

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



POWER IN HEALTH CARE ⁰⁴

BIG WIN AT BUS FACTORY ⁰⁸

USW FLEXES MUSCLE IN D.C. ¹⁰

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“IT WAS CLEAR THAT OUR ONLY PATH FORWARD WAS TO TAKE OUR FUTURE INTO OUR OWN HANDS – AND THAT’S WHAT WE DID WHEN WE VOTED TO ORGANIZE.”

PATRICK WATKINS, BLUE BIRD WORKER AND UNION ORGANIZER, MAY 12, 2023, AFTER HE AND HIS CO-WORKERS VOTED TO JOIN THE USW

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Solidarity Makes a Difference

The United Steelworkers immediately got to work supporting the strikers at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in our strike that began last October. USW members, staff and leaders have shown unwavering solidarity with members of The NewsGuild-CWA, Communications Workers of America and the Teamsters.

USW members have fed our strikers, given them office space, supported our strike publication and stood with us on the picket line until 3 in the morning.

The striking union members at the Post-Gazette, who once worked in the building right next door to the USW headquarters, are fighting for what all workers deserve – respect on the job, decent wages, fair benefits and the right to have a union at all. If it were up to the anti-union owners of the PG, we would go away quietly.

But we won't.

That's why the support of the USW has meant so much – you know as well as anyone what it takes to push back against an immovable employer set on destroying the union. We win through our solidarity.

I urge all USW members, retirees and friends to check out the publication created by the award-winning union workers who are now on strike against the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. I even put my journalist's hat back on, and we cover the struggles of USW members in the area as well. You can read our work, keep up with the strike and make donations to the strike fund by visiting unionprogress.com.

All we have is each other. And we have more power than we know.

Jon Schleuss
International President
The NewsGuild-CWA

We Need a Strong Labor Secretary

As a union member and president of a local labor council, I know how important it is to have pro-worker allies in Washington. Nowhere is this more vital than the Department of Labor, an agency founded in order to help promote the welfare of working people.

But the leadership of the Labor Department makes a big difference in how it approaches this mission. Julie Su's remarkable track record in advocating for workers' rights and fair labor practices makes her an ideal candidate for Secretary of Labor. Her extensive experience in enforcing labor laws and protecting workers from exploitation would enormously benefit our work force.

As a West Virginian, I know the value of strong labor unions in securing fair wages, safe working conditions and job security. I have asked my senators, Joe Manchin and Shelley Capito, to confirm Julie Su for Secretary of Labor. I would urge my fellow union members across the United States to contact their senators and deliver the same message – confirm Julie Su.

By supporting her nomination, our senators can demonstrate their commitment to the welfare of labor unions and working people across this country.

David Martin
Local 5668
Ravenswood, W.Va.

Biden's Leadership Saved Pensions

Many of the people reading this magazine are workers who are either retired or looking forward to a secure retirement thanks to their union, and their years of hard work.

But imagine if that secure retirement – the one you worked for decades for, and the one you gave up raises for during rounds of bargaining over the

years – was suddenly gone, with next to nothing left to show for it.

Until recently, that was a real possibility for hundreds of thousands of workers in this country, including tens of thousands of Steelworkers union members, as well as members of my Local 13-1331.

There were dozens of multiemployer pension plans that were running out of money, because of irresponsible company behavior, industry consolidation, plant closure, unfair trade, and other factors that are beyond workers' control.

No matter what the reason, none of them are good enough reasons to deprive a worker of their hard-earned retirement.

This summer, thanks to President Joe Biden's leadership, funds were released through the American Rescue Plan that will make sure that 200 struggling pension plans would be able to pay out the benefits that workers and retirees had earned. Before that day, these workers faced the prospect of seeing their benefits substantially reduced, through no fault of their own.

This legislation – which was called the Butch Lewis Act before it was folded into the American Rescue Plan – should have been one of those no-brainer laws that got support from everyone on both sides of the aisle. Because who would argue with making sure people get what they earned? But it was only through the hard work of President Biden and the Democrats in Congress that this happened at all.

Every union worker with a pension or a secure retirement plan should be thankful that we have leaders like this in Washington looking out for us.

Mike Scott
Local 13-1331, Campti, La.
See story, Page 27.

STAY CONNECTED

We welcome correspondence from USW members, retirees and their families. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. You can reach us via email at editor@usw.org or by mail at 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.



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HEALTH CARE WORKERS BUILD POWER

Union Members Who Were on the Front Lines of COVID are Still Fighting for a Better System

Deborah Richardson
Local 7600



Three years ago, registered nurse and USW member Judy Danella's feelings ranged from sadness to worry to disbelief as the COVID-19 crisis gripped the nation.

The president of Local 4-200 at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, N.J., was shocked to see so many people, young and old, suffering and dying each day. As a health care worker, she wondered who among her union siblings might be the next to fall ill.

"COVID came so quickly, and we were not prepared," Danella said. "There was a feeling of sadness that so many nurses left the nursing profession and felt they were giving up a career they loved."

Worst Days of Pandemic

That summer of 2020, the United States was suffering through some of the worst days of the pandemic. Infections in the U.S. passed 2 million, deaths from the virus reached the heartbreaking 100,000 mark, vaccines were still months away, and tens of millions of Americans were under stay-at-home orders.

Those orders were intended to help protect front-line workers by slowing the spread of the virus. Still, for Danella and the thousands of other USW members in health care jobs, daily life was punishing, with ever-longer hours, overcrowded facilities, equipment shortages, fears of infection, and the lasting psychological distress of witnessing the effects of the deadly disease first-hand.

At Robert Wood Johnson, Local 4-200 members made sure to use their union solidarity the best they could to combat the virus. They fought to ensure they had the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), and that no members lost their jobs as a result of the crisis.

"The union was instrumental in keeping our members employed," Danella said. "We fought hard to make sure PPE was distributed to nurses across all floors."

A New Understanding

The crisis also led Americans to a better understanding of how important front-line health care workers are to the nation's collective well-being.

"People realize, in general, now how important the health care community is,"

said Alyssa Stout, an X-ray technologist at Northern California's Oroville Hospital and president of Local 9600, as she recalled how she and her co-workers helped each other through the crisis. "I feel we have more leverage now than we ever did before, because people realize we're needed."

Today, Danella, Stout, and thousands of other USW members who put themselves on the line during the pandemic are continuing to harness that leverage to fight for a better system, stronger contract language, and improved care for their patients.

Stout and her 800 co-workers banded together to keep Oroville Hospital operating through the pandemic, working around the clock to save lives. Later, they brought that same strength to the bargaining table, winning



James Schavers
Local 183

Julian Hernandez
Local 183

Kathy Whitaker
Local 14637

Isabel Moreno
Local 183

Ann Marie Ruiz
Local 183

a new contract with safety enhancements and other provisions that left Local 9600 members, the hospital and their community stronger than before.

As the pandemic worsened, Danella and her co-workers reached out to government officials to make sure they could access enough PPE to protect themselves and their patients. And, in the midst of the crisis, they bargained a new agreement that provided significant wage increases, public health emergency language, and other vital benefits.

Strength in Numbers

The crisis gave union workers in health care and other essential workplaces a new sense of their collective strength.

“We need to be prepared and remember that we have

faced obstacles and have survived,” Danella said. “If all union members stood together, imagine the power in the country we would have.”

One of the many common issues USW health care workers face is the need to achieve safe staffing levels to protect patients on a daily basis and prevent the health care system from becoming overburdened as it was during the worst days of the pandemic.

“You prioritize your work,” Danella said as she explained how she approaches the constant stream of alerts she receives about the additional tasks assigned to her throughout her shifts. “You just somehow get through the day, and you manage.”

Danella and other health care workers rallied in May at the New Jersey statehouse, demanding that lawmakers pass legisla-

tion establishing minimum staffing levels for registered nurses in hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers and state psychiatric facilities.

“You want to give the patient the best care you can,” said Danella, whose local includes about 1,650 registered nurses at the Robert Wood Johnson facility, a Level 1 trauma center. The local was in difficult negotiations for a new contract as *USW@Work* went to press and, on July 24, announced that it notified Robert Wood Johnson that members would begin an unfair labor practice strike the following week.

Also this July, in Duluth, Minn., members of Local 9460 rallied for safe staffing at St. Mary’s Medical Center while they were engaged in tough bargaining with Essentia Health.

The New Jersey legislation

would require one registered nurse for every four patients in an emergency department, one for every two patients in intensive care, and one for every five patients in a medical/surgical unit. The bills also would give the nurses a voice in designing and implementing staffing systems that model future needs.

Lawmakers in other states across the country – spurred by union activism among health care workers – are considering similar measures after health care employers for years refused to hire adequate numbers of nurses, certified nursing assistants, dietary workers and other essential staff.

International Vice President Kevin Mapp, who oversees the USW’s 50,000-member health care sector, said that it is important

that safe staffing measures include a comprehensive approach to the issue, one that considers not only nurses, but aides, dietary and clerical staff, among other jobs. New York state lawmakers enacted such a law in 2021.

“Staffing is an issue that is important at every level of health care,” Mapp said.

“Every worker in a hospital or nursing facility contributes in some way to the facility’s mission of providing quality care.”

The movement for safe staffing reached the Capitol in Washington, D.C., as well. This spring, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky of Illinois introduced legislation to establish mandatory minimum staffing levels for nurses at hospitals nationwide.

In addition, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are in the process of finalizing a rule that would establish minimum staffing levels at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities that receive federal funds. USW members are pushing to make the final staffing rule as robust as possible by including appropriate ratio levels and all health care job classes.

State-Level Efforts

In Michigan, where union workers have spent years fighting for minimum staffing ratios, 42 percent of nurses recently reported knowing of patients who died because of short-staffing. In 2020, nurses at a Detroit hospital filed a lawsuit claiming they were

Ann Marie Ruiz
Local 183



**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

illegally fired for pointing out that short-staffing contributed to dozens of unnecessary deaths in the emergency department.

A safe staffing bill failed to pass Michigan’s Republican-controlled legislature last session. But Jackie Anklam, president of USW Local 9899, said that she hopes the new Democratic majorities that took office in both legislative bodies this January will enact minimum ratios for nurses and other groups of health care workers.

“It should be for all,” said Anklam, whose local represents hundreds of workers at Ascension St. Mary’s Hospital in Saginaw.

‘They Just Want Help’

Chris Sova, a registered nurse and president of USW Local 15301, said


safe staffing standards would help to address the stress that workers feel as they race to answer one call after another.

“It’s like the water dripping in the middle of the night,” said Sova, whose local represents workers at Bay County Medical Care Facility in Essexville, Mich. “It’s just one of the many things wearing on you.”

Sova said that while many health care workers receive extra pay when they are short-staffed, they would rather have the peace of mind of knowing that there are enough people to do the job.

“They just want more help,” Sova said.

While the pandemic fueled a renewed interest in flexing union muscle among workers across all U.S. workplaces, health care



“I feel we have more leverage now than we ever did before, because people realize we’re needed.”

Alyssa Stout, Local 9600

Chad Longpre-Shepersky
Local 9349

John Diddle
Local 8183

workers – in the USW, in other unions, and in non-union workplaces – were among the most active in turning that power into action.

At UMass Memorial Health Care in Massachusetts, 2,700 workers won significant raises and other enhancements in their most recent contract. Nurses at three Steward Health Care hospitals in Florida recently fought for protections from unsafe staffing as well as for the creation of an infectious disease task force.

Workers at Kaleida Health in New York fought to gain wage increases, a health and safety committee and a promise from management to create 500 new positions to address staffing issues.

And more than 800 interns, residents and other doctors at the University of Illinois Chicago formed a union last year so they could fight together for much-

needed resources.

While only about 17 percent of nurses, and only about 12 percent of other health care workers, are currently unionized, a recent AFL-CIO study found that more than 70 percent of health care workers would vote to unionize their workplaces if they had the chance.

“I do see a new trend,” said Scott Skotarczyk, president of Local 7798-1 at Copper Country Mental Health in Michigan.

To Danella, that trend is bound to move the nation’s health care system forward. “There is strength in numbers,” she said. “And we can move the industry forward if we all work together.”

Stout agreed, offering this advice to health care workers who want to build union power at their workplaces: “Don’t give up. Don’t back down. We’re so much stronger together.”



CAREGIVERS HOLD FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING IN 5 YEARS

About 200 USW health care workers bowed their heads in unison on the morning of July 24 as they memorialized co-workers and patients lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The moment of silence, which opened the 2023 USW Health Care Workers Conference, was a reminder of the dark days health care workers faced in the past three years, and also an opportunity for members to reflect on their progress.

“We have learned so much since 2020,” International Vice President Kevin Mapp, who oversees the 50,000-member sector, said in his keynote address to the first gathering of USW health care workers in five years. “The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly changed our jobs.”

The pandemic also provided lessons in solidarity and how health care workers can organize and use their collective power for positive change, said Desirae Beatty, a certified nursing assistant who voted, along with her 500

co-workers at Pennsylvania’s Kane Community Living Centers, to become USW members in January 2022.

“We are constantly organizing,” said Beatty, who wept as she spoke of the fight to protect patients and caregivers from the ravages of COVID-19. “It’s a constant fight.”

The Health Care Workers Council helps members in that daily fight to build strength and solidarity within their locals and across North America, said Bethany Getgen, who joined the union in 2019 along with two dozen co-workers at the Persad Center, a nonprofit organization serving the LGBTQ+ community.

“Unionizing gave us the power,” she said, “to demand that management clean up their act.”

Members at the conference participated in four days of intensive training sessions and workshops designed to help them build on that success.

“I hope we all recognize how powerful we are,” Beatty said. “Solidarity is the key.”



Rene Johnston
Local 9600

Alyssa Stout
Local 9600

SHARE YOUR STORIES

The USW is collecting stories and artifacts from the COVID-19 pandemic for inclusion in the union’s museum at the international headquarters in Pittsburgh. Members who have stories or artifacts representing that struggle can contact the USW education department at 412-562-2559. Members also can sign up for “Stat Facts,” the USW’s health care sector newsletter, by texting HCWC to 47486.

UNION YES AT BLUE BIRD

WORKERS AT GEORGIA BUS MAKER ACHIEVE MAJOR VICTORY



Workers at Georgia bus manufacturer Blue Bird Corp. voted in huge numbers this spring to join the USW, a major organizing victory that gained national attention for its remarkable success in the notoriously anti-union South.

It was the largest union organizing win at a manufacturing plant in the region in 15 years.

“We’re proud that Blue Bird workers chose to join our union,” said International President Tom Conway. “We’re ready to help them bargain a fair contract that accounts for their contributions to the company’s success.”

Bargaining that first contract was getting under way as *USW@Work* went to press, following the election of the unit’s bargaining committee in mid-June.

Strong Turnout

A month earlier, more than 1,100 of the plant’s hourly workers participated in the election at Blue Bird, with nearly two-thirds voting in favor of joining the USW.

For Blue Bird workers like Patrick

Watkins, the union election, held over two days in May, was an opportunity for him and his colleagues to gain a voice on the job and to use the power of solidarity to address urgent concerns including workplace safety and health, scheduling, work-life balance, and fair wages and benefits.



“We work hard, and we deserve fair pay, safe working conditions and to be treated with respect on the job,” said Watkins, who served on the volunteer organizing committee. “It was clear that our only path forward was to take our future into our own hands – and that’s what we did when we voted to organize.”

Blue Bird, one of the largest bus manufacturers in the United States, employs nearly 1,500 hourly workers at the factory that sits about 100 miles south of Atlanta in Fort Valley, Ga., outside Macon.

The USW’s decisive victory was further evidence that U.S. workers are

hungry for unions.

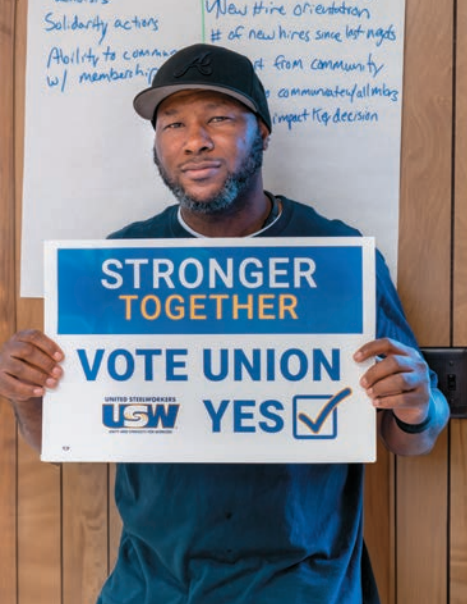
A recent Gallup Poll showed approval of unions among U.S. workers at 71 percent, a 57-year high.

Federal Funding

Until recently, however, that support was not as evident in the Deep South, where so-called right-to-work laws and other anti-union statutes are widespread, and employers take full advantage of that environment, making the idea of unionization a particularly difficult and even scary

prospect for many workers.

In April, the USW filed unfair labor practice charges alleging that Blue Bird management broke federal labor law when it engaged in surveillance and interrogation of workers, as well as in threatening to close the plant or freeze pay and benefits to drag out the bargaining process if workers voted to unionize.



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“We work hard, and we deserve fair pay, safe working conditions and to be treated with respect on the job, it was clear that our only path forward was to take our future into our own hands - and that’s what we did when we voted to organize.” Patrick Watkins



Still, the company’s anti-union rhetoric may have been somewhat muted by the fact that the company, which produces low-emission and electric vehicles, is slated to receive an infusion of federal funding through the Biden administration’s \$1.2 trillion infrastructure law.

The legislation included provisions intended to make sure that the law would result in good-paying jobs for American workers, and that employers who received federal support would not use the funds to block workers’ efforts to unionize.

“Blue Bird stands to be a significant beneficiary of the much-needed investment in our nation’s infrastructure,” said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, whose district includes tens of thousands of USW members in Georgia and six other Southern states, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands. “Blue Bird owes it to taxpayers to respect workers’ rights.”

Voices of Support

President Joe Biden and other leaders also made a point of voicing support for the Blue Bird workers. Georgia’s two U.S. senators, Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, wrote a letter calling on the company to respect its workers’ right to vote without interference.

U.S. Rep. Sanford Bishop, from Georgia’s 2nd Congressional District, and voting rights activist and former Georgia State Rep. Stacey Abrams, also reinforced workers’ right to pursue

unionization without interference.

“I have been a longtime supporter of the USW and its efforts to improve labor conditions and living standards for workers in Georgia and across the nation,” Bishop wrote in a letter to workers. “For decades, unions have served as an important voice for workers in their fight for fair wages, fair benefits, and safe working conditions via collective bargaining.”

In a statement following the election, Biden said the Blue Bird result was just one example of what workers can achieve through his administration’s investments in the future and its support for labor rights.

“The middle class built America, and unions built the middle class,” Biden said. “The workers at Blue Bird, and at companies just like it all over the country, are proving the future can and will be built in America. And union workers will be a big part of that future.”

Organizing on the Rise

Driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and historic job-creating investments from Washington, workers have ramped up union organizing and pro-labor actions across the country in recent years.

“This is just a bellwether for the future, particularly in the South, where working people have been ignored,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. “We are now in a place where we have the investments coming in and a strat-

egy for lifting up wages and protections for a good high-road future.”

With only 4.4 percent of its labor force belonging to unions, Georgia is among the states with the lowest density of union workers. Still, in recent years, the Peach State has been the scene of increased labor organizing.

In addition to Blue Bird, the NLRB in 2021 certified an election for about 350 workers at Kumho Tire in nearby Macon, who voted to join the USW. The union also has several other active organizing campaigns in Georgia, South Carolina, and other states throughout the area.

Blue Bird worker Craig Corbin, a member of the volunteer organizing committee, said that he consistently heard discouraging comments during the campaign from people telling him that organizing a union in the South was a nearly impossible task.

“I even heard I’m going to lose my job,” he said. “But you do it in Fort Valley, you could do it anywhere in the South.”

Millions of workers in the South and across the country deserve the wages, benefits and security that unions offer, Flippo said, and, when given true freedom to choose, will vote for them.

“Workers at places like Blue Bird in many ways embody the future,” he said. “They’re the ones who are making the investments in our infrastructure a reality, the ones who are building safer, cleaner communities for generations to come.”

THE POWER OF

OUR UNION

Rapid Response Activists Flex Their Muscle on Capitol Hill



Vern Beck of Local 12775 was at the Indiana State House for a rally in support of teachers when he learned that lawmakers were debating a bill that would help members of his local.

When he took a detour to listen to legislators, Beck found an official with Northern Indiana Public Service Co., which employs Local 12775 members. As a result of that conversation, USW Rapid Response activists traveled to the capitol, where they convinced two lawmakers to change their stances on the bill, which passed out of committee by one vote.

“That is the power of our union,” International Vice President David McCall told the 700 USW member

activists who traveled to Washington, D.C., in June for the Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Conference. “This work is critical to keeping our facilities operating and our members on the job.”

It was the union’s largest gathering of Rapid Response activists and coordinators in a decade. Rapid Response is the USW’s nonpartisan education, communication, and action program. Through the union’s grassroots, nationwide network of activists, it provides members a powerful voice in government decisions in Washington, D.C., in state houses, and in cities and towns across the country. For nearly 30 years, activists in the program have made calls, written letters and visited

with officials to lobby for pro-worker initiatives.

“Rapid Response,” program Director Amber Miller said, “is a direct reflection of the union’s core values.”

Four-Year Hiatus

While the 2023 Rapid Response conference was the first in-person meeting for the activists since October 2019, McCall and other USW leaders reminded members that, even though COVID prevented them from gathering, their important work never stopped.

In fact, the first day of the event was largely a celebration of several years of USW-led wins. Beck’s effort on behalf of Local 12775 was just one



International
Vice President
David McCall



International
Vice President
Emeritus
Leeann Foster



Secretary-
Treasurer
John Shinn



of scores of victories union activists achieved since their last in-person meeting. Since then, members successfully fought to preserve retirement security, secure more affordable health care, protect workers' rights, ensure fair trade, and enact a host of other policies, while pushing back against attacks on workers that would result in plant closures or jobs shipped overseas.

Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn rattled off a long list of those victories, which included passage of the Butch Lewis bill that secured the pensions of more than a million workers and retirees, including more than 100,000 USW members.

Other victories included passage of crucial COVID relief bills, the Biden

administration's \$1.2 trillion infrastructure and jobs plan, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act, which provided support for U.S. production of semiconductors and other technology vital to domestic supply chains.

"These things didn't happen by accident," Shinn told the crowd. "They happened because of the hard work of people in this room, and the hard work of the members of this union."

Local, State Victories

The USW's wins on a national scale helped to support the USW's core values – including creating good jobs, safeguarding workers' rights, improving health care, and preserving retirement

security for American families. Members also fought at the state and local level to ensure safe staffing in hospitals, support military veterans, pass "Buy America" laws, preserve organizing rights, and other important efforts.

International Vice President Roxanne Brown congratulated USW members in Michigan for their push earlier this year in overturning a so-called "right to work" law meant to crush unions by starving them of funds. In other states, including Montana, members successfully blocked passage of the same type of union-busting laws.

"We have a lot of wins," Brown said. "But we have a lot more fights ahead of us."

Those fights include pushing for



U.S. Sen.
Sherrod Brown, Ohio



U.S. Sen.
Amy Klobuchar, Minn.



International Vice President Roxanne Brown



passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which would remove barriers to union organizing and increase penalties against union-busting employers, as well as the Leveling the Playing Field 2.0 Act, which would modernize the nation's trade laws and provide new tools for workers to fight illegal imports.

Both pieces of legislation have bipartisan support and were centerpieces of USW members' conversations with their representatives on Capitol Hill, which took place on the third and final day of the conference.

Buril Smith of Local 9231 in New Carlisle, Ind., said he has attended about 20 Rapid Response conferences and he's still awed each time by the history on display in Washington, D.C.

"But you have to remember, this is our house," Smith said. "This is our city, this is our town."

On a rainy morning as they prepared to head to the Capitol to remind their lawmakers of that fact, USW members received a series of rallying cries from AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer and former USW leader Fred Redmond, along with a dozen labor-friendly members of Congress, about the importance of their lobbying mission.

U.S. Sen. John Fetterman said that he owes his career to the Steelworkers, who provided him with his first endorsement.

"I've carried it with me as a badge of honor ever since," said the Pennsylvania Democrat, whose home sits across the street from U.S. Steel's Edgar Thomson Works. "You have a friend with an unflinching devotion to your union."

Capitol Office Visits

Dustin Hardisty, of Local 712 in Lewiston, Idaho, works as a bleach operator for Clearwater Paper. He was making his first visit to Capitol Hill as a Rapid Response activist, knowing that he might not always find a friendly ear from his lawmakers.

"I'm hoping they will keep an open mind, especially about trade," Hardisty said as he made his way to lawmakers' offices. The 11-year USW member was the only activist to make the trip from Idaho, but said he quickly connected with other members from around the country.

"It's awesome," Hardisty said of watching 700 Steelworker's march to Capitol Hill to fight for workers' rights. "It makes you feel less alone."

Fair Trade Fight

The issue of trade dominated the second day of the conference, with speakers and panel discussions that emphasized the importance of the USW's vigilance on unfair imports, both for workers and for the communities in which they live.

U.S. House members Frank Mrvan, a Democrat from Indiana, and Bill Johnson, a Republican from Ohio, led a discussion on the subject, and agreed that passing the Leveling the Playing Field 2.0 bill was a priority for them and others in the 100-member Congressional Steel Caucus.

"China has disadvantaged American workers," Johnson said. "That is apparent no more so than in the steel industry."

Craig McKey of Local 1899 in Granite City, Ill., said hundreds of members at his U.S. Steel facility have seen the effects of unfair trade first hand over the past two decades. He said that current U.S. trade laws – which require petitioners to prove injury to workers before the government can impose remedies – are badly in need of an update.

"The hardship is already there before they can take any action," McKey said.

In-Person Advantage

The fact that the conference took place in person for the first time in four years provided an opportunity for Chris Frydenger of Local 7-838 in Illinois and Jill Stough of Local 7248 in Ohio. It was the first time the pair met face to face, despite the fact that their employers' and their locals' fortunes are deeply intertwined.

Frydenger and his co-workers at Mueller Co. make fire hydrants and other water-distribution products. Their facility utilizes raw materials provided by Stough's employer, Wieland Chase. In turn, Mueller ships scrap metal back to Wieland Chase, where it is melted down and re-used.

"Our orders drive their orders," Frydenger said. "They're not successful without us, and we're not successful

without them.”

Over the years, pressures from unfair imports have threatened jobs at both locations, but Rapid Response activism on that issue, as well as the push for infrastructure investments and “Made in America” policies, has helped ensure that workers at both sites have bright futures.

“That has helped us tremendously,” Stough said of the USW’s work. “Through the years, we have struggled due to dumping.”

Positive Public Opinion

In the days before they headed to the U.S. Capitol, members took part in training sessions, workshops and discussions aimed at sharpening their lobbying skills and arming them with information to support their work.

Shinn made sure members knew that support for unions among American workers is at an all-time high, and that they should use that information when arguing for the PRO Act.

Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing, a partnership between the USW and employers, which advocates for “Buy America” policies and manufacturing jobs, told members that they were heading to Capitol Hill with public opinion squarely on their side. Paul shared statistics from a recent poll that showed that nearly 80 percent of American voters support “Buy America” laws, and nearly 90 percent support cracking down on unfair trade.

“They work for you,” Paul reminded members about their representatives in Congress. “You put them there. You are the strength of America.”

Pro-Union Policies

Jeff Vance, of Local 1155L at Bridgestone Tire in Tennessee, said that the strength of the nation’s pro-worker policies goes hand in hand with his and other USW members’ success in bargaining and organizing.

“I strongly believe in representing my local and trying to get the best for my local,” Vance said. “I know that has to be done through legislation.”



GET INVOLVED

HELP
WORKING FAMILIES
CALL YOUR
SENATORS!
877-607-0785

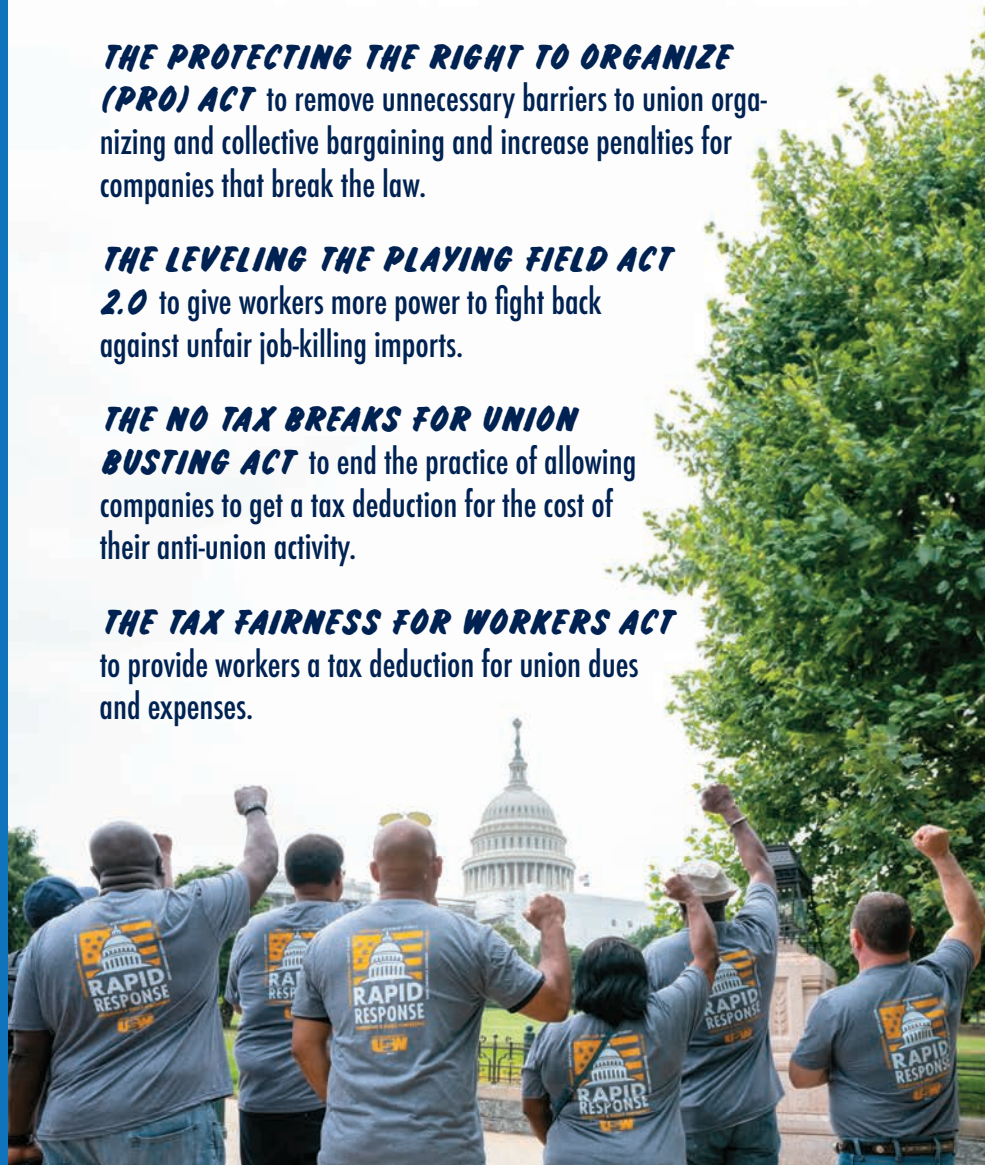
USW members can contact their senators and representatives and ask them to support legislation to help working families, including the bills listed below. To reach your lawmakers, call 866-202-5409 for your representative and 877-607-0785 for your senators. The call is toll free and you will be directly connected to your legislators’ offices. Remember to make two calls to the Senate number so you are able to reach both offices.

THE PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE (PRO) ACT to remove unnecessary barriers to union organizing and collective bargaining and increase penalties for companies that break the law.

THE LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD ACT 2.0 to give workers more power to fight back against unfair job-killing imports.

THE NO TAX BREAKS FOR UNION BUSTING ACT to end the practice of allowing companies to get a tax deduction for the cost of their anti-union activity.

THE TAX FAIRNESS FOR WORKERS ACT to provide workers a tax deduction for union dues and expenses.



CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVE! 866-202-5409

NEW CONTRACTS AT



ANCHOR GLASS LOCATIONS

Members of 13 USW Units who work at six Anchor Glass facilities voted this spring to ratify new three-year agreements with the company.

The three contracts – master agreements for three individual bargaining units – cover more than 1,300 workers in the production and maintenance, mold making and automated machine

departments at Anchor factories in Jacksonville, Fla.; Warner Robins, Ga.; Lawrenceburg, Ind.; Shakopee, Minn.; Elmira, N.Y.; and Henryetta, Okla.

The agreements include across-the-board wage increases of 4 percent per year, hourly skill adjustments, continuation of the current health care plan, additional pension contributions, and

an increase in sick and accident benefits from \$350 to \$500 per week.

In addition, the contract provides the option for members to take Juneteenth, Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Veterans Day as unpaid days off.

The results at Anchor mirror other recent settlements for USW members who work in the glass industry, including Ardagh and

Owens-Illinois.

“Members throughout the glass industry have gone above and beyond in recent years to show their solidarity,” said Claude Beaudin, chair of the USW’s glass council. “That collective strength has resulted in agreements like this, which position our union work force and the company to prosper well into the future.”

FIRST CONTRACT RATIFIED WITH PITTSBURGH MUSEUMS

USW members who work at Carnegie museums in Pittsburgh voted overwhelmingly in May to ratify their first contract.

The new agreement, which covers about 500 workers across four museum locations, came as a result of 18 months of steadfast solidarity throughout what were often difficult negotiations with museum management.

“These new union members should be incredibly proud of this win,” said International President Tom Conway. “This kind of solidarity is what makes us all stronger.”

The new agreement sets a \$16 per hour living wage floor, a point that was one of the members’ top priorities. The majority of workers will see immediate raises ranging from 15 percent to 35 percent.

The agreement also includes the establishment of a health and safety committee, anti-discrimination

and seniority language, and increased sick time for part-time workers.

“This contract demonstrates what’s possible when workers organize and bargain collectively,” said Jenise Brown, a part-time educator at the Carnegie Museum of

Natural History. “This is only the beginning, and I can’t wait to see what we all can accomplish together in the future.”

District 10 Director Bernie Hall praised the museum workers for their steadfastness throughout the long campaign.

“This agreement is a major accomplishment not just for these members but for the region’s entire nonprofit sector,” Hall said. “Everyone deserves a living wage and a voice on the job, and these folks understood that from the start.”



MEMBERS APPROVE NEW CONTRACT WITH ALCOA

USW members voted in May to ratify a new agreement covering nearly 900 members of three local unions at Alcoa aluminum smelters in the United States.

The new three-year master agreement covers 850 workers at the smelter at Warrick Operations in Indiana and the smelter at Massena Operations in New York.

In addition, the master contract covers wages and benefits for about 50 members at Alcoa's calcining facility in Lake Charles, La. Negotiations were under

way on the local aspects of the Lake Charles contract as *USW@Work* went to press.

The USW's previous master agreement with Alcoa expired on May 15, and the two sides reached a tentative deal on a new contract just a few days before expiration.

Despite the early agreement, negotiations were not smooth at the outset. The company came to the bargaining table proposing concessions and smaller wage increases than members were willing to accept.

In the end, member

solidarity prevailed and resulted in a new contract that includes wage increases of more than 13.5 percent over the life of the deal, along with ratification bonuses, improvements to sick and accident coverage and increased dental benefits.

The agreement also maintains quality, affordable health care coverage, with no changes to contribution rates, deductibles, or co-payments for active employees.

"As always, we could not have achieved this kind of strong agreement without

every member at each facility standing firm against the company's plans for cuts and concessions," said District 7 Director Mike Millsap, who chaired the USW bargaining committee. "When management came to the table with concessions that failed to recognize the contributions of its workers, members stuck together and fought for the contract they deserved."

In addition to the financial gains, the new contract also updated health, safety and environment practices and removed outdated language.



Photo by Ohad Cadji



Tim Linn

WHO THEY ARE LOCAL 310L

WHERE THEY ARE DES MOINES, IOWA

WHAT THEY DO PRODUCE A WIDE VARIETY OF TIRES, MOST NOTABLY THOSE USED ON AGRICULTURAL VEHICLES AND MACHINES.

#USWMade is a feature focusing on products made by USW members that consumers can purchase in stores or online.

Follow the #USWMade hashtag on social media and check out the #USWMade playlist on YouTube to learn about other products made by USW members. If your local makes a product that you would like to feature in *USW@Work*, send an email to: editor@usw.org.

— DRIVE IT HOME WITH —

Union-Made TIRES

Thousands of USW members work in the tire and rubber industry, producing a wide variety of products including tires used on cars, trucks, buses, agricultural and commercial vehicles, motorcycles and other machines.

Tim Linn, president of Local 310L in Des Moines, Iowa, has been a tire builder for more than 26 years. He and his co-workers at Bridgestone/Firestone work at a factory that began as a plant to supply the U.S. military during World War II. Today, much of their product line consists of tires used on agricultural equipment.

“We have a vast array of sizes and types of tires that we make,” Linn said. “We’re centrally located, so transportation is convenient. With agriculture being such a big industry here in the Midwest, this is a good place for us.”

The idea that he and his co-work-

ers produce American-made tires for American consumers is a source of pride for Linn, whose father, brother and son have all worked at the factory. He knows that USW-made tires are the best in the world.

“Being union made, and being American-made, we go above and beyond,” Linn said. “The time and the quality that we put in here just isn’t comparable.”

Linn said that is part of the reason why the USW’s work to ensure fair trade in the tire sector and in other industries is so critical to preserving the union way of life. It’s a way of life that has provided security for his family and so many other union workers like him, and one that he hopes will continue for generations to come.

“If you buy a foreign-made competitor’s products, you’re going to end up spending more in the long run,” Linn said.

How to Buy Union Tires

Often, USW-made tires are placed on new vehicles before they leave the factory. In other cases, consumers can purchase them in stores.

Tires sold in the United States carry codes that help customers determine where they were made. Buyers can find USW-made tires by finding codes that appear something like this: “DOT BE XX XXX XXX.” The two letters or numbers that follow the DOT identify a company and location as listed below:

BE: B.F. Goodrich - Tuscaloosa, Ala.

BF: B.F. Goodrich - Woodburn, Ind.

VE, YE, YU, 8B: Bridgestone/Firestone - Des Moines, Iowa

D2, E3, W1, Y7: Bridgestone/Firestone - La Vergne, Tenn.

2C, 4D, 5D: Bridgestone/Firestone - Morrison, Tenn.

JU, PC, UK: Goodyear - Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

DA: Dunlop/Sumitomo/Falken - Buffalo, N.Y.

JF, MM, PJ: Kelly-Springfield - Fayetteville, N.C.

JN, MJ, PY: Goodyear - Topeka, Kan.

JE, MC, PT: Goodyear - Danville, Va.

UP: Cooper - Findlay, Ohio

UT: Cooper - Texarkana, Ark.

CF: Titan Tire - Des Moines, Iowa

JH, MN, PK: Titan Tire - Freeport, Ill.

B plus serial #: Titan Tire - Bryan, Ohio

CC: Yokohama Tire - Salem, Va.



UNIVERSITY STAFFERS FILE FOR UNION ELECTION

Staff members at the University of Pittsburgh filed for a USW election this June with the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) and are on track to become the largest public sector union work force to unionize in decades in Pennsylvania.

The University of Pittsburgh staff numbers in the thousands, making the group one of Western Pennsylvania's largest work forces. Staff members work across the university's five campuses as advisers, researchers, scientists, library and technology specialists, accountants, educators, designers, counselors, administrative professionals and more.

The group is organizing seeking transparency in opportunities for advancement, competitive pay and secure benefits, among other improvements.

Jen Goekeler-Fried, a lab manager and research specialist at Pitt and member of the volunteer organizing committee, addressed a crowd of elected representatives, Pitt staff members and labor allies at a rally on June 8 to celebrate the group's filing for their election.

"I've worked at Pitt for nearly 29 years, and according to U.S. News and World Report, my salary is equivalent to the average starting salary of recent college graduates," said Goekeler-Fried. "Pitt is one of the largest employers in the region, and we have an opportunity to set an example for other workers."

Paving the Way

The university administration has spent millions of dollars on union-busting tactics to try to quell workers' unionization efforts. In October 2021, the Pitt faculty successfully voted to

unionize after a yearslong fight against the administration's anti-union interference, making them one of the largest new unions in the country at the time.

Jesse Dubin, a senior program evaluation specialist in the school of pharmacy, said the faculty's successful unionization drive showed the staff what is possible.

"We have an example of a successful campaign right here at Pitt, and it's 100 percent provided momentum for us and has changed the environment for the staff union campaign," said Dubin. "I think the existence of the faculty campaign gives us permission to dream big."

On June 28, a group of Pitt staff hand-delivered a notice to University Chancellor Patrick Gallagher's office stating that they filed an unfair practice charge against the administration with the aid of the USW.

In its filing with the PLRB, the group alleges the university's administration broke the law during anti-union captive-audience meetings, misclassifying workers as managers, and telling them they did not have the right to unionize under Pennsylvania law.

USW District 10 Director Bernie Hall called on university officials to stop interfering with the workers' right to form a union.

"The administration paid millions of dollars to union-busting law firms like Ogletree Deakins in response to workers' organizing efforts, while staff continue to work for embarrassingly low wages," Hall said. "Pitt's dedicated staff continue to participate in making Pitt a world-class university. Rather than wasting time and resources attempting to keep workers from exercising

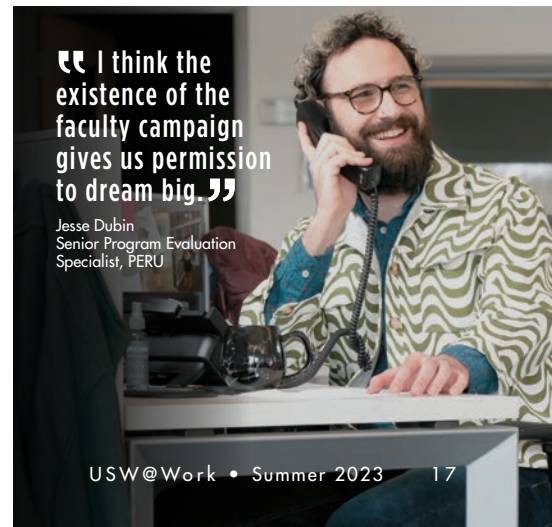
their rights, the Pitt administration should welcome the opportunity for workers to make their own choice."

Looking Forward

Members of the campaign's organizing committee are optimistic about the next phase of the election process and remain hopeful that the University of Pittsburgh's new incoming chancellor Joan Gabel, who took the helm on July 17, will respect the law and allow workers the right to a free and fair union election.

Though the details surrounding an election are yet to be determined, the Pitt staff organizing committee has already ramped up outreach to their colleagues. In the meantime, Dubin plans to continue conversations with co-workers to build momentum for a future union election vote.

"We cannot make these kinds of structural, systems-level changes individually," said Dubin. "Only together can we make the kinds of changes that will result in a better working environment for everybody."



"I think the existence of the faculty campaign gives us permission to dream big."

Jesse Dubin
Senior Program Evaluation
Specialist, PERU

FOSTER RETIRES, MENDOZA TAKES OFFICE

Longtime USW Leader
Made Advancements
in Paper Bargaining,
Women of Steel



International Vice President Leeann Foster, who has served the union in numerous leadership roles for more than 25 years, announced her retirement this spring.

In June, the USW Executive Board named Luis Mendoza, who worked closely with Foster as chair of the union's paper sector, as her replacement.

Foster was elected international vice president in 2019 after serving as assistant to the international president and associate general counsel.

Paper Bargaining

Foster led bargaining for more than 550 locals and more than 30 councils in the paper sector. Her work led to the coordinated bargaining that dominates the industry and helped members build solidarity and power, leading to stronger wages and benefits across the sector.

"The program has allowed us to establish standards around wages, health care, retirement and a host of language issues like contract and job protection in the event of a facility sale," she said. "It also improves every economic metric across the industry while injecting members' voices back into the bargaining process."

Before joining the USW, Foster served as assistant to United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) President Boyd Young, later assisting Young in forming the Paper, Allied-Industrial and Chemical Workers International Union (PACE). With PACE, Foster was key in forming the National Paper

Bargaining Program and in the PACE merger into the USW.

Strides on Health, Safety

Foster, who also oversaw the Women of Steel program, said she hoped she inspired other women to take on leadership roles.

"Being a woman, and leading one of the major manufacturing sectors in the USW," Foster said, "is a mark I feel I have made permanently on the union."

Foster said the USW paper sector made major strides on safety and health during her tenure. She credited the work of USW members in building local union-management safety committees and gaining many full-time safety representatives.

"We brought lagging indicators like fatalities and life-altering injuries down, and we built leading factors such as effective health and safety committees and processes for stopping a job if a member feels it is unsafe," she said. "I feel my work saved lives and kept many of our members from experiencing fatalities and life-altering injuries."



Mendoza Takes Office

Foster said the transition for Mendoza, the first Puerto Rican to serve as USW vice president, would

be seamless thanks to his experience in union leadership. Mendoza served as bargaining chair of the union's paper sector since 2019.

Born in New Jersey and raised in Puerto Rico, Mendoza became a Steelworker at 19 when he joined Local 12882 at the Hercules factory in Kenil, N.J.

In 1996, he became a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) at the Radford Army Ammunition Depot in Virginia.

Over the years, Mendoza served in numerous leadership positions, including as a steward, health and safety coordinator, and unit president.

In 1999, when OCAW merged with United Paperworkers International Union to form PACE, Mendoza began volunteering for political and organizing campaigns.

In 2005, PACE and the USW merged, and Mendoza was a Steelworker once again. A year later, he joined the union staff and since then has bargained with major employers in the paper sector and numerous other industries.

Following his swearing-in, an emotional Mendoza thanked his family for supporting his union service, and promised to keep working tirelessly on behalf of USW members.

"We've made great progress in recent years," Mendoza said. "And I look forward to continuing the fight for social and economic justice every day alongside the members of this great union."

When Del Vitale was sworn in as District 4 director in July 2019, it was the culmination of a union career that began when he was 18 and working at Oneida Packaging in New Jersey.

Vitale remembers his days as a steward with the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), and a young unit president with PACE, both of which later became part of the USW. At one conference where a longtime union officer was retiring, Vitale was nearly brought to tears when he thanked that leader for a lifetime of service to the cause of labor.

Now, it's Vitale who is stepping down after 45 years, creating an opportunity for the next generation and leaving an example of service and solidarity behind.

"When you're doing the work, you don't really have time to think about your legacy," he said. "But when you take the time to look back, you realize that we really accomplished a lot of good things, not for myself but for the union."

Legacy of Leadership

Vitale said he was proud that under his leadership, members in the district achieved countless strong contract agreements, built their solidarity across numerous states and sectors, and strengthened their communications network throughout a large, diverse area. District 4 includes Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and Puerto Rico.

As director, Vitale worked with USW members across a wide range of industries, including paper, pharmaceuticals, health care, manufacturing, printing, chemicals, aluminum, nonprofits and the public sector.

Vitale said that he was optimistic about the opportunity the labor movement has to organize more workers, and that the current political environment makes it the right time to do so.

"The young generation coming up has so many good people," he said. "The next generation has the potential to step up and take the union even further."

One of those stepping up is Vitale's successor, David M. Wasiura, who served as Vitale's assistant for four years before the USW Executive Board tapped him as the new District 4 director this spring.

"This district is going to be in very good hands with Dave," Vitale said. "I like to think that I raised the bar a little bit, and that Dave has the strength to take the district to the next level."

Vitale said he hopes he's leaving behind a legacy of doing whatever it takes to advance the cause of labor.

"Get involved, and get educated," he said when asked what his message would be to new union members. "And make sure that when the union calls on you to do something for your fellow workers, you always answer that call."



New Director in Office

Wasiura did just that in 1996 when he began his career as a fourth-generation metalworker in Buffalo, N.Y., following in his father's footsteps at the American Brass facility, just a few blocks away from his family home.

Over the next fifteen years, Wasiura served in several positions in Local 593, including as local vice president and as a member of the bargaining committee.

After a stint at USW headquarters in Pittsburgh, Wasiura returned to District 4 in 2013 as a staff representative, working with local union members in New Jersey and New England before returning to Buffalo to serve as the District 4 organizing coordinator. He has bargained contracts and organized new members across a wide range of industries throughout the district.

"I'm humbled and honored to be standing here," the new director said upon his swearing-in this June. "I will wake up every morning looking to serve the members of this union and District 4."

VITALE STEPS DOWN AFTER 45-YEAR CAREER

Longtime Assistant Wasiura Takes Over as District 4 Director



USW: CONGRESS MUST ACT TO SUPPORT STEELWORKERS

The USW joined steel industry executives at a June 7 hearing to urge members of the Congressional Steel Caucus to keep fighting for a level playing field for American workers and steelmakers, who continue to face pressure from unfair imports.

“The Steel Caucus has a storied history of bipartisan cooperation to defend American workers and ensure the enactment of policy that maintains a strong domestic industry,” USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman said. “We hope you will continue that tradition by enforcing and updating our trade laws and improving domestic procurement policy.”

Among the actions Houseman called for in his testimony were the continuation of Section 232 tariffs on steel imports; the need to address a surge of steel imports from Mexico; the urgency of updating U.S. trade laws; and the importance of making sure taxpayer dollars maximize job creation with the proper implementation of the Build America, Buy America program.

A handful of top steel industry leaders joined Houseman at the “State of the Steel Industry” hearing, including Lourenco Goncalves, chairperson, president and CEO of Cleveland-Cliffs, the largest flat-rolled steel producer and iron ore supplier in the United States.

Goncalves, who also serves as chair of the American Iron and Steel Institute, touted his company’s environmental and sustainability efforts, contrasting Cliffs’ success at reducing carbon emissions with the more greenhouse-gas-intensive steelmaking taking place in China and other nations.

Other executives testifying included Richard Fruehauf, senior vice president of U.S. Steel; Barbara Smith, CEO of Commercial Metals Co.; Andy Annakin, executive vice president of Bull Moose Industries; and Leon Topalian, CEO of Nucor.

The Congressional Steel Caucus is a bipartisan group of about 100 elected representatives who work to support the American steel industry and its workers.

In his remarks, Houseman specifically urged the caucus to push for passage of the Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0, which would strengthen trade laws and provide new tools to help workers and employers fight back against unfair and illegal imports.

“The USW will continue to use trade enforcement,” he said, “to ensure that the U.S. will not be the dumping ground for other countries’ steel products.”

For a video of the full hearing, visit: <http://usw.to/4oi>

USW WELCOMES USMCA RAPID RESPONSE CASE

The USW welcomed the U.S. government’s announcement in June that it accepted for review a petition against Grupo Mexico, a mining conglomerate owned by Germán Larrea, Mexico’s second-wealthiest person.

The petition, filed by the Mexican National Mineworkers’ Union, the USW, and the AFL-CIO, comes under the rapid response labor mechanism of the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement (USMCA).

The petition asserts that Grupo Mexico is violating Mexican labor laws by using strikebreakers to operate the San Martín mine in Sombrerete, Zacatecas.

“When companies break the law to keep wages low in Mexico, it hurts both Mexican and American workers,” said International President Tom Conway.

In the United States, the company’s ASARCO subsidiary is currently on trial before an administrative law judge of the National Labor Relations Board. It is facing unfair labor practice complaints stemming from a strike by workers at its operations in Arizona and Texas that ended in 2020.

In July, in another case filed under the USMCA, the USW welcomed an announcement from the U.S. Trade Representative and the Department of Labor that a case filed in April against Goodyear was resolved.

The case, filed by the independent Mexican Workers’ Union League, centered on workers who were denied their rights at the company’s plant in San Luis Potosí, Mexico.



USW APPLAUDS DECISION ON FREIGHT RAIL COUPLERS

The USW welcomed a final determination this June from the International Trade Commission on certain dumped and subsidized freight rail couplers from China.

“USW members at Amsted in Granite City, Ill., proudly manufacture coupler systems and railway components that contribute to our critical infrastructure,” International President Tom Conway said. “But like too many Americans, they’re forced to compete with unfairly traded foreign goods.”

The USW was part of a coalition that first filed antidumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) petitions against China and Mexico on Sept. 29, 2021. It refiled the petition on Sept. 28, 2022.

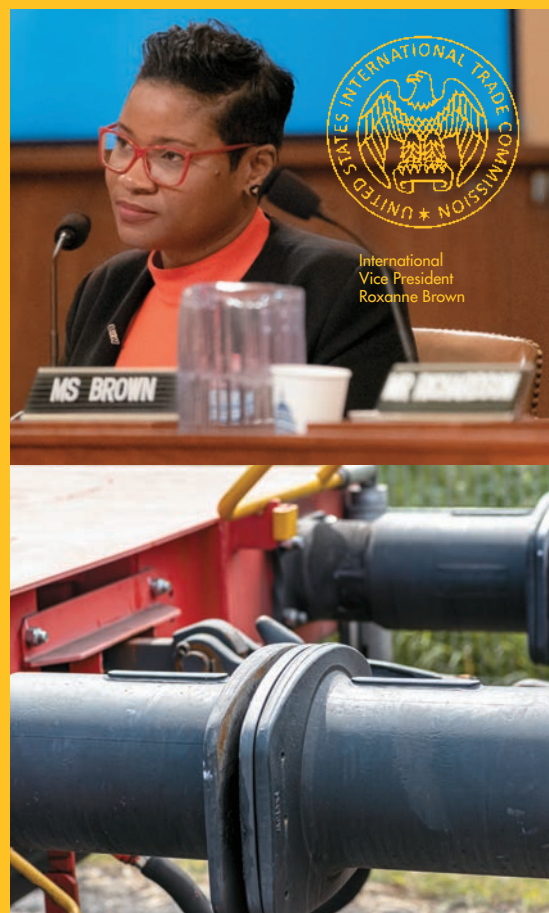
“This deliberate undercutting of domestic industries not only hurts individual workers, but whole communities that are left to grapple with the erosion of good, manufacturing jobs,” Conway said. “We’re gratified that the ITC in this case saw the harm our members experience every day.”

Last May, USW Local 1063 President Antonio Wellmaker told the ITC that his Amsted facility lost 725 jobs over the course of only a few years as a result of illegally dumped and subsidized Chinese imports, leaving employment at the plant at less than 300.

“Amsted says that it relocated the bulk of its production from Granite City to Mexico so that they can compete with Chinese imports,” Wellmaker testified.

While Amsted was originally a member of the petitioning coalition, it dropped out within days of filing the case.

“This situation makes clear how essential it is that workers can advocate on their own behalf when they face unfair trade,” said International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who testified before the ITC this spring. “Fortunately, the USW had the standing to file a petition in this case, as we have in far too many others. Until we achieve larger, systemic fixes to our trade system, it’s essential that workers themselves can continue to engage in this process and seek relief.”



International Vice President Roxanne Brown

TRADE BRIEFS

Houseman Joins EXIM Panel

The board of directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) in July appointed USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman as a member of the organization’s advisory committee.

The EXIM, the official U.S. export credit agency, works to support American jobs by financing and facilitating exports of U.S.-made goods.

Tire Duties Will Remain

The International Trade Commission determined in April that revoking the existing antidumping and countervailing duty orders on pneumatic off-the-road tires from India would be likely to lead to the continuation or recurrence of material injury to the U.S. tire industry. As a result of the commission’s affirmative determinations, existing duty orders on imports of these

tires from India will remain in place.

The duties under review came as a result of petitions filed in 2016 by the USW and Titan Tire.

Local President Testifies

Tom O’Shei, president of Local 135L in Buffalo, N.Y., testified in May before a field hearing of the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means on the subject of “Trade in America: Securing Supply Chains and Protecting the American Worker.”

O’Shei, whose local represents 1,100 workers at the Sumitomo tire plant in Buffalo, said his workplace has been upgrading its facilities in recent years, adding capacity and jobs, in large part because of the USW’s successful fight against illegally dumped and subsidized tire imports.

Still, Congress must do more to



Tom O’Shei

level the playing field and ensure fair trade, he said, including updating de minimis thresholds, punishing customs law violators, pushing for strong rules of origin, and other actions.

“The union has used every tool available to defend a domestic industry which has manufacturing facilities in 19 states and employs nearly 100,000 workers,” O’Shei said. “For the union, this is about our jobs and attaining a level playing field.”

A caravan of care

LOCAL 2L MEMBER PROVIDES FOOD, CLOTHES AND NOW A 'SHOWER BUS' TO AKRON'S UNHOUSED

Robert P. Ford Jr. went to a high school football game in Akron, Ohio, on a snowy night in 2018 and noticed students shivering in the stands without coats, hats or even socks.

The football coach later told him that many families struggled to afford these basic necessities, and that launched Ford on a mission to help the city's most vulnerable.

Ford, a member of Local 2L who credits his union job at Goodyear with lifting him out of poverty decades ago, began by distributing food out of his car and from pantries he set up in two city schools.

Then he and his nonprofit, Forever R Children, established a mobile food pantry with a pickup truck provided by the local sheriff's department and a trailer donated by a church. Aided by dozens of volunteers, including co-workers and USW retirees, Ford distributes food, clothing and other items to about 125 families each month.

Now, in his most ambitious undertaking yet, Ford recently persuaded Metro RTA, Akron's transit agency, to donate a 45-foot-long passenger bus that he intends to retrofit with showers for homeless residents.

"If you're dirty, people work really hard not to see you," said Ford, a lead in Goodyear's Final Finish Department who received the District 1 USW Cares Jefferson Award in 2021. "You can't apply for a job, can't apply for housing, can't maintain health and wellbeing. Being clean is so critical, so fundamental to who we are."

Shower buses already serve homeless residents of Miami, New York City, San Francisco and Athens, Tenn., among other locations. They provide soap, towels and toiletries, as Ford also intends to do.

Akron has the highest eviction rate in the state. The area's unhoused population has grown over the past couple of years, with some residents living on the streets and in encampments.

The need for the shower bus dawned on Ford after visitors to his food pantry asked for sanitary wipes to clean themselves.

"There are no showers in the woods," he noted.

Metro RTA keeps its buses on the road for a dozen years or more and then auctions them for about \$50,000 each. But in this case, administrators and the agency's 12-member board agreed to forgo the revenue and donate a bus to help Ford meet a pressing community need.

"Yes... let's go," said Jarrod Hampshire, chief operations officer for Metro RTA, summing up the agency's response.

"We've never heard of an opportunity like this before," Hampshire said. "This is so cool. This is definitely one that we'll be bragging about to our peers."



Robert P. Ford Jr.
Local 2L

Visit foreverrchildren.org
for more information.



The bus, which traveled Interstate 77 between Akron and Cleveland nearly every day for 13 years, will remain at the transit garage until the conversion begins.

Ford continues raising tens of thousands of dollars for the overhaul, which involves installing three showers, two bathrooms and a changing area. District 1 provided \$10,000 for the project.

“Robert’s work ethic and commitment to others represent the best of the USW,” observed District 1 Director Donnie Blatt, who arranged for union members to attend the ceremony at which Metro RTA officially transferred the bus to Forever R Children.

“He’s not only providing food, clothing and other essentials to some of the most disadvantaged members of the

community but extending the hope and respect that also help to sustain these families.”

Ford’s compassion reflects true solidarity with those he serves.

“At one time, I was homeless. I slept in my car and had nothing to eat,” Ford explained, citing a medical condition in his late teens that left him unable to work.

His union job at Goodyear, where he’s worked for decades, helped him to get back on his feet. He added that the good wages afforded by his USW contract enabled him to fund Forever R Children’s early work on his own.

“Without the Steelworkers, I’d never, no way, make enough money to do this on the side,” said Ford, who continues to reach into his own pocket to fund the nonprofit even as he works with a growing list of sponsors and volunteers.

On a recent Saturday, for example, a couple of dozen supporters mobilized at the House of Prayer for All People in the city’s Highland Square neighborhood.

“Faith without works is dead,” said one of the helpers, Andrew Respress, a longtime USW member who retired from Goodyear and now serves on the Forever R Children board. “If you don’t do anything, how’s anything going to get done?”

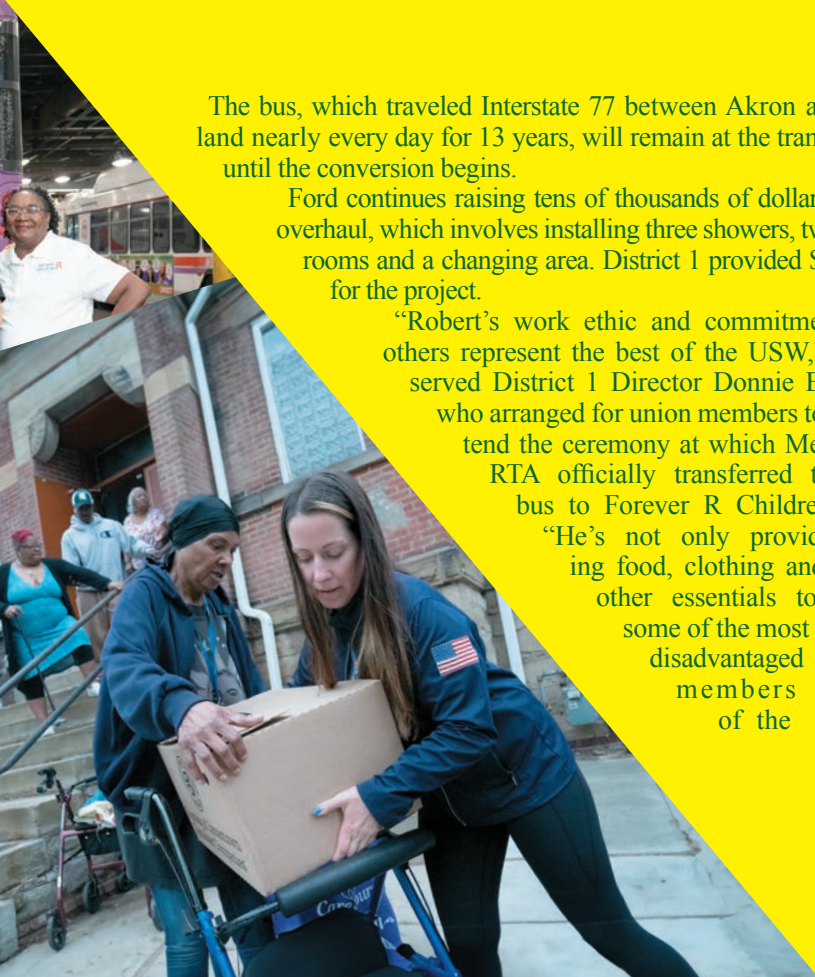
Some volunteers distributed bags of meat, produce and canned goods to clients who walked or drove to the church.

Others loaded food into the Forever R Children trailer for the morning’s next distribution, on a street corner in West Akron, where clients either arrived on foot or lined up their cars at Ford’s makeshift drive-through.

“Sometimes I run low, and this helps,” explained Steven Bell, a client who’s known Ford since elementary school.

Ford hopes to have the shower bus on the road by Oct. 1. In the meantime, he’s coordinating with health providers that operate mobile clinics in the hope of creating a convoy that will provide hygiene, medical, dental, mental health and other services to homeless people, all in one place at one time.

“What I’m trying to create is a caravan of care and wellness,” Ford said.





WORKERS PUSH FOR CONFIRMATION OF NEW LABOR SECRETARY

President Joe Biden nominated Julie Su as U.S. Secretary of Labor in February, but more than five months later, her confirmation remained stuck in a divided U.S. Senate as *USW@Work* went to press.

USW members who have seen how powerfully she fights for workers are calling on their senators to vote to confirm Su, who has served as acting labor secretary since Marty Walsh stepped aside after two years on the job.

“If she asked me to knock on doors for her, I’d be out there knocking,” said David Simmons, a member of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) from Pasadena, Calif. Simmons recalled the passion Su displayed for workers’ rights when she served in the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency prior to joining the Biden administration as Walsh’s deputy.

“I think she’d make a great secretary of labor,” said Simmons, who worked with other USW members on a campaign to improve conditions

for car wash workers in the state during Su’s tenure there.

Su ramped up enforcement of labor laws, pursued millions in back wages and filed criminal charges against unscrupulous bosses.

“Julie Su was able to greenlight important issues rather than let them flounder in an uncaring bureaucracy,” said David Campbell, secretary-treasurer of Local 675 in Southern California.

Still, Republicans and some moderate Democrats remain on the fence about Su’s nomination, partly because of her unflinching advocacy on behalf of workers.

It is the labor secretary’s job to enforce workers’ rights along with federal wage, overtime and child labor laws. The secretary also is charged with fighting discrimination, overseeing workplace safety and health agencies, administering pension security programs, and monitoring employer compliance with shutdown and layoff rules, among other responsibilities.

MEMBERS BUILDING VETERANS OF STEEL

Since voting last summer at the union’s constitutional convention to require locals to establish Veterans of Steel committees, USW members worked to grow the program and mobilize on behalf of veterans.

This summer, Veterans of Steel coordinators from each U.S. district met at USW headquarters to work on getting more members involved in their locals, communities and beyond.

“Too many veterans are unaware of the benefits they earned,” said International President Tom Conway, an Air Force veteran. “This lack of information about how to navigate the benefits process causes unnecessary harm.”

Of 19 million veterans in the United States, only about half are enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care, and only 5.3 million receive disability compensation.

Members in the Veterans of Steel program – along with Rapid Response, SOAR and other activists – began a push for legislation at all levels of government to help veterans gain awareness of and access to benefits.

“Transitioning from active duty to civilian life is a very difficult process,” said Marine veteran and Local 13-1 Vice President Greg Washington.



International Vice President David McCall

Acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su

Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn



SOLIDARITY WORKS

“You feel like you’re just out there by yourself.”

In New York, the effort to aid in that transition already had success. Thanks to USW activism, a new law took effect Jan. 1 requiring employers to post information about veterans’ benefits.

Members in other states are pushing for similar laws, with the goal of eventually passing such laws in all 50 states.

Conway took the fight to Washington, D.C., sending letters to Congress urging support for the “Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act.”

The bipartisan legislation would expand the work of county veterans service officers, one of the best resources to assist veterans in securing benefits.

“Many veterans do not access all of their earned benefits because they do not have the proper information or knowledge,” Conway wrote. “To reduce benefit underutilization and increase awareness of services, the CVSO Act will strengthen county veterans service officers’ efforts.”

Veterans of Steel are building a communications network to share information and coordinate their efforts, including using model contract language and other resources to advocate for veterans in bargaining.

“This is about creating a sustainable network,” Conway said, “a platform that we can build upon in the future.”



SUPREME COURT DELIVERS BLOW TO UNIONS

The U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in June that could severely affect union workers who decide to go on strike.

In its decision in the case of *Glacier Northwest v. International Brotherhood of Teamsters*, the high court ruled that companies have the right to sue unions for damages that the company believes were the result of collective activity.

Glacier Northwest, a Seattle company that delivers ready-mix concrete, sued the union after the company was unable to make deliveries when truck drivers went on strike in 2017 and some of its product went to waste.

The union argued that the company was at fault for failing to make adequate preparations for the strike. The Washington Supreme Court threw out the case, but Glacier Northwest appealed, betting correctly that the U.S. Supreme Court’s anti-worker

majority would take the company’s side.

“Make no mistake – this ruling has everything to do with giving companies more power to hobble workers,” Teamsters President Sean

O’Brien said following the decision.

Before the ruling, labor leaders expressed concern that a decision that went against the striking workers could discourage union members from going on strike at a time when worker activism is on the rise across the country. Labor Department statistics show that union organizing petitions, as well as strike activity, both rose sharply in 2022.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said that the ruling would not deter workers from fighting back.

“Working people are standing up for our rights and fairness in the workplace at a rate not seen in generations,” Shuler said. “Striking for justice on the job is a critical part of the labor movement’s resurgence.”



To learn more about USW members’ push for legislation to help military veterans, check out episode 44 of the USW’s podcast, *Solidarity Works*. Visit usw.to/podcast.



WARNING

The high court ruled that companies have the right to sue unions for damages that the company believes were the result of collective activity.



STEEL PRIDE

USW Members Show Solidarity with LGBTQIA+ Community



From Southern California to Eastern Canada, members of the USW took to the streets throughout June to demonstrate their solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community during Pride Month.

Local 135L members displayed their Steel Pride with a large contingent in the Buffalo Pride Parade on June 4, while Local 9187 sponsored and participated in Stark County Pride in Ohio on June 10.

Later in the month, USW members in District 6 participated in the Toronto Pride Parade on June 25, riding in an electric truck that displayed a large USW banner. Steelworkers also marched in the Pittsburgh area at People's Pride, including faculty and graduate student workers at the University of Pittsburgh.

On the West Coast, Steel Pride remained strong with the Local 7600 Civil and Human Rights Committee. They tabled at several Pride events hosted by their employer, Kaiser Permanente.

“The USW was the only union who showed up,” said Maggie Hernandez, a full-time grievance representative of Local 7600. “We shared information on Pride at Work and why it’s important for LGBTQIA+ members to have union protection.”

In addition to local grassroots Pride events, the USW voiced its support for the movement with a statement that International President Tom Conway released along with the

union’s LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee.

“Every person – regardless of their ethnic, national, religious, gender, or romantic identity – deserves health and safety in their workplaces and in their communities,” the statement said. “This Pride Month we recognize and recommit to this crucial founding principle of our union.”

“We must do everything we can to fight back against this wave of harassment and hate, and not allow it to weaken our collective bargaining power.”

The advisory committee built on this concept of worker protections by hosting a webinar with labor author and activist Anne Balay on June 22.

Balay is the author of several books, including *Steel Closets*, which highlights the voices of gay, lesbian, and transgender steel workers in Indiana. This groundbreaking publication was one of the primary catalysts to the formation of the committee.

Balay said that negotiating protections and benefits into collective bargaining agreements is the best and most tangible way that union members can support the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights.

“Contract language is really important,” Balay said. “Writing this book convinced me that unions are the only way for queer and trans workers to be protected.”

Members can learn more about the USW LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee and access a variety of related labor resources by visiting usw.org/steelpride.



“ We must do everything we can to fight back against this wave of harassment and hate, and not allow it to weaken our collective bargaining power. ”

International President Tom Conway





BIDEN FULFILLS PROMISE TO SAVE PENSIONS

President Joe Biden this summer delivered on his promise to stabilize multiemployer pension plans and save the hard-earned retirements of 1.3 million Americans, including tens of thousands of USW members and retirees.

The USW-backed American Rescue Plan, which Biden signed in 2021, supports dozens of multiemployer funds facing collapse because of corporate bankruptcies, Wall Street recklessness and other factors outside workers' control.

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. (PBGC), the federal agency administering the support, has allocated billions so far for plans covering workers from numerous industries and unions.

In June, the agency announced \$1.3 billion for the PACE Industry Union-Management Pension Fund (PIUMPF), covering many USW members and retirees from the paper sector, and \$887 million for the National Integrated Group Pension Plan (NIGPP), serving USW participants from numerous manufacturing industries.

"Without President Biden's support, many of these workers and retirees would have lost the bulk of their retirement income and spent their golden years scraping by," said International President Tom Conway, noting the American Rescue Plan passed Congress without a single Republican vote.

USW activists spent many years advocating for legislation to save troubled multiemployer funds.

"But only President Biden stepped forward to get the job done," International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn said. "He continues to show that he is the most pro-worker president in American history."

Multiemployer plans combine contributions from two or more companies in manufacturing, trucking and other industries. PIUMPF, with more than

64,500 participants, and NIGPP, with more than 48,000, both faced bankruptcy in 2034.

Some union members already put off retirement because of the threat to their pensions, while others facing benefit cuts had begun thinking about how to trim expenses during their retirements. It's unacceptable to put workers in that kind of predicament, said International Vice

President Luis Mendoza, who oversees the union's paper sector.

"After decades on the job, workers deserve secure retirements," Mendoza said.

Tim Moffett, who recently retired from the International Paper mill in Campti, La., said he'll rest easier knowing he's going to receive every penny of the pension he earned during 32 years on the job.

"You count on it being there. You never dreamed it wouldn't be there," said Moffett, a PIUMPF participant and former president of Local 13-1331, noting he and his co-workers often accepted smaller raises over the years in exchange for larger company pension contributions.

In many union families, the American Rescue Plan will have a multi-generational impact, Moffett added, pointing out that it also saves the Teamsters pension earned by his late father and now helping to sustain his mom.

Decades of climbing, crawling, hauling pipe and pulling wire have taken a toll on Chad Newcome, president of Local 14614-1 and an electrician at Tri-County Electric in Morgantown, W.Va.

Now, with NIGPP stabilized, he can once again think about early retirement.

"I smiled for a week after I heard that," Newcome said. "You can go on with your planning. You can go on with your life."

PROTECT OUR PENSIONS



PENNSYLVANIA



NEW YORK



CALIFORNIA

BISMARCK BOBCAT WORKERS WIN FIRST CONTRACT

Members at the Bobcat manufacturing facility in Bismarck, N.D., voted in July to ratify the facility's first contract, which covers more than 700 workers.

USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez credited members of the newly organized unit for their solidarity throughout the successful negotiations.

"Our members at Bobcat take tremendous pride in their work and now can be proud of the wages, benefits and security of their hard-fought and fairly won union contract," Ramirez said. "Thanks to the dedication of our negotiating committee and the solidarity of the membership, our work in Bismarck will be more rewarding, safer and more secure than ever."

The Bobcat workers in Bismarck voted for USW representation in a secret-ballot election in September 2022 and in March 2023 were followed by some 200 more Bobcat employees at the company's facility in Rogers, Minnesota, where negotiations for a first contract continue.

"The USW welcomes the opportunity to provide a voice on the job for all workers, and as our union continues to grow, so does our collective power," Ramirez said. "We look forward to the challenges ahead knowing that we are strongest when we are united."

MINNESOTA MINE WORKERS JOIN USW

Workers at Cleveland Cliffs' Northshore Mining became the newest members of the USW in July when they elected to unionize.

Northshore Mining had been the only taconite mine on Minnesota's Iron Range without a union. The approximately 400 workers mine taconite in Babbitt, Minn., make iron ore pellets in Silver Bay, Minn., and transport products and tailings.

"We chose to unionize so that we can have a voice on the job, especially when it comes to workplace health and safety, retirement security and other critical issues that affect us every day," said Jason Curtis, who works as a maintenance technician in the operation's concentrator. "We're proud of our work and of our part in the long legacy of responsible mining in Minnesota. Now we're looking forward to making these jobs even better."

The USW also represents approximately 2,000 workers at four other Cliffs' mining facilities in Minnesota and northern Michigan.

"Mining in Minnesota provides essential support for our local communities, our domestic steel industry and our nation's critical infrastructure," said USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez. "We're honored that workers at Northshore chose our union."

USW LEADER PARTICIPATES IN SOLVAY FORUM

Local 14-200 President Gregory May represented USW members at this year's Solvay Global Forum in Brussels, Belgium.

This group was created in 2015 to foster internal social dialogue between the eight labor representatives of Solvay's 30,000 employees and top management.

During this year's forum, a representative from each Solvay location provided an update on their unit, along with a discussion of short-and long-term goals for the future.

May also offered a presentation on some of the issues and goals

USW members discussed at the union's Solvay Council meeting in early April.

Members of the forum heard from CEO Ilham Kadir and asked her questions directly to gain information they felt were pertinent to their regions as well as discuss the upcoming "Power of 2" company split.

"I was impressed with the open dialogue," said May. "Solvay recognizes the benefit of these direct communications from its employees to the top line managers."

Leaders expect the Solvay forum to continue operating after the company split expected to begin at the end of 2023.

GOODYEAR RETIREE TRUST GETS NEW CHAIR

Tom Duzak, architect of an innovative and successful effort to protect retiree health care benefits, retired in June as chair of the Goodyear Retiree Healthcare Trust.

He will be succeeded by Chad Apaliski of the USW Collective Bargaining, Research and Benefits Department.

Duzak served as chair of the trust since its inception, a result of the 2006 contract settlement between the USW and Goodyear.

USW members went on strike against Goodyear on Oct. 5, 2006, in large part to preserve retiree health insurance. When the strike concluded, the settlement laid the foundation of what became the Goodyear Retiree Healthcare Trust, which continues to provide health care benefits to retirees.

"Dignity in retirement is one of our union's highest priorities," said International President Tom Conway. "Tom helped make this a reality for tens of thousands of USW members

and retirees through his hard work and dedication."



GLASS WORKERS WIN NEW CONTRACT AFTER STRIKE

About 330 workers at the Owens-Illinois glass plant in Montreal reached a new contract agreement in July after about two months on strike.

The three-year agreement provides USW members with at least a 14 percent wage increase over three years, and raises of as much as 20 percent for those who work specialized jobs. The contract also includes increases to pension contributions and other added benefits.

Following unacceptable proposals by the company, the Owens-Illinois workers voted by 97 percent in May to authorize the strike.

GERARD RECEIVES TOP CANADIAN HONOR

Retired International President Leo W. Gerard, who began his career as a miner in Sudbury, Ontario, and went on to serve for 18 years as the USW's leader, in June received Canada's highest civilian honor, Companion of the Order of Canada.

Governor General Mary Simon, who bestows the Order of Canada, presented the award in recognition of Gerard's "vast and influential work in labour advocacy, notably as the seventh International President of the United Steelworkers union," the announcement said.

Companion of the Order of Canada is awarded for "outstanding achievement and merit of the highest degree, especially in service to Canada or to humanity at large."

"I am honored and overwhelmed to be appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada," said Gerard, 76, who retired in 2019. "I want to acknowledge the undeniable fact that this tremendous honor deserves to be shared by so many others, from my family to the members of my great union, to the countless other labor, social justice and political activists whom I was privileged to work alongside for five decades."

Current International President Tom Conway, who worked closely with Gerard as international vice president before succeeding him in the top office, praised his longtime colleague for the dedication and tenacity he displayed throughout his career.

"For the past two decades, nobody has spoken with more strength and conviction on behalf of working people in the United States and Canada than Leo Gerard," Conway said. "Our union was fortunate to have him leading the way for us for many years, and he richly deserves this tremendous honor."

Marty Warren, the USW's national director for Canada, said Gerard's impact on the cause of workers was "indisputable."

"Leo Gerard's life mission has been to improve the working and living standards of workers in Canada, the United States and around the world," Warren said.



NEW CONTRACT ENDS STRIKE AT PUERTO RICO'S V'SOSKE

Members of Local 6588 reached a tentative agreement in July on a new three-year contract at the V'Soske Inc. manufacturing plant in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, following a strike that lasted more than three months.

Workers at V'Soske create beautiful hand-tufted, hand-carved rugs that cost on average more than \$100,000 and have decorated luxury stores, boats, celebrity residences, and iconic buildings including the White House and the Museum of Modern Art.

Despite the quality of their work and the profits they help bring, members had not received a raise for more than seven years. V'Soske took advantage of the economic crisis in Puerto Rico to improve its profits while keeping workers' salaries low.

Members of Local 6588 and other workers in Puerto Rico continue to face the lasting effects of natural disasters, including the devastating hurricane María in 2017, earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We know these rugs sell for extremely high prices in large part because of the skilled work that goes into each piece," said District 4 Director David Wasiura. "These hard-working union members are proud of their work and deserve to be paid fairly for their craft."

Members were preparing to vote on the new agreement with V'Soske as *USW@Work* went to press.

NEW USW APP AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

Members can now receive USW event info, get news alerts and have their union card right on their smart phone by using the new USW app.

Apple users can download the free app at the App Store, usw.to/apple, and Android users can find it at the Google Play Store, usw.to/android.

The app will send alerts to members about bargaining updates, union events, training opportunities and other information. Verified members will also be able get a digital version of their union card.

Please note that to access the member-only features, members must register and verify their member ID. Members can find their member ID number on their union card, their *USW@Work* mailing label, or by contacting USW local union services at 412-562-2400.





ABG LEADER CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY

USW Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn and other USW leaders helped to celebrate this spring with Ernie LaBaff, retired president of the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers' International Union (ABG), as he marked his 90th birthday.

About 200 people attended a party in Potsdam, N.Y., with LaBaff, who retired in 1997, shortly after the ABG completed its merger with the USW. In his remarks to the crowd, LaBaff said that one of his greatest accomplishments as a union leader was completing the ABG-

USW merger.

Surrounded by a large contingent of friends and family, LaBaff also received proclamations from local political leaders in recognition of his years of service to the people of New York state.

CAPTION: Clockwise from bottom left: Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn; Mark Goodfellow, president of Local 420 in Massena N.Y.; staff representative Jack VanderBaan; Bob Smith, former president of Local 420, and former ABG President Ernie LaBaff.

MINNESOTA HEALTH CARE WORKERS BECOME USW MEMBERS

About three dozen home care and hospice workers at Fairview Range Medical Center in Hibbing, Minn., voted in May to join the USW.

The group includes registered nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, case managers, home health aides, licensed practical nurses, workers in scheduling and billing, and one chaplain.

The group chose to organize for better wages and benefits, and to attract and retain quality staff so their patients get the best care possible.

“Our patients have more acute need than even five years ago, and we have less and less workers to care for them,” said Sarah Lamppa, a social worker who spearheaded the union effort. “We need to draw in quality workers who want to stay so our patients get the best care possible, and get our wages to a more competitive place.”

The organizing effort was successful despite the company's union busting efforts, which included anti-union meetings and efforts by the company to delay the vote.

The workers will become members of amalgamated Local 9349.

USW GAS COUNCIL MEETS IN PITTSBURGH

About 50 USW members who work in the natural gas industry took part in two days of meetings this summer at USW headquarters, where they discussed how they can best work together to build a strong future for the sector.

The council, led by District 11 Director Emil Ramirez and District 4 Assistant to the Director Steve Finnigan, participated in information-sharing sessions and heard from other USW leaders about trends in the industry.

Among the topics members discussed were the importance of local communications and action teams, activism on political issues of importance to working families, and the current economic state and future of the industry.

“We've continued to have strong participation from gas locals across the union,” Ramirez said. “This council is building a network that will provide strong communication and solidarity for workers throughout the gas industry.”

USW OFFERS COMMENTS ON WORKER SURVEILLANCE

The USW submitted comments this summer to the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy on the prevalence and impact of automated worker surveillance and management.

The USW emphasized that when employers are considering implementing new technology, they should work with local unions at the very early stages, collectively bargain over the implementation of that technology, conduct a full assessment of the health and safety hazards of new technologies, and train workers to implement and maintain any agreed-upon technology using existing union employees rather than outside contractors.

“Currently, collective bargaining is the most impactful way to prevent economic or physical harm to workers due to surveillance or other technology in the workplace,” the USW said in its comments. “We urge this administration to advance public policy to prevent job loss, unreasonable discipline, and injury to workers from these types of technology.”





AFL-CIO VOTES TO ENDORSE BIDEN FOR RE-ELECTION

In the earliest presidential endorsement in AFL-CIO history, the labor federation's board voted in June to support the re-election campaign of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

The union coalition followed the announcement with a rally in Philadelphia, where the president joined hundreds of union members to talk about how his policies have created thousands of good-paying union jobs, invested billions in rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, and supported a resurgence of American manufacturing.

"There's absolutely no question that Joe Biden is the most pro-union president in our lifetimes," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "The largest labor mobilization in history begins today, supercharged by the excitement and enthusiasm of hundreds of thousands of union volunteers who will work tirelessly to re-elect a president they know has our backs and will always fight for us."

AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond, a former USW international vice president, said the Biden-Harris administration has overseen historic economic expansion that has resulted in higher wages for workers and the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years.

"Made in America isn't just a slogan to this president, it's a demand for a brighter future in which no worker is left behind," said Redmond.

While the USW is part of the 12.5 million-member AFL-CIO, the Steelworkers union conducts its own endorsement process, which is still ongoing and includes sending candidate questionnaires to all major candidates to ensure that every candidate who gains the union's endorsement supports the USW's core values of workers' rights, fair trade, affordable health care, and retirement security. To learn more about the USW's endorsement process, visit uswvoices.org.



WOMEN OF STEEL DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Ann Flener-Gittlen, who has directed the USW Women of Steel program for 17 years, announced this summer that she would retire in September.

Replacing Flener-Gittlen will be Randie Pearson, who currently serves as national Rapid Response coordinator and who began her career as a member of Local 912 at Toledo Refining Co. before serving as District 1 Rapid Response coordinator. Charleeka Thompson will take over as the new national Rapid Response coordinator.

International President Tom Conway praised Flener-Gittlen, who was a union member for 51 years, as a "trailblazer."

"Ann helped to grow Women of Steel into one of labor's most

effective activist networks," Conway said.

Before directing Women of Steel, Flener-Gittlen served as national Rapid Response coordinator and was a member of United Rubber Workers Local 302, in Wooster, Ohio, where she served as president of the 1,200-member local union.

Flener-Gittlen said that she and her USW siblings were "truly a family" and that she was proud of the number of women she saw take on leadership roles as a result of the USW's Women of Steel program.

"So many sisters grew their own power and leadership to help build and strengthen our union," she said. "I have no doubt that the Women of Steel will continue to shine."

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE IN OCTOBER

The USW International Women's Conference "Women of Steel – Know Your Power" will take place from Oct. 23 to Oct. 26 at the Wyndham Hotel in Pittsburgh.

This year's women's conference will focus on building and enhancing members' skills and global solidarity, as well as strengthening the labor movement, all of which contributes to a local union's ability to better serve members. The program will include high-profile speakers from the United States and Canada, along with women from countries and unions where the USW is forming global alliances.

The conference is open to all USW members, but local unions are encouraged to seek out female-identifying members who reflect the diversity of our union. There is no limit to the number of delegates a local union can send.

For more information on registration and travel arrangements, visit: www.usw.org/events/international-womens-conference.

Have You Moved?

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

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

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

You may also email the information to membership@usw.org



WYOMING AMBULANCE WORKERS MAKE HISTORY

A group of 30 workers at Frontier Ambulance in Fremont County, Wyoming, made history this spring when they voted overwhelmingly to join the USW.

The 22-2 vote made them the first new union in Wyoming in decades, as well as one of the only health care unions in the entire state.

“It’s a chance to change things for the better, and I think everybody really believed in that dream,” paramedic Dominick Sapien said of the successful effort in the so-called right-to-work state, which has only about 14,000 union workers among its 578,000 residents.

For District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, the Frontier workers’ vote was evidence that the hunger for union representation cuts across any geographic, political and generational boundaries.

“Every day, more workers in Wyoming and around the country are realizing the benefits that come with a strong union in their workplace,” Ramirez said. “These first responders fought for and won what every worker deserves – a voice in the decisions that affect their work.”

That ability to gain a voice – for workers and also for their patients – was one of the driving forces for

Sapien and the three dozen other paramedics and emergency medical technicians at Frontier, who work 48-hour shifts, staff three ambulance stations and cover about 9,200 square miles, a territory more than seven times the size of Rhode Island.

“We didn’t unionize to spite the company or make a point. It’s because we genuinely care about each other and the patients,” Sapien said. “I would hate to think I’d lose a patient because we didn’t have the tools that we needed,” he said, adding, “Nobody is going to know better than the people on the ground what the people on the ground need.”

Workers, he said, plan to fight for better equipment, safer working conditions, including a common-sense policy restricting non-emergency transports during blizzards, and improved vehicle maintenance.

“My co-workers are great people,” he said. “They do this for the community.”



Members who were on the front lines of COVID are still fighting for a better system.

See page 4