’s U.S. steelmaking, finishing, cokemaking and mining operations in a \$1.4 billion transaction.

## USW JOINS CALL FOR CHANGES AT CSB

The USW joined 21 other organizations, including labor, environmental and scientific groups, in July to send a 16-page letter to the chair of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) with recommendations on how the board can better fulfill its mission.

The group, which included the AFL-CIO and the BlueGreen Alliance, outlined 21 specific ways in which the CSB, without increasing its current budget of \$12 million, could better achieve its goal of preventing future workplace incidents.

Among the recommendations made to CSB Chair Katherine Lemos were for the board to perform an accounting of its current record-breaking backlog of cases and make public its plan for completing the investigations.

Other recommendations included a staff recruitment, training and retention plan to address CSB job vacancies and ensure timely investigations, for the board to rely less on company-supplied information in its investigations, for the board to be more transparent and open in its meetings and in the information it shares with the public, and for the board to prioritize the reform of risk management and process safety management.

## USW, MISSISSIPPI POLYMERS REACH CONTRACT AGREEMENT

USW members reached an agreement on a new contract with Mississippi Polymers this July after a brief lockout.

Following the work stoppage, more than 100 members of USW Local 759L returned to work on June 14 as bargaining continued. The members then voted by a 4-to-1 margin to ratify the new contract, which includes provisions to ensure more affordable health care for members.

USW District 9 Director Daniel Flippo called the contract an important step forward for the union.

“The hard-working USW members at Mississippi Polymers were determined to reach a new labor agreement that reflected their commitment and contributions to the company’s success,” Flippo said.





## LABOR BOARD SETS FACULTY ELECTION DATES

Faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh are looking forward to holding a vote to become USW members after the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) scheduled an election to take place from Aug. 27 through Oct. 12.

“It’s been a long road, but I am thankful that we will finally have the chance to make our voices heard,” said Tyler Bickford, an associate professor in the university’s English Department. “Gaining a voice will provide faculty members with greater job security, improve educational outcomes, promote better research and increase transparency across the university system.”

The decision to hold an election followed years of relentless anti-union efforts by the school’s administration aimed at preventing such a vote from taking place.

Financial records show that the administration has paid more than \$2.1 million since 2016 to Philadelphia “union avoidance” law firm Ballard Spahr for its help in an ongoing campaign to stop faculty members’ unionization efforts, as well as to prevent a concurrent

effort by Pitt graduate student workers to join the USW.

“It’s unfortunate that an institution like Pitt can accept millions in tax dollars and then turn around and spend millions to silence its workers,” said Melinda Ciccocioppo, a lecturer in the psychology department. “As Pitt faculty members, we have wanted nothing more than what all higher education workers deserve – a voice in the decisions that affect our lives and those of our students.”

A PLRB hearing examiner ruled last summer that the university administration artificially inflated a list of its faculty employees in order to impede the faculty’s unionization campaign. This April, the examiner issued a follow-up decision on which faculty members would be included in the USW bargaining unit, bringing the total to about 3,000 faculty members.

“We look forward to making our voices heard loud and clear and then moving forward with the important work of making the University of Pittsburgh a better institution for faculty, students and our entire community,” Ciccocioppo said.

## NLRB TO PROSECUTE NEW COMPLAINT AGAINST TECNOCAP

Region 6 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) issued a consolidated complaint in June against West Virginia-based Tecnocap for a series of unfair labor practices between August 2020 and February 2021.

On Sept. 13, 2021, an administrative law judge will hear the NLRB’s case against Tecnocap for violations of federal labor law that include unilaterally slashing employee health benefits and requiring union members to work 12-hour shifts.

In addition, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit upheld a determination by the NLRB that the company’s nine-day March 2018 lockout of almost 80 members of Local 152M at the company’s Glen Dale, W.Va., production facility was illegal.

USW District 8 Director Ernest R. (“Billy”) Thompson said that the USW welcomes the prospect of justice for the workers who Tecnocap illegally locked out and admonished the company for still refusing to bargain in good faith.

“We hope that this decision prompts Tecnocap to reconsider its pattern of violating the rights of employees and to return to the bargaining table to hammer out a fair contract for these workers,” Thompson said. “The company simply needs to start obeying the law and negotiating with us in good faith.”





## TRAGEDY RENEWS GLOBAL UNIONS' CALL FOR SAFETY

Leaders of two of the world's biggest labor federations demanded a renewed focus on worker safety following another deadly factory disaster in Bangladesh this July.

On July 8, doors were reportedly locked when a fire broke out in a seven-story building where fruit drinks and packaging materials are made. The tragedy resulted in 49 workers being burned to death, while three others died jumping from the building and 25 were rescued from the roof.

At least 16 children were missing following the fire, and family members allege that children as young as 11 were working in the factory.

"The combination of child labor and workers locked into an unsafe factory has led to a particularly heartbreaking and distressing result," said Valter Sanches, general secretary of the IndustriALL Global Union, which represents more than 50 million workers in 140 countries. The USW's Director of Regulatory and State Policy, Anna Fendley, serves the organization as a vice president.

Bangladesh has a long history of fatal workplace tragedies, particularly in garment factories. In November 2012, 112 workers died in a Tazreen Fashions factory fire after being locked in the building. In April 2013, 1,133 people were killed when the Rana Plaza factory complex collapsed.

Global labor leaders and garment makers agreed to the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety in May 2013 in an attempt to create safer working conditions and prevent future disasters in the nation's factories. The groups are currently working on a successor agreement to that accord.

"Eight years after Rana Plaza, this shocking and needless tragedy shows that deadly working conditions in Bangladeshi factories persist," said Christy Hoffman, general secretary of UNI Global Union, a 20-million-member worldwide labor federation. "While huge strides have been made in garment industry safety – thanks to the Bangladesh Accord – it is a reminder that without robust and independent systems to enforce safe working conditions, the very worst can happen."

## ADDITIONAL COMPLAINT EXPECTED AT ASARCO

Region 28 of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Arizona is investigating additional charges the USW filed against ASARCO that could lead to a fifth consolidated complaint against the copper producer for unfair labor practices (ULPs).

A trial date for the Region's fourth consolidated complaint is set for Oct. 19.

The USW and six other unions, representing more than 1,800 workers at ASARCO facilities in Arizona and Texas, launched a ULP strike against the company, a subsidiary of Mexico City-based mining and metals conglomerate Grupo Mexico, in October 2019. Last summer, the unions ended the ULP strike and made an unconditional offer to return to work.

The NLRB has already issued four complaints against ASARCO for bargaining in bad faith, illegally declaring impasse in contract negotiations, and taking other unlawful actions against its union work force before, during and after the ULP strike.

## MEMBERS RATIFY CONTRACT, END STRIKE AT UNIFRAX

About 190 members of Local 4-2058 returned to work at Unifrax in Tonawanda, N.Y., in June after voting to ratify a new three-year contract after about a month on the picket line.

USW members at the ceramic fiber insulation plant initiated the strike in May after the company declared impasse and implemented its so-called "last, best and final" contract offer.



**UNITED STEELWORKERS**  
**Rapid Response**  
**Legislative and Policy**  
CONFERENCE

The USW's 2021 Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Conference will take place Oct. 31 through Nov. 3 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Members can find out more information and register at [www.usw.org/events](http://www.usw.org/events).

# 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 \_\_\_\_\_

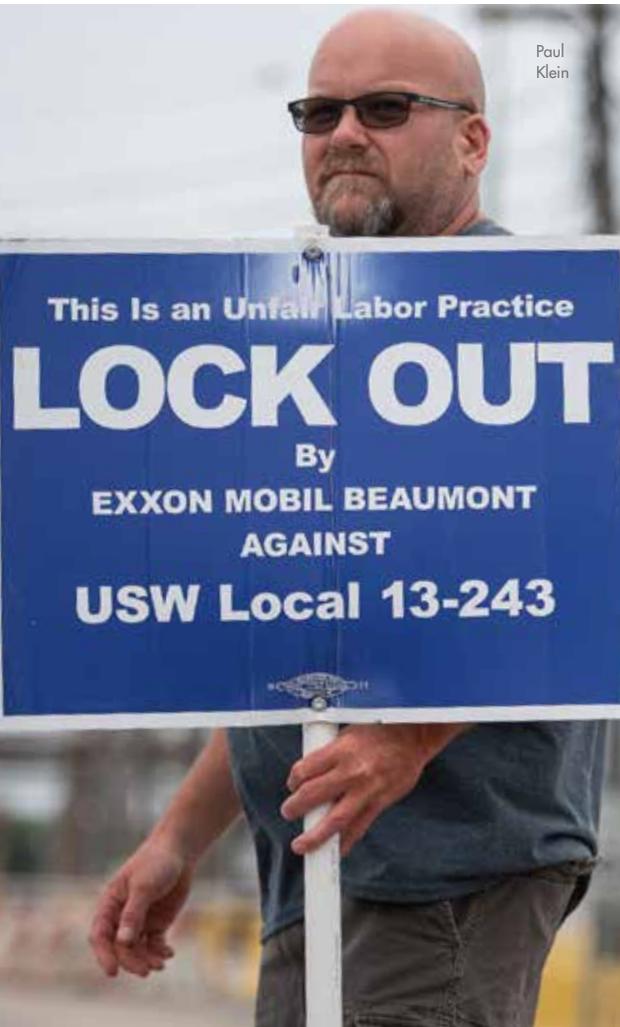
City \_\_\_\_\_

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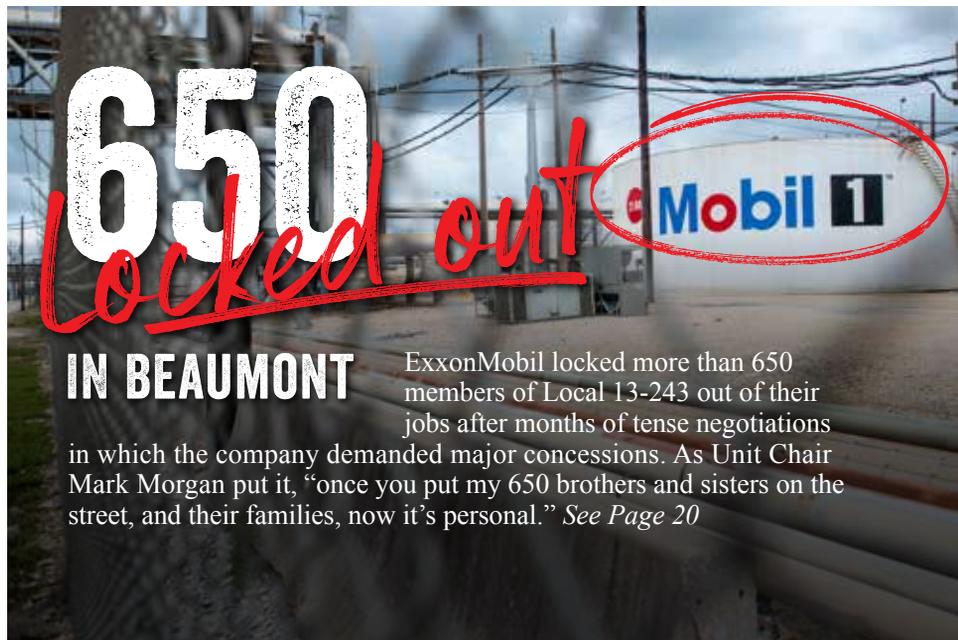
You may also email the information to [membership@usw.org](mailto:membership@usw.org)



John Stejskal



Paul Klein



## 650 Locked out IN BEAUMONT

ExxonMobil locked more than 650 members of Local 13-243 out of their jobs after months of tense negotiations in which the company demanded major concessions. As Unit Chair Mark Morgan put it, "once you put my 650 brothers and sisters on the street, and their families, now it's personal." See Page 20