

# USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

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A Powerful Voice for Workers



**CINCINNATI, OH**—SOAR activists from the USW District 1 Sub District 5 office attended the Cincinnati AFL-CIO Labor Council Labor Day Celebration at the Fan Zone of the Cincinnati Reds' Great American Ball Park. We were proud to gather with many members, families, and local leaders who stand with workers in our fight for progress and to enjoy a baseball game! In solidarity! Let's play ball!

Pictured from left, Jason Perlman, Ohio AFL-CIO Political Director, SOAR Activists Carl Vineyard and Ronnie "Pup" Wardrup.



**KNOX, IN**—SOAR members from SOAR Chapter 30-18 were invited to join members of USW Local 9551 to share lunch with good friends on Labor Day. We had a great day with great food!

Pictured, on the left is SOAR Activist Charlie Averill standing with the President of Local 9551, Jason Steiner and his spouse Lisa Steiner. In solidarity!

## LABOR DAY 2024

**NEW ORLEANS, LA**—Members of SOAR Chapter 13-5, the USW Local 750 SOAR Chapter, volunteered at the New Orleans AFL-CIO Labor Day Picnic.

Pictured from left to right include participants from USW Local 750. Wilton Ledet, SOAR Ch. 13-5 President; Donald Borne, USW Local 13-750 Unit Chair; Carmine Frangella, SOAR Ch. 13-5 Secretary-Treasurer; Johnnie Bonds, LU 750 Vice President; Stephen Lewis, LU 750 member. Way to go, SOAR!



**ALBANY, NY**—Members of SOAR Chapter 4-17, the Local 9265 SOAR Chapter, attended the New York State AFL-CIO annual Michael Burns Labor Day Celebration picnic held at the American Legion in Clifton Park on September 2. The free picnic honored the hard work, dedication and contributions of workers everywhere. In solidarity!

District 4 Staff Rep Rick Sauer, SOAR 4-17 members Mike Blue, Gary Cunningham VP, and Danielle Blue.

SOAR 4-17 Member Gary Cunningham VP with son's Ryan and Sean.

SOAR 4-17 Member Gary Cunningham with NYSNA USW 9544 Members Janet Strominger and Greg Reynoso.

SOAR 4-17 Member Lisa Newmark with grandson Jack and SOAR 4-17 Member Gary Cunningham.



**QUAD CITIES OF ILLINOIS/IOWA**—Activists Bonnie Carey and Brad Greve from SOAR Chapter 11-4, the USW 105 Retirees, of Bettendorf, IA, marched with USW Local 105 in the Labor Day Parade. Coming or going, SOAR is leading the way!



**NEWPORT NEWS, VA**—SOAR Chapter 35-1 Activist Shirley Bellamy attended the 47th annual Congressman Bobby Scott's Labor Day Cookout at his home in Virginia. Sister Bellamy stated she had so much fun, and heard Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff speak, as he was the main attraction for this year's event.





**BILL PIENTA**  
*SOAR President*

## SOAR's Role is the Next Level of Activism for Our Union

**I recently passed the 58th anniversary of being a member of the USW, having paid dues to my local union or SOAR since 1966. I became active in the union and have held numerous positions in the organization since the early 1970s. I have seen a lot and have been in contact with many people over these years. While our members have always been willing to step up when needed, I believe we are now reaching levels of involvement that make me feel very comfortable regarding our union's future.**

I participated in our union's NextGen Conference earlier this year and recently attended my district conference. I also received reports on the Rapid Response and Canadian National conferences. All these events had significant participation from newly elected local union officers or newly hired members who wanted to learn how to become more involved.

I have also seen the energy and compassion of our union's newer International Officers and District Directors. The members have chosen wisely in their selection

of these leaders. They have energized our members and have offered programs and training that make our union stronger and more united than ever.

The International and Districts invite SOAR to participate in their actions as a full participant, exchanging ideas and information and educating both groups.

You may ask, why would I spend so much time writing about active USW members and their leaders? The answer is simple. For SOAR to remain a relevant part of the USW, we must continue to bring in new members to SOAR. The majority of our new members come from recently retired local union members who were participating in their local union activities. Their main reason for joining SOAR is not the social events, like attending the Christmas party or the lunch provided at the meeting, but rather the opportunity to continue their activism and to stay connected to our union.

We will have no trouble maintaining and growing our membership if we show them that SOAR is the "Next Level of Activism" for our union by demonstrating what we do for our members and the labor movement.

## SOAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED



**The 14th SOAR International Conference is scheduled for April 4-5, 2025, at Caesars Forum Conference Center in Las Vegas, NV. Chapters large enough to send delegates were notified by mail.**

**For those chapters planning to submit resolutions to the conference, all resolutions must be received in the SOAR office in Pittsburgh, by February 3, 2025.**



**JULIE STEIN**  
SOAR Director

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

### USW Retirees and Active Members Hopeful for Continued Progress in 2024 Elections

With the 2024 election fresh in our minds, I thought I'd take this opportunity to take stock of the top legislative and policy victories we've secured over the last four years.

While we can't possibly list every victory, I'm hopeful that this review will embolden and motivate us for the important work that lies ahead.

#### Federal legislative and policy victories:

- ▶ **Union Pensions Rescued:** 120,000 active and retired USW members were among the 1.3 million union members whose pensions were rescued by the Biden/Harris American Rescue Plan.
- ▶ **Lower Prescription Drug Costs** were achieved through the historic Inflation Reduction Act, which empowered Medicare to negotiate costs with drug manufacturers. As a result, Medicare recipients now enjoy a \$35 monthly cap for their insulin and, beginning in 2025, a \$2,000 cap on out-of-pocket prescription costs, saving an estimated 19 million Medicare beneficiaries \$400 per year on average.
- ▶ **Renewed, Pro-worker direction at the National Labor Relations Board** has helped spur a massive surge in union elections. President Biden took swift action to fire the former NLRB general counsel who turned the Board against workers, chipping away at our bargaining ability and generally weakening unions. Then, on numerous occasions, Vice President Kamala Harris cast the tie-breaking vote to confirm labor-friendly members to the Board, creating an opportunity to restore and increase Board funding and to reverse Trump-era rules that restricted union activities in American worksites.
- ▶ **Historic investments in American manufacturing**, thanks to another tie-breaking vote from Vice President Harris, helped pass the Biden/Harris Inflation Reduction Act. This law is sparking private investment in new manufacturing and has provided existing facilities with the resources to upgrade technology to remain competitive.
- ▶ **Hard-fought improvements in workplace health and safety** include a new ban on the import and use of asbestos in worksites and a long-awaited rule to limit workers' exposure to silica dust. Additionally, the Biden/Harris Department of Labor has moved to create a new federal standard to protect workers from heat-related illnesses and death.

#### State-level legislative and policy victories:

- ▶ Michigan's newly-elected, pro-union governor and legislature—the state's first in nearly 40 years—acted to restore workers' collective bargaining rights by repealing the state's so-called right-to-work law and putting an end to the unfair pension tax.

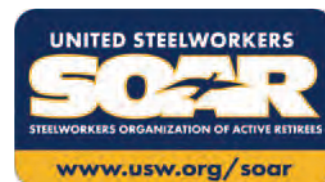
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# 2024

HAPPY FALL!


STAY ACTIVE. STAY INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED.  
STRONGER TOGETHER.



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**SOAR in ACTION**  
**USW@Work**


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# A Historic Win for Workers and Retirees: The NDP Delivers for Working-Class Canadians

By Matthew Green, Member of Parliament for Hamilton Centre

In the world of organized labour, trade unions have always been the driving force behind securing better deals for workers. Whether it's negotiating fair wages, safer working conditions, or protecting the rights of retirees, unions understand that real progress comes from the power of collective bargaining. This same spirit of negotiation and persistence has been at the heart of the New Democratic Party's (NDP) recent achievements in the "Confidence and Supply Agreement" with the Liberal government. Just as a union forces management to the table to secure a better contract, the NDP has successfully used its power and negotiated to push the Liberal minority government to adopt policies that will profoundly benefit all Canadians — especially workers and our retirees.

## The NDP's Fight for Anti-Scab Legislation

One of the most significant victories in this agreement is the introduction of anti-scab legislation. For too long, companies have been able to use replacement workers during strikes, undermining the strength and solidarity of unionized workers. This legislation finally legislated the union fight to ensure that federally regulated unionized workers are protected from having their jobs filled by temporary workers during a strike. It's about ensuring that when workers stand up for their rights, their actions cannot be undercut by using scabs.

The NDP's persistence in securing this legislation is a clear demonstration of its commitment to protecting



Matthew Green, NDP Member of Parliament for Hamilton Centre, with NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, on the picket line supporting USW Local 7135 members at National Steel Car in Hamilton on strike in 2023 for safer working conditions.

the rights of all workers, both active and retired. It sends a strong message to employers that the era of exploiting workers through replacement labour is coming to an end. This victory will resonate through the generations, safeguarding the right to strike—a cornerstone of labour rights—and ensuring that our grandchildren inherit a Canada where workers' voices cannot be silenced by corporate interests.

## Dental Care for Seniors: A Win for Health Equity

Another critical win for Canadians, particularly seniors, is the expansion of dental care. The NDP has long argued that dental care should be a part of our public health care system, recognizing that oral health is not a luxury but a necessity. In union terms, this is like negotiating a long-overdue health benefit that ensures retirees can enjoy their golden years without the burden of high dental

costs. Many seniors live on fixed incomes, and dental care is often one of the first things to be sacrificed when budgets are tight. With this new program, retirees can access the care they need without worrying about financial strain.

This expansion is not just a win for seniors; it's a win for all Canadians. By including dental care as part of our public health system, we are taking a significant step towards health equity. It's a victory that echoes the principles of solidarity that have always been at the heart of the labour movement—no one should be left behind, especially when it comes to something as fundamental as health.

## Pharmacare: A National Program for All

In addition to dental care, the NDP has secured the first steps towards a national pharmacare program, with new provisions covering all medications and equipment for diabetes as

well as full coverage for contraceptives. This achievement is the result of years of advocacy, much like a union's fight for comprehensive benefits in a collective agreement. For retirees, who often face the dual challenge of declining health and rising costs, this program is a lifeline. It ensures that they can access the medications and equipment they need without the fear of financial ruin.

The significance of this program cannot be overstated. It is the beginning of a national pharmacare system that will ultimately cover all Canadians, ensuring that everyone has access to the medications they need. This is the kind of transformative policy that the NDP has fought for, recognizing that health care must be comprehensive and accessible to all, regardless of income or age.

### **The Democratic National Convention: A Moment for Organized Labour**

As we celebrate these victories, the fight for workers' rights is ongoing, not just in Canada, but across North America. The Democratic National Convention recently wrapped up in Chicago, and organized labour has a crucial opportunity to push back against the rise of the far right. Just as the NDP has fought for a better deal for Canadians, American unions and progressive politicians are fighting to protect the gains that have been made and to push for further advancements in workers' rights.

The rise of far-right politics poses a significant threat to the progress that has been made over decades. It is a reminder that the gains we celebrate today must be defended tomorrow. The labour movement must remain vigilant and active, ensuring

that our victories are not rolled back by those who seek to weaken the power of workers and retirees.

### **The Affordability Crisis: A Call for Deeper Social Safety Nets**

Finally, we must acknowledge the affordability crisis facing seniors today. The cost of living continues to rise, and many retirees are struggling to make ends meet. Housing, health care, and everyday essentials are becoming increasingly unaffordable, especially for those on fixed incomes. This crisis underscores the need for deeper social safety nets to protect our seniors in their retirement.

The NDP's achievements in dental care, pharmacare, and anti-scab legislation are critical steps forward, but they are just the beginning. We must continue to fight for policies that ensure all seniors can retire with dignity and security. Just as unions never stop fighting for a better deal for their members, we must continue to push for stronger protections and support for our retirees.

In these challenging times, the NDP has proven that it is Canada's only Labour Party, standing up for the rights of workers and retirees alike. Let us celebrate these victories, but let us also recognize that the fight is far from over. Together, we will continue to win for workers and continue our fight for a Canada where every retiree can enjoy the fruits of their labour in peace and security.



## **SOAR Chapters to Elect Officers**

**While voters across the country are heading to the polls to choose their national and state leaders in the U.S., SOAR members will participate in their own elections to select officers for all our SOAR chapters, including Canada.**

According to Article 6 of the SOAR Chapter By-laws, elective chapter officers are the President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, and three Trustees. The chapter may decide to add an office of Financial Secretary and/or to separate the office of Secretary and Treasurer. All positions serve four-year terms.

The nomination of officers will be held at the chapter meeting in October, and the election will be held at the November meeting.

No member is allowed to hold more than one office in a chapter, although chapter officers may serve on the SOAR Executive Board or as a District Coordinator. To hold a chapter office, members must be in good standing at the time of nomination and election.

If a chapter does not meet regularly during October, it must hold both the nomination and election of officers during the November meeting.

Any vacancies caused by ineligibility, death or resignation shall be filled by appointment by the remaining chapter executive board members until the next election, except that if the vacancy is in the office of President, the Vice President shall serve as President for the remainder of the term.

# SOAR in ACTION

Bethlehem, PA—On Saturday, July 27, members of SOAR Chapter 7-9, the Paul J McHale Retirees/USW Local 2599 SOAR, got together for their annual clean-up of Steelworkers Memorial Park, aided by Liberty High School's football team. Stronger Together!



St. Paul, MN—Activists Tom Remily and Tony Morentic from SOAR Chapter 33-7, the Twin Cities SOAR Retirees, are pictured with Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon at the AFL-CIO House of Labor during the 2024 Minnesota State Fair. Chapter 33-7 members manned the Steelworker booth at the House of Labor for several days during this year's fair.

Often referred to as the "Great Minnesota Get-Together," the annual Minnesota State Fair is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the region. This end-of-summer tradition is held the 12 days leading up to and through Labor Day. Great work, SOAR!



Sharpsburg, PA—SOAR Chapter 20-15, Greater Pittsburgh Area SOAR, got wind of seniors' fears regarding Social Security and Medicare. Chapter members did the research, wrote a one-page flyer and took their show on the road. The flyer included local contact information to cut through some of the misinformation. Chapter members Dave Wolfe, Jen Salandra, Barbara Pugliese and Andy Zanolio visited the senior center in Sharpsburg, providing answers to the many senior concerns, including rumors that undocumented workers were collecting Social Security—not true.

Pictured, SOAR activist Dave Wolfe addresses residents of the senior center about their concerns regarding Social Security.



White Bear Lake, MN—On July 26, members of SOAR Chapter 33-7, the Twin Cities SOAR Retirees, participated for their second year in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life fundraiser. Their team name was "SOAR for the CURE," sponsored by USW District 11. The team exceeded their goal and raised \$1,494 for cancer research! Way to go, SOAR!



Allenport, PA—Greetings from SOAR Chapter 15-12, the "Retirees of Allenport, PA," who gathered on July 15 for their monthly SOAR chapter meeting and took a group photo. The chapter's members are mainly retirees from two former Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel facilities, Monessen Works and Allenport Works, which shut down in 1986 and 2008. At 80 years old, Richard Senko, the president of SOAR Chapter 15-12, is the youngest officer of the chapter. In seniority and solidarity!



Aurora, MN—Members of SOAR Chapter 33-4, the Steelworker Retirees of Aurora, MN, got together on July 3 for the area's Patriotic Days celebration and parade. Since 1985, this chapter has taken pride in participating in this annual parade. However, this year, they constructed a float as it was getting more challenging to march the distance, and they won third place! Way to go, SOAR!

Rice Lake, WI—On August 15, local retirees and members of the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans demonstrated near the Social Security Administration office in Rice Lake to show their support of the program. The Alliance has launched a "Save Social Security" statewide campaign, which is soon to go national. Social Security celebrated its 89th birthday on August 14. Pictured on the far left is the president of the WI ARA, Ross Winklbauer, who is also a SOAR activist of Chapter 2-6.

Photo credit by Michelle Jensen of the Chronotype Newspaper in Rice Lake.



Hoyt Lakes, MN—Taking advantage of their new float, SOAR Chapter 33-4 members again got together on July 27, for the 2024 Hoyt Lakes Water Carnival parade.

This chapter just keeps "floating" along! Way to go, SOAR!



Harrisburg, PA—On June 25, SOAR activists of Chapter 20-15, the Greater Pittsburgh Area SOAR, joined in with the USW District 10 delegation to attend its Rapid Response Lobby Day & Labor Rally held at the Pennsylvania state capitol to advocate for legislation that benefits USW members and all workers. SOAR was in the House! We're stronger together! In solidarity!

Washington, D.C.—SOAR Activist Bonnie Carey from SOAR Chapter 11-4 in the Quad Cities area of Illinois/Iowa, was present at the Heritage Foundation on July 30 to celebrate Medicare's 59th anniversary and to spotlight the dangers Project 2025 poses to Medicare. Bonnie was part of the Alliance for Retired Americans members from across the country who were lobbying for the protection of Social Security and Medicare on Capitol Hill. In the photo, Bonnie is seen standing second from the right. Great work, Bonnie!



# United Steelworkers Voice Support for Solar Trade Petitions



**As most steelworkers have learned, a major part of China’s manufacturing playbook is to have its government-subsidized companies operate in third-party countries to circumvent U.S. trade laws. China has a long history of this nefarious practice especially in the steel and aluminum industries.**

Well, The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is at it again—this time in the growing solar manufacturing industry.

At the end of August, the United Steelworkers (USW) offered their “strong support” for anti-dumping and countervailing duty petitions filed by leading domestic solar manufacturers at the Commerce Department and International Trade Commission.

The American Alliance for Solar Manufacturing Trade Committee is seeking remedy for alleged unfair trade practices perpetrated by mostly Chinese firms operating in third-party countries. The committee is comprised of solar companies with U.S. production facilities, including Convalt Energy, First Solar, Meyer Burger, Mission Solar, Qcells, REC Silicon and Swift Solar.

The solar manufacturers allege that the Chinese companies set up shop in Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam to dodge previous U.S. trade enforcement action. These Chinese firms also are accused of benefiting from massive government subsidies leading to solar overcapacity and the dumping of solar products at artificially low prices into the U.S. market.

USW International President Dave McCall, in an Aug. 27 letter written to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and International Trade Commission Chair Amy Karpel, called for “careful consideration of the petitions” filed by the solar manufacturers.



“The People’s Republic of China’s playbook on illegal trade practices is no secret: subsidize, create excess capacity, pay low wages, dump, open operations in low-wage countries to circumvent and surge into international markets. The PRC has been doing this across industries for almost 25 years now since the U.S. granted it Permanent Normal Trade Relations status: steel, tires, chemicals, paper products, aluminum extrusions and solar, to name just a few.”

China currently dominates the solar industry and its supply chain, holding more than 80 percent of the world’s solar manufacturing capacity, and uses a slew of unfair practices, including likely forced labor, to maintain its control. But with the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, the U.S. began taking real steps to rebuild its own solar manufacturing capabilities leading to significant domestic investment.

All of that will be for naught, however, if China is able to dump its unfairly traded products into the U.S. at bargain basement prices, including by setting up shop or routing products through the four Southeast Asian nations named in the suit.

It is a direct threat to the solar companies that filed the lawsuit but also hits home for USW members. McCall noted in his letter that the USW represents workers throughout the solar supply chain and those jobs are at risk, too.

“The U.S. currently employs more than 30,000 workers in the solar supply chain, but with a fair and level international solar market, that number could climb to hundreds of thousands.”

We at the Alliance for American Manufacturing agree with McCall that all American workers, like those represented by the USW, deserve to compete on a level playing field.

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



# District 13 Welcomes New SOAR Chapter in Texas

**SOAR members in Texas were honored to have their SOAR chapter officially chartered by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.**

On March 9, 2024, SOAR Chapter 13-6, known as Dallas Area SOAR, was presented its official charter by USW District 13 Representative Lawrence Castillo at the Women Rising Conference in Dallas. The new area-wide chapter will be home to steelworker retirees from multiple local unions within the Dallas area.

Lou Luckhardt, a former president of USW Local 9487, an amalgamated local based in Dallas, Texas, will serve as the chapter's first president. Over the past year, Paul Williams, USW 9487 Local staff, has worked to lay the foundation for this new chapter, which already has approximately 35 members.

The additional first officers of the chapter include Teri Thurman, vice president; Lorraine Russ, recording secretary; and Jeanne Schulze, of AFGE 1003, recording secretary. The trustees include Suzette Alexander, Felisha Carter, and Shohn Liggins.

The chapter's first meeting was held on May 5, 2024. Gene Lantz, Texas President of ARA, spoke to SOAR Members about the Texas Alliance of Retired Americans.

The chapter plans to hold monthly meetings to support the work of the local unions in Dallas while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs

like Medicare and Social Security.

Luckhardt stated, "The members are eager to get started. Our chapter's first initiative was to cosponsor the "Women Rising" event with Women of Steel in honor of International Women's Day, which was held in March."



Pictured from left are Teri Thurman, vice president; Lou Luckhardt, president (holding the charter); Lorraine Russ, recording secretary; and Paul Williams, treasurer. Kneeling in the front row is Lawrence Castillo, USW D13 staff representative. Jeanne Schultz, recording secretary and trustees Suzette Alexander, Felisha Carter, and Shohn Liggins were not present for the photo.

*SOAR welcomes our new members from Chapter 13-6, and together, we will continue the "good" fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!*

## LABOR DAY 2024



**PITTSBURGH, PA**—Members of SOAR Chapter 20-15, the Steelworkers of the Greater Pittsburgh Area SOAR, led the way for the Steelworkers marching in what organizers call the largest Labor Day Parade in the country. The annual parade route ends at the USW headquarters building, where a picnic-style luncheon was held to celebrate OUR day!



**TUCSON, AZ**—SOAR Chapter 38-9, the Robert R Guadiana SOAR Chapter, combined its Labor Day Award event with a Harris-Walz info/rally session held September 4. SOAR Chapter 38-9 President Sherryn "Vikki" Marshall hosted the ceremony.

Three SOAR chapter members were honored with awards: the late Arthur E. Eckstrom, Jr., Dan Eckstrom, and Celestino "Tino" Toress. Brother Toress, who could not attend, was awarded the BacLovio Barraza award.



Jennifer Eckstrom, niece of Arthur E. Eckstrom, Jr., read his In-Memoriam to the audience and panel members, and accepted the 2024 Outstanding Trustee Award on his behalf.



Dan Eckstrom was honored with the 2024 Outstanding Community Service Award. Pictured, Dan and Vikki Marshall.

Patrick Robles, Southern AZ Campaign Representative for Harris-Walz, speaks to the audience about the campaign and the importance of voting in the upcoming elections.





# District 4 Welcomes New SOAR Chapter in New Jersey

SOAR members in the North and Central area of New Jersey (N&CNJ) were honored to have their SOAR chapter officially chartered by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.

On February 20, 2024, SOAR Chapter 4-23, the USW North & Central New Jersey SOAR Chapter, was presented its official charter by USW District 4 Director Dave Wasiura at the district's LM Conference in Edison, N.J. The new chapter will be home to Steelworker retirees from multiple local unions in the north and central New Jersey.

Howard Boyer, a longtime USW LU 4-417 activist who is newly retired, will serve as the chapter's first president.

Al Polk, the District 4 SOAR executive board member, reported that Joe Arico and Luke Gordon, USW District 4 staff; Howard Boyer; and Ken Goley, who will serve as the chapter's vice president, worked to establish this chapter, which already has approximately 27 members and is growing. Special

thanks go out to Mike Fisher, USW District 4 sub-district director, and Joe and Luke for their continued support of this new chapter.

The additional first officers of the chapter are Kevin Dexheimer, recording secretary; Joan Merullo, financial secretary; and Coleen Barnett, treasurer. The trustees include Joseph Gibson, Michael Savage, and William Wilson.

The chapter's first meeting was held on March 14, and the plan is for the chapter to meet quarterly to support the work of the local unions in north and central New Jersey while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.

Boyer stated, "We are committed to supporting the USW agenda and assisting SOAR chapter members and retirees in whatever way we can."

***SOAR welcomes our new members from Chapter 4-23, and together, we will continue the "good" fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!***



Pictured front row from left: USW D4 Director Dave Wasiura, USW Local 4-00417 (LU 4-417) President Carlos Manzoni, LU 4-417 Financial Secretary Thomas Johnson, SOAR Chapter 4-23 Recording Secretary Kevin Dexheimer, Chapter 4-23 President Howard Boyer, Chapter 4-23 Treasurer Coleen Barnett, Chapter 4-23 Trustee William Wilson and USW D4 Asst. to the Director Steve Finnegan. Back row from left, LU 4-417 Vice President Jack Krieger and Chief Steward Chris Abbott. Chapter officers not present for the photo: Vice President Ken Goley, Financial Secretary Joan Merullo and Trustee Mike Savage.



**GRANITE CITY, IL**—SOAR activists of Chapter 7-34-2, the Steelworker Retirees of the Tri-Cities Area, met early to decorate the SOAR Trailer for the Granite City Labor Day Parade and then marched in it, too!

**NEW YORK, NY**—On Saturday, September 7, New York City's Labor Day parade stepped off in Manhattan. Members of USW Local 9265 and SOAR Chapter 4-17 marched in this year's parade. Way to go, SOAR!



Priscilla with NY State Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton (Staten Island/Brooklyn) and NY State Senator Robert Jackson (Washington Heights/Inwood.)



USW 9265 President Bradley Kolb and SOAR member Barry Markman.



NYC Labor Day Parade SOAR members Maria Castro and Lenny Mangano.

USW 9265 members Robert Wright and Bradley Kolb, SOAR members Priscilla Marco, Blair Burroughs, and Lenny Mangano.





Dave McCall

# HOLDING WORKERS in CONTEMPT

**Dave Harvey credits the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) with helping him make it to a healthy retirement.**

OSHA implemented a standard in 2016 dramatically reducing workers' exposure to silica in many workplaces, including the Du-Co Ceramics Co. plant in Western Pennsylvania where Harvey spent decades making ceramic electrical components.

Harvey's union, the United Steelworkers (USW), long pushed OSHA to enact the rule and protect workers across the country from airborne silica dust, generated during manufacturing processes and other kinds of work involving rock, sand, gravel and clay. The substance lodges deep in the lungs, contributing to cancer, silicosis and other life-threatening ailments.



Dave Harvey

It would be foolhardy now to return to dustier workplaces that put workers' lives at risk. But Harvey knows this nightmare scenario is a real threat with a right-wing Supreme Court that's already gutting labor rights and will almost certainly

attempt to institutionalize the subjugation of workers if a Republican wins the White House in November.

"Just look at what's happening," warned Harvey, Pennsylvania coordinator for the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), referring to the court's growing and alarming string of anti-worker decisions. "We're going back in time, back to the way it was when unions were just getting started."

In one particularly alarming case, *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, the court's six pro-corporate justices overturned longtime precedent and slashed the authority of federal agencies to interpret laws and make regulations.

This ruling sets the stage for a potential rollback of hard-won regulations safeguarding working people, such as a new Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services rule mandating safer staffing levels at nursing homes, the OSHA silica standard that continues to protect Harvey's

former co-workers, and the similar silica standard for miners that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) enacted earlier this year at the urging of the USW and other unions.

Also at risk because of the decision are Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules and recently expanded Department of Labor (DOL) standards extending overtime to millions more workers when they work extra hours.

The greedy corporations that opposed these kinds of common-sense measures in the first place now circle like vultures, hoping to have them rescinded. In the four weeks since the *Loper Bright* ruling, for example, companies already filed at least five lawsuits challenging DOL regulations on minimum wages and other critical issues.

"They're not exposed to it," said Harvey, explaining why the justices would issue a ruling potentially increasing workers to silica or other hazards. "They don't care."

"They're not in touch with the working people. There's no doubt about that," Harvey said of the justices, one of whom, Neil Gorsuch, once sided with a trucking company that fired a driver for leaving his disabled rig on the side of the interstate so he could seek warmth from freezing temperatures.

As much danger as the *Loper Bright* decision portends for working people, it's only one reason why this court earned a reputation for corporate bootlicking.

In the past year alone, MAGA justices also wrote rulings attempting to limit workers' right to strike and making it more difficult for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to reinstate workers illegally fired for asserting their labor rights.

"They don't want us to strike," observed Harvey, who once joined co-workers on a walkout to get a fair contract at Du-Co Ceramics. "They're making it harder and harder to do that."

Rulings like these fly in the face of Americans' growing support for unions and helped to drive the court's approval rating to a record low. What's particularly galling is the justices' cozy ties to the very CEOs and corporations potentially benefiting from their rulings.



Gorsuch and two associates sold a Colorado property for nearly \$2 million to the head of a law firm with cases before the court. The trio had the property on the market for about two years and sold it shortly after Gorsuch took his seat on the court.

Right-wing Justice Samuel Alito accepted private jet transportation from a hedge fund billionaire who later had cases before the court. Alito neither reported the gift on ethics forms nor recused himself from the cases involving his benefactor.

And Alito’s fellow extremist, Justice Clarence Thomas, accepted numerous vacations and other gifts from a conservative megadonor and billionaire with ties to right-wing organizations.

“They need ethics,” Harvey said, noting that the justices right now “don’t answer to anybody.”

The Biden-Harris administration in coming months plans to pursue Supreme Court reforms aimed at holding the justices accountable and ensuring the court serves all Americans instead of just a wealthy few.

Right now, justices enjoy lifetime appointments, ostensibly to keep them out of politics. But it sure hasn’t worked out that way, observed Priscilla Marco, SOAR coordinator for Puerto Rico, New York and several other states, noting the spate of rulings stacking the deck in favor of corporations.

“They were appointed by Trump to do certain things, and they’re apparently doing them. They’re not being independent,” she said, welcoming the idea of term limits and an enforceable ethics code for justices.

“The only way to change this is at the ballot box in November,” she said, noting that electing a Democratic president and Congress will provide the impetus necessary to enact the reforms and ensure the appointment of fair-minded justices in the future. “Everything comes down to November.”



Priscilla Marco

## USW District 4 HONORS SOAR ACTIVIST

**In August, at the USW District 4 2024 Education Conference held in Atlantic City, the district recognized SOAR Activist Denny Mitchell for his activism on behalf of retirees and working families and for his ongoing commitment to the union.**

At each of the District 4 educational conferences, one award per sub-district is presented to individuals who are identified as activists in District 4. Also, an award is given to a retired member of the district who continues to fight for working families and participates in district activities during retirement.

Denny Mitchell was selected for his leadership and activism, as demonstrated by his strong support of the USW Political Program. He has devoted much time to political activities such as door knocking, phone banking, and leafleting in various states throughout District 4, often requiring him to spend time away from his family while on the road.

After retiring in 2018, he became active in SOAR and was appointed a SOAR Coordinator by District 4 Director Dave Wasiura in June. He remains engaged in the union’s Rapid Response program, which involves advocating locally and in Washington, D.C., to ensure that our elected officials support the legislation necessary to assist working families.

Denny continues to travel around the district as the lead political coordinator for the USW District 4 Political Program in New Hampshire, a role he has held for the past three election cycles. As a result of his dedicated service to the union, he was chosen to receive the District 4 award for “Retired Activist in the District” at the 2024 conference.

*Congratulations, Denny!*



**Pictured left to right: Bill Pienta, SOAR International President; Denny Mitchell, honoree; Al Polk, District 4 SOAR Executive Board Member; Dave Wasiura, District 4 Director; and Steve Finnegan, Assistant to the District Director.**

# Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships to Four Students

## Marking 15<sup>th</sup> Year of Scholarships



By Doug May, SOAR Activist, Chapter 7-34-2

**Granite City, IL—When looking back at the outreach that our Granite City, IL, SOAR chapter participates in or organizes, delivering resources as volunteers, activists and advocates, arguably our annual Jane Becker Chapter Scholarship Award Program is most rewarding.**

Monday, August 5, 2024, marked the fifteenth year that, in total, \$85,000 has been disbursed among high school seniors who are college-bound sons, daughters or grandchildren of our chapter’s members.

This year, four \$2,500 scholarships were awarded to essay winners after showing a lively and uplifting video at the Granite City Cinema. The video provided a wonderful retrospective of our SOAR chapter’s outreach efforts over the years.

Dr. Bob Daiber, retired Madison County Regional Superintendent of Schools, graciously judged the essays and presented the awards to the winners, who wrote on the topic, “How Organized Labor Built the Middle Class.”

winners, who wrote on the topic, “How Organized Labor Built the Middle Class.”



### The 2024 Scholarship Recipients:

**Logan Bradford Flecke**

*Sponsored by grandfather Terry Holst*

**Kelsey Horn**

*Sponsored by grandparents Mike and Phyllis Geske*

**William May**

*Sponsored by grandparents Doug and Kim May*

**Madelyn Schaus**

*Sponsored by grandparents Richard and Vicki Schaus*

The namesake for our scholarship awards program was the wife of George Becker, USW International President from 1993 to 2001. Jane Becker was one of the main organizers after SOAR was established in 1985 when leadership recognized that valuable energy was going untapped. Retirees had much to give back, and we serve as an example.

We continue our outreach within the community while engaging and building coalitions among local, statewide, and elected officials who support policies like Social Security and Medicare, which are programs important to USW retirees.

### Among many activities, we have provided resources

- ▶ The Twigs program, battling childhood hunger in the community.
- ▶ Purchasing a refrigerator and deep freezer for The Good Samaritan House that empowers unhoused mothers and their children with guidance, shelter and hope.
- ▶ An ongoing collection for our troops that are stationed overseas during the Christmas season.
- ▶ Community Care Center

### The 2024 SOAR Award Recipients

The “Edward Sadlowski Labor Leader of the Year Award” didn’t go to one individual but to a committee. When Granite City SOAR chapter member Dennis Warren’s grandson, Jordan Ayers, was recently involved



## 2024 Scholarship Recipients

SOAR scholarship recipients, from left: Logan Bradford Flecke, Madelyn Schaus, William May, and Kelsey Horn.



**2024 SOAR Award Recipients**  
**Edward Sadlowski Labor Leader of the Year Award**  
 Local 1899 Women of Steel Committee,  
 with SOAR Chapter 34-2 President Dennis Barker.

in a terrible workplace accident, resulting in Jordan being paralyzed for the rest of his life, SOAR members and the USW Local 1899 Women of Steel Committee (WOS) immediately starting working on raising funds to assist in Jordan’s lifetime of care.

The Local 1899 WOS Committee spent three months, many hours of their time after work, collecting items for the silent auction and making baskets. Leading up to the Jordan Ayers trivia fundraiser night, WOS arranged silent auction items and basically ran the whole event.

The total amount raised for Jordan Ayers through the collective efforts was over \$10,000. Jordan is now living independently in an assistance facility in Paducah, Kentucky.

## The “Friend of SOAR Award”

If you want to build power and be a positive force in your community, you need strong allies. SOAR couldn’t have better allies than the United Congregations of the Metro East (UCM) Darnell Tingle, the Executive Director of UCM, accepted the award.

The “**SOAR Activist Award**” was presented to our SOAR Chapter Vice President, Kenny Hay. Kenny has been the first one to offer help with BBQs, setting up the hall for luncheons, and anything else we asked. He was always the first to say, “I’ll be there.”

Gloria Rains was presented with the “**Volunteer of the Year**” award. Gloria has been a long-time member of our SOAR Chapter. She is always the first to arrive at our luncheon, bringing a side dish. She volunteers at the sign-in table, collecting the 50/50 money and keeping the attendance book. Gloria is another example of what makes our chapter successful.

Thank you to all the ad book sponsors who made these awards possible. Special thanks to Granite City Cinema for opening its doors for the video to be shown and the awards presented. Also, a big thank you to Dr. Bob Daiber for volunteering again as the essay judge and presenter.

“Congratulations and good luck to the scholarship winners as they pursue their higher education, stated Dennis Barker, president of the SOAR chapter, “We would also like to express our appreciation to all the SOAR activists who consistently volunteer for our ongoing efforts to make this world a better place.”

After the awards presentation, members and friends of SOAR enjoyed a delightful BBQ luncheon at the Neighborhood Social Club.

## 2024 SOAR Award Recipients



### Friend of SOAR Award

Executive Director of UCM Darnell Tingle accepted the “Friend of SOAR” award on behalf of the United Congregations of the Metro East (UCM).



### The “SOAR Activist Award”

Honoree Kenny Hay and Dennis Barker



### Volunteer of the Year Award

Honoree Gloria Rains and Dennis Barker



# SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurrin, SOAR Legislative Director

## Why We Must Prevent a Return To Anti-Union Politics



Jay McMurrin

Last year, the UAW’s “Stand Up Strike” strategy proved how important the right to strike is for workers seeking higher wages, better benefits, retirement security and improved working conditions.

In most cases, union activists never have to strike; the simple threat of a strike is enough to push employers to offer fair bargaining agreements.

But when the boss wants to play hardball, an effective strike can mean the difference between gaining an equitable contract or settling for something lesser. In short, union members are reduced to collective begging without the right to strike.

That’s why when I heard former President Donald Trump’s comments during an interview with billionaire union buster Elon Musk, it made me cringe with memories of a different era. Trump began his remarks by telling Musk, “You are the greatest cutter.” He continued saying, “Look at what you do. You walk in, and you just say: You want to quit? They go on strike—I won’t mention the name of the company—but they go on strike, and you say: ‘That’s okay, you’re all gone. You are all gone. So, every one of you is gone.’”

The above statement was Trump praising Musk for firing his employees for union activities at a New York supplier. Think about that: we have a want-to-be future President telling an employer that it

is an excellent move to fire workers looking to form a union or trying to gain a fair contract. Employers listening to the interview heard Trump’s words and were drooling at the mouth. The hopeful next President of the United States had just given Union Busting his seal of approval.

Trump’s words took me back to something that occurred almost 43 years ago to the date. Trump’s comments came on August 13, 2024, but on August 3, 1981, then-President Ronald Reagan took action to fire 12,000 striking members of PATCO (Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization). I won’t argue who was right or wrong at the time. However, it bears saying that while employers had the right to use replacement workers at the time, it didn’t happen often. However, Reagan’s actions sent a message to big business, and they were listening.

The 1980s and 1990s were among the most tumultuous years of the U.S. labor movement. During that time, employers engaged in strikes and lockouts at record numbers—our union was no exception. The Steelworkers faced long, bitter battles at U.S. Steel, Ravenswood Aluminum, Bridgestone-Firestone, Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel and Caterpillar, to name just a few. The pattern at those companies repeated itself over and over again. Contract talks would grind to a halt. The boss would lock his workers out and then replace them with scabs that Reagan affectionately referred to as “Permanent Replacement Workers.” The

use of scabs effectively rendered strikes all but illegal in America.

As a result, the number of strikes in the U.S. dried up, leading to the most extended wage stagnation in American history. It also contributed to significant losses in union membership.

Our union, the United Steelworkers, effectively brought rogue companies to justice. Still, it came at a considerable price as we spent millions of dollars fighting in court and waging worldwide campaigns to secure fair labor agreements for Steelworkers.

Since those days, unions have learned to wage corporate campaigns to force employers to the bargaining table, select strike targets more wisely, and choose the right issues to strike over. As a result, the use of replacement workers to break strikes has been reduced. Still, the number of strikes called each year remains well below the pre-Reagan era.

For those of us who lived through the scab years, you know that it is something we do not want to face again. These memories are another reason why Donald Trump should not be elected this fall. The public supports our movement, and over the past four years, union membership has been growing.

We cannot afford to return to the days of an anti-union (Trump) National Labor Relations Board. Make your plan to vote this November 5 or sooner. And please, vote for union-endorsed candidates.



# As President and Vice President, Kamala Harris and Tim Walz Will Look out for Seniors

By Robert Roach, Jr.

**With early voting under way in many states, a large percentage of voters have already cast their ballots. For those who have not, and are still undecided, the Alliance for Retired Americans has endorsed the Kamala Harris-Tim Walz ticket for President and Vice President.**

Vice President Harris will protect Social Security and increase benefits. Donald Trump proposed four budgets that slash Social Security, proposed cutting “entitlements,” and even promised to cut Social Security’s funding.

Donald Trump has tried to take credit for lower drug prices, but don’t be fooled. It was Kamala Harris whose tie-breaking vote in the Senate ensured that Medicare beneficiaries who need insulin are paying no more than a \$35 a month copay, and all their recommended vaccines are now free. Her vote also ensured that out of pocket spending on prescription drugs for seniors with Medicare Part D will go down to \$2,000 next year.

Donald Trump proposed a budget that cut Medicare by \$500 billion over ten years. Kamala Harris has pledged to protect Medicare from cuts and supports expanding it to include guaranteed vision, dental, and hearing benefits.

Donald Trump cut safety inspections at nursing homes and proposed four budgets that cut Medicaid.

He also promises to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which protects people with pre-existing health conditions. Kamala Harris will build on the ACA to provide more affordable health care.



And it was Kamala Harris’ tie-breaking vote in the Senate to pass the Butch Lewis Act, as part of the American Rescue Plan, that helped Joe Biden save millions of workers’ and retirees’ pensions. Thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration, 2 to 3 million workers’ pension plans now are solvent and able to pay full benefits through at least 2051.

We must elect Kamala Harris and Tim Walz President and Vice President for the sake of older Americans across the nation. Please go to [www.vote.org](http://www.vote.org) if you have not already made your plan to vote and to learn the laws on voting by mail in your state. You can enter your address and check your registration at that site to make sure there are no surprises when you arrive at the polls.

*Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW.*

*For more information, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).*

## USW Retirees and Active Members Hopeful for Continued Progress in 2024 Elections *continued from page 3*

► Minnesota’s pro-worker, pro-retiree legislature and governor, Tim Walz, now our endorsed Vice Presidential Nominee, passed a state budget (HF3028/SF3035) that was hailed as the “most significant worker protection bill in state history.”

► In Ohio, voters defeated Issue 1, which would have raised the threshold for voters to amend the constitution to a supermajority of 60 percent and enacted stricter requirements for getting amendments on the ballot.

I hope this much-abbreviated list of accomplishments fills you with confidence and resolve as we gear up for another year of fighting to strengthen union power, enhance workplace safety and health, and protect every American’s right to a secure retirement.

While much attention has been focused on the presidential campaign, we must remember that state and federal lawmakers also make the decisions that impact our access to health care, our ability to afford prescribed medications, the availability of various health care services in our communities, and so much more.

Strengthening retirement security has long been a top priority of the Steelworkers, as evidenced by the results of our Your Union, Your Voice (YUYV) membership surveys. We must continue vigilance in growing union power as we celebrate these policy victories and keep the momentum going.



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

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