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A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



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“Health and safety is the foundation of the labor movement. We don’t know how many lives we’ve saved. There’s no way to measure it, but it is work that can never stop, and we can never quit.

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT DAVID McCALL, AUG. 19, 2024
ADDRESSING THE USW HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE

CURRENT



MEMBERS COMMIT TO SAFETY, HEALTH

Nearly 1,700 union activists spent a week in Pittsburgh this August committing themselves to the fight for safer and healthier workplaces.

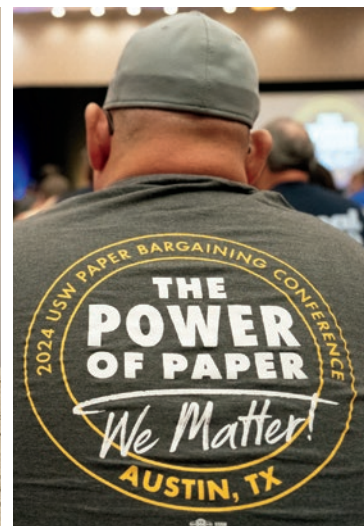
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Herman Potter is the president of Local 689 at the Portsmouth nuclear site in southern Ohio.

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COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

JESS KAMM BROOMELL
Director of Communications

AARON HUDSON
Assistant Director of Communications

R.J. HUFNAGEL
Editor

STEVE DIETZ
Photographer

GREG COLE
KATELYNN PFEIL
Graphic Designers

CHELSEY ENGEL, RYIN GAINES, TONY MONTANA, MATT RICHARDS, CHEYENNE SCHOEN, TAYLOR SMITH, JOE SMYDO, JENN WOOD, SHERRY YANG

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
USW@Work, USW Membership Department,
60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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

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Support Your Fellow Workers

It's been impossible to ignore the surge in union activity across the country in recent years.

I'm not sure if it's because of the pandemic, or the difficulties that so many young people face with student loan debt, the cost of housing, the tight job market, greedflation, or what else is driving it, but it's clear that workers, and young people especially, are waking up to the benefits that unions can bring to their lives.

We've all seen the successes in the national, high-profile SAG-AFTRA and UAW strikes that made big news, but I'm sure each of us in our own communities have workers who are struggling for recognition or fighting for a fair contract. We should all try to show our support for them however we can.

I'm not in the job market anymore because I retired years ago, but as the president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees, I am proud and happy to lend support to my friends in the labor movement whenever I can.

Whether it's marching in a parade, walking a picket line, showing up to a rally at a Starbucks or another place where workers are trying to get a union, or even writing a letter like this to your local news outlet, I hope my fellow USW members and SOAR members get out there and support our growing movement.

If the people who are out there organizing and leading our movement now represent the future, I think I can say with confidence that we are in good hands.

William J. Pienta
SOAR International President
Fredonia, N.Y.

All Elections Have Consequences

Between now and Nov. 5, we're probably all going to hear plenty about the presidential election, and that's fine, because it is one of the most important elections of our lifetimes.

But I want to encourage my fellow Steelworkers to remember that the next resident of the White House is far from the only thing we are deciding this fall. There are races up and down the ballot across all 50 states that could have a huge effect on our rights as workers to organize, to get good contracts, to make our workplaces safer and to ensure our retirements.

Every single congressional seat is up for election this November, along with one-third of the Senate. Some states will be electing governors, and many will determine the makeup of their state legislative bodies. I encourage all of my USW siblings to research the positions their candidates take on the important issues of workers' rights, affordable health care, retirement security and fair trade.

In years like this, when the focus is so heavy on the top of the ballot, it's important that we stay focused on all of the races, because state-level laws and the laws that come out of the U.S. House and U.S. Senate can have as much or more of an effect on our rights as union workers than what happens in the White House.

Clint Blake
Local 13-434
El Dorado, Ark.

Stand Against Voter Suppression

This story should tell you all you need to know about the stakes in the 2024 election. The story starts this summer with an early-morning knock at the door of an 87-year-old grandmother in Texas.

On the other side of the knock were armed police and other agents of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a far-right advocate of voter suppression and other

reactionary measures. For three hours, they ransacked her home, seizing electronic devices and documents.

Why? Because the resident of the home happened to be a leader of LU-LAC, the League of United Latin American Citizens, an influential advocacy organization that offers Spanish-speaking residents assistance with voter registration, immigration and other issues.

These "election police" also raided and ransacked the homes of other voter-registration activists, seizing cell phones and computers.

These efforts were carried out in order to reduce voter turnout. Texas demographics are trending toward the prospect of increasing Democratic victories. Paxton's solution? Suppress the vote, by any means necessary.

These raids are a clear and present attack on self-determination and a threat to the rights of American citizens. The excuses for the raids are baseless, but with them, Paxton is sending a wider message to all far-right Republicans: Get busy on driving down registration and turnout in all areas with populations that might lean Democratic.

The moral of this story is a simple one. One side in our current electoral contest wants to win by using lies, intimidation, and even armed thugs in the early morning raids to reduce voter turnout and participation. The other side wants to win by expanding the electorate and working to increase registration. They are urging the greatest number of legal voters to cast their ballots and take part in the grassroots political process.

Our task is to stand up against voter suppression, and stand with all grandmothers working to enhance the political power of those held down by exclusion.

Carl Davidson
Local 3657, Retired
Aliquippa, Pa.

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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NUCLEAR FAMILY



UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
ATOMIC WORKERS

USW Atomic Workers on Course for a Prosperous Future

Anita Bevins is part of five generations of family who have worked at the Portsmouth nuclear site in southern Ohio.

For nearly 35 years, Bevins has worked at the site operating cranes and has trained hundreds of workers to do the same. She works alongside two of her children, two grandchildren and two sons-in-law who are also employed at the plant.

As she looks forward to retirement, Bevins credits the facility with helping to protect U.S. national security, ensure energy independence, and build a strong, secure future for herself, her loved ones and her community.

“It has helped me raise my children,” said Bevins, one of about 900 members of Local 689 who are part of six units spread across the sprawling 3,777-acre site in Piketon, about 70 miles south of Columbus.

Local 689 is one of seven local unions that are part of the USW’s Atomic Energy Workers Council (AEWC), which represents a total of about 3,000 members.

Barry Sexton is one of the longest-tenured USW members at the Portsmouth site. After a stint in the U.S. Army, he joined a work-study program and has been at the site for more than 45 years.

“Talk about luck,” he said.

Herman Potter, president of Local 689, himself a second-generation atomic worker, noted that the site is among the largest employers in the region and, thanks to the USW-negotiated wages and benefits, also one of the best places to work.

Focus on the Future

That is unlikely to change any time soon, especially now that the site is home to a project that represents the future of U.S. nuclear energy.



Anita Bevins



A year ago, Centrus Energy, one of a half-dozen contractors employing USW members at the federally owned Portsmouth site, launched the first new U.S.-owned and operated uranium enrichment production in 70 years.

Inside one of the two identical, massive buildings designed to house the project are a series of tall white cylindrical towers, each containing centrifuges that produce the enriched uranium that will power the next generation of nuclear reactors. Today, there are 16 towers, but hundreds more are expected to fill the space over the next two years.

“We are looking years down the road to make sure we remain here,” said Potter. “We are going to need more people, and we’re going to need to train them.”

Because that training and the necessary security clearances take roughly 18 months to complete, and the company expects to hire as many as 500 people by 2027, Potter said, the search for new workers is already getting underway. The union is even exploring the possibility of establishing a regional training center at the local hall.

Potter credits the local union’s strength in part to its relationship with political leaders, including U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown and former Sen. Rob Portman, who invited Potter to be a guest at the State of the Union address in 2016. The Ohio legislators, he said, helped ensure the site would have a strong future.

The expansion in Portsmouth comes with increases in federal funding and strong support from the Biden-Harris administration, which has earmarked \$2.7 billion in funding to establish a reliable domestic supply of fuel for the nuclear power industry, part of the White House’s stated goal of achieving energy independence and generating 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2035.

In July, USW Atomic Energy Workers Council President Jim Key, who also serves as an appointee to the U.S. Department of Labor Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health, witnessed President Joe Biden sign into law the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy (ADVANCE) Act.

The bipartisan bill sets forth provisions to incentivize

the development and deployment of domestically produced advanced nuclear fuel technologies and to clean up hazardous land. Key expects the new law will help bring scores of valuable new union jobs to the atomic sector, including the Portsmouth site.

USW District 1 Director Donnie Blatt, who oversees the union’s work throughout Ohio, said the proud USW members at Portsmouth are eager to grow their local as more jobs come to the area.

“Portsmouth has been vital to our nation’s atomic energy, and our USW members are key to its future,” said Blatt. “With the new uranium enrichment project, we’re not just creating jobs – we’re ensuring energy independence and economic growth for our community. Our members’ dedication and skill will continue to drive this critical work forward.”

For America, By Americans

The promise of a strong future for the atomic industry is good news for USW members and others in the region, who rely on the ripple effect of the good jobs at Portsmouth to fuel the local economy.

“It’s promising,” said Delbert Reisinger, who has worked at the site for 16 years.

“It feels good to know we’re using American technology to make a product for Americans.”

Delbert Reisinger

Sam Carver

Reisinger said he's noticed an uptick in small business activity and other economic growth in the area since the new uranium enrichment work began, and that he expects the growth to continue as the site expands.

"We're ready," he said. "We've proven it time and time again."

Aaron Howard, a chemical operator at the site and daytime union steward, said that the future of the plant will be critical for sustaining the community long-term.

Piketon's population hovers at around just 2,000, and while many who work at the plant commute in from surrounding towns, it is by far the largest employer in the area.

"We're talking about a large economic influx of thousands of jobs," said Howard. "It means a lot for the people here."

Matt Snider, manager of the new centrifuge plant, said he was thankful for the company's strong working relationship with the USW.

"Centrus is proud to be leading the effort to restore American leadership in uranium enrichment, and grateful for the USW members in our Piketon plant who are making it happen," Snider said.

The new uranium enrichment project at Portsmouth is, in a way, a throwback to the past for a work site that for 45 years was home to a gaseous diffusion plant that enriched uranium – first for use in the nation's nuclear weapons program and, later, for commercial nuclear reactors. Those operations ended in 2001, and for the past three decades, USW members have performed complex decontamination and decommissioning work there.

Fluor-BWXT, the contractor that oversees the decommissioning, custodial, plant protection and other work at the site, is the largest employer of USW members in Portsmouth, with about 650 on its payroll.

Greg Wilkett, site manager for the company, said the most important aspect of his work with the union is ensuring that all workers go home safe at the end of their shifts.

"You don't get that unless you have a great partnership," Wilkett said. "We have a common interest."

Sam Carver said wages and benefits are a small part of what USW membership provides to the workers in Portsmouth. Having a strong voice on the job, particularly on issues of health and safety, is essential, he said.

"It's about knowing that they have your back," Carver said. "We know that when we bring something up, they're not going to take it lightly."

Phil Budnik, a unit president and safety representative, said the membership works closely with management at the site on a number of issues, including safety and ensuring adequate funding from the federal government.

"We are good at protecting our work force," said Budnik, who served in a management role at a previous job. "It has given me perspective."

USW members in Portsmouth also have found opportunities to change direction in their careers. Paige Cisco, a second-generation atomic worker, began

working at the Portsmouth site during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic as a janitor, and for the past three years has worked in process operations. Cisco quickly became a leader within her local, stepping up to become unit president, a full-time safety representative, a sergeant-at-arms and a worker-trainer

who now travels around the country providing Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) trainings for fellow USW members.

Cisco's mother, who also worked as a process operator at the site, now works with the Worker Health Protection Program through New York's

Queens College, which partners with the USW, the Department of Energy and other agencies to offer free health evaluations to atomic workers for conditions related to radiation, asbestos, beryllium, noise, solvents, and other potential exposures.

Cisco attended the USW's Health, Safety and Environment conference held in August, where she and other USW members in the nuclear sector had the chance to discuss their health and safety concerns in a special session for atomic workers.

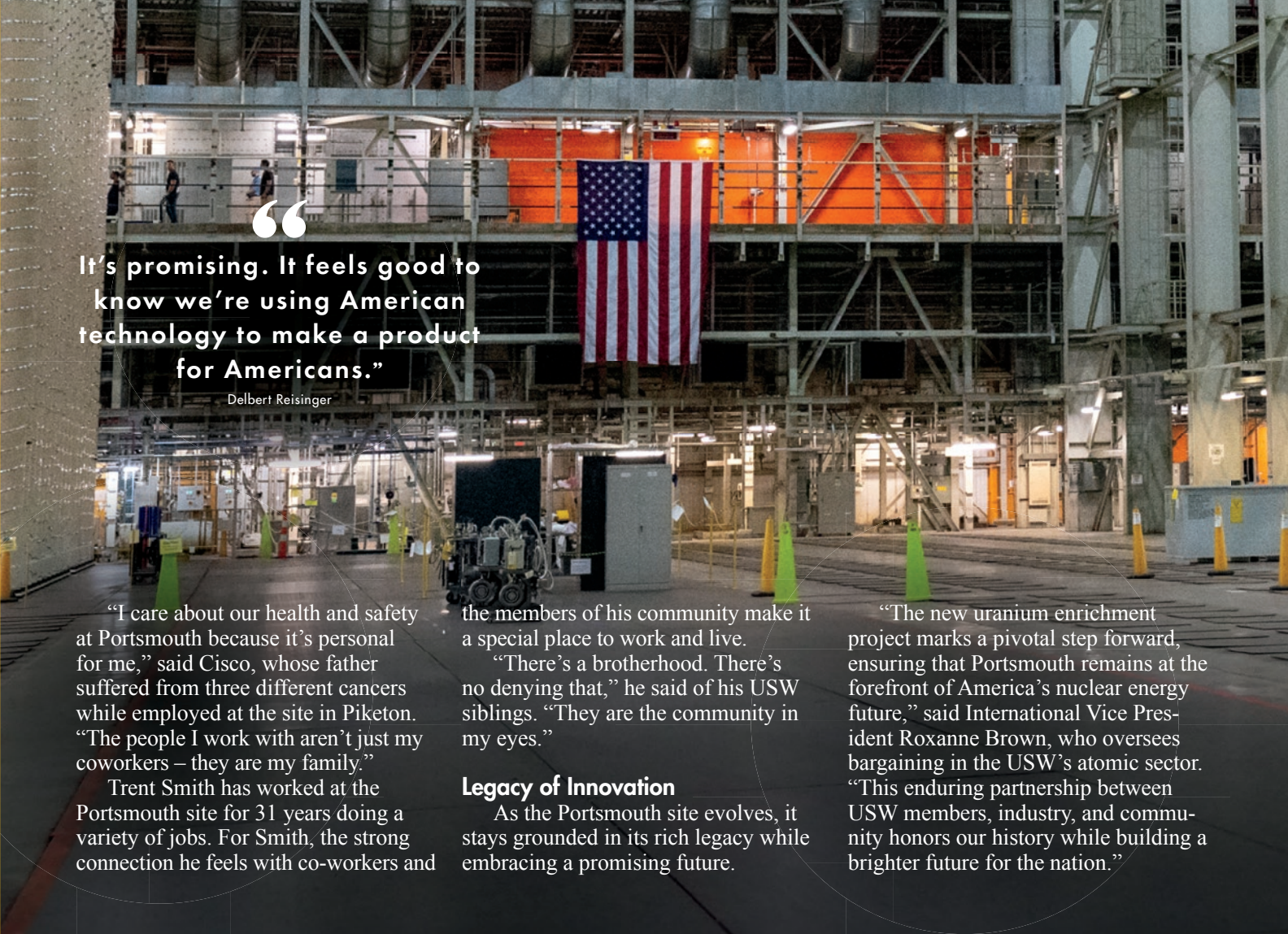


Anita Bevins

Delbert Reisinger

Paige Cisco

Herman Potter



“

It's promising. It feels good to know we're using American technology to make a product for Americans.”

Delbert Reisinger

“I care about our health and safety at Portsmouth because it's personal for me,” said Cisco, whose father suffered from three different cancers while employed at the site in Piketon. “The people I work with aren't just my coworkers – they are my family.”

Trent Smith has worked at the Portsmouth site for 31 years doing a variety of jobs. For Smith, the strong connection he feels with co-workers and

the members of his community make it a special place to work and live.

“There's a brotherhood. There's no denying that,” he said of his USW siblings. “They are the community in my eyes.”

Legacy of Innovation

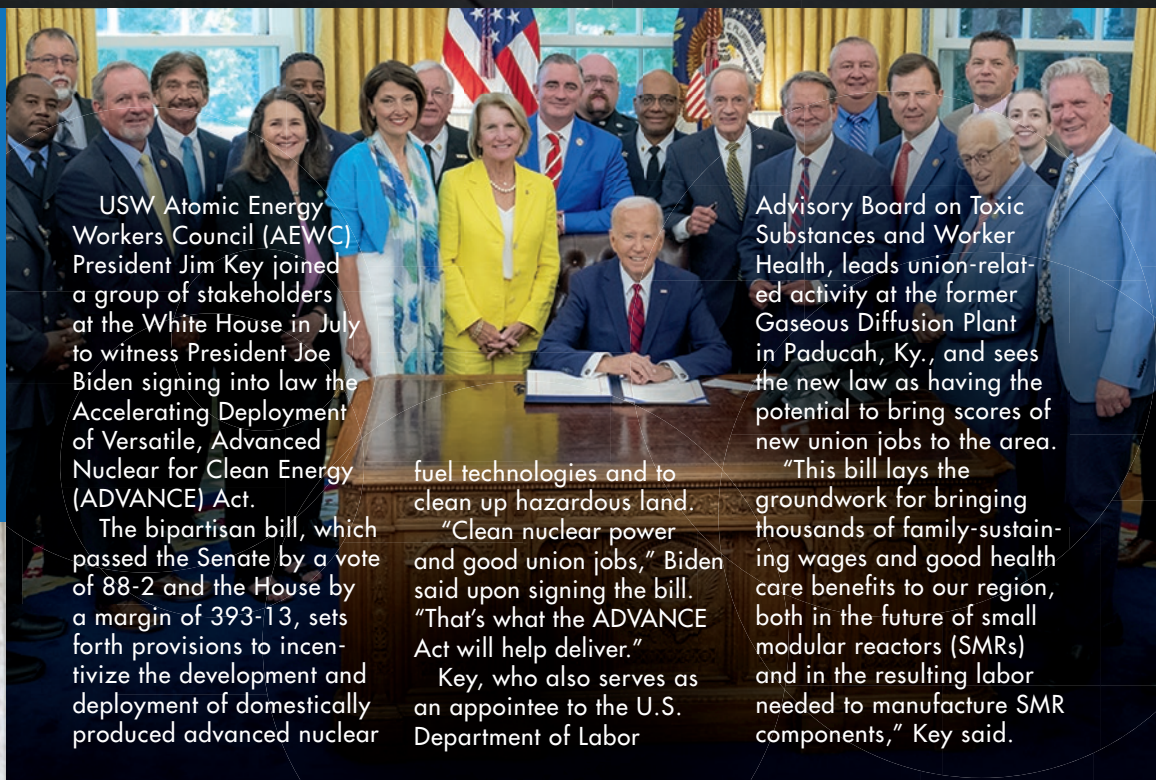
As the Portsmouth site evolves, it stays grounded in its rich legacy while embracing a promising future.

“The new uranium enrichment project marks a pivotal step forward, ensuring that Portsmouth remains at the forefront of America's nuclear energy future,” said International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who oversees bargaining in the USW's atomic sector. “This enduring partnership between USW members, industry, and community honors our history while building a brighter future for the nation.”



ADVANCE ACT

AEWC President Witnesses Signing of Law on Nuclear Fuel Development



USW Atomic Energy Workers Council (AEWC) President Jim Key joined a group of stakeholders at the White House in July to witness President Joe Biden signing into law the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy (ADVANCE) Act.

The bipartisan bill, which passed the Senate by a vote of 88-2 and the House by a margin of 393-13, sets forth provisions to incentivize the development and deployment of domestically produced advanced nuclear

fuel technologies and to clean up hazardous land.

“Clean nuclear power and good union jobs,” Biden said upon signing the bill. “That's what the ADVANCE Act will help deliver.”

Key, who also serves as an appointee to the U.S. Department of Labor

Advisory Board on Toxic Substances and Worker Health, leads union-related activity at the former Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Paducah, Ky., and sees the potential to bring scores of new union jobs to the area.

“This bill lays the groundwork for bringing thousands of family-sustaining wages and good health care benefits to our region, both in the future of small modular reactors (SMRs) and in the resulting labor needed to manufacture SMR components,” Key said.



YOUR UNION YOUR VOICE YOUR VOTE!

USW members have responded to thousands of surveys, participated in countless town hall meetings across the United States, and shared their views on the union's core issues through the ongoing "Your Union, Your Voice" program. Throughout those conversations and responses, members were very clear about the concerns that are most important to them – good jobs, workers' rights, quality, affordable health care, retirement security, safer and healthier workplaces, and fair trade.

In preparation for the Nov. 5 election, *USW@Work* asked members from across the United States to share their thoughts on those and other important issues.

To learn more about the issues and find more information about the election, visit uswvoices.org.



SAM MENDEZ Local 338

Kaiser Aluminum
Spokane, Wash.

LABOR RIGHTS, FAIR TRADE

"I want to make sure people understand what's at stake. The rights of union members are on the ballot. Our wages and our pensions are on the ballot.

"Kamala Harris doesn't just talk the talk, she walks the walk. She pounds the pavement with union workers who are on the picket line. That shows what she stands for – she stands for us. If she is

willing to make that effort to support us, then I'm willing to make the same effort to support her."

The Facts

Kamala Harris walked a picket line with striking autoworkers in 2019 and canceled an appearance in 2023 to avoid crossing a picket line. She has taken on price-gouging corporations, and she has spoken out and voted against unfair trade that harms workers. Harris has been vocal in her support for the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.



NICOLE ROTTMAN
Local 889

Penreco, Calumet Karns City Refining
East Brady, Pa.

**AFFORDABLE
HEALTH CARE**

“Harris and Biden have done so much for working people. The Inflation Reduction Act is a perfect example of how they have fought for everyday Americans. That legislation capped the cost of insulin for diabetic patients on Medicare, which hits very close to home for me. My wife is diabetic, and insulin is not cheap. That is life-changing for a lot of people.”

The Facts

In 2022, Kamala Harris cast a deciding vote for the Inflation Reduction Act, providing financial relief for millions of Americans, including those on Medicare, by expanding benefits, lowering costs, and strengthening the program for future generations. Specifically, the law capped the cost of insulin at \$35 for a month’s supply.

**UNION
ORGANIZING**

“Kamala Harris comes from the working class. She has been a big part of one of the most pro-labor administrations of our lifetimes. She stands up for workers’ rights, she fights for affordable health care, strong retirements. She is bringing a new energy to the campaign and has breathed new life into the labor movement.”

The Facts

Kamala Harris led the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, focusing on removing barriers for workers across the United States who want to form unions, and creating more good-paying union jobs. In the first half of 2024 alone, union election petitions increased 35 percent.



ANDY JERGENS
Local 5282

Olin Chlor Alkali Products
Henderson, Nev.





DEBORAH RICHARDSON

Local 7600

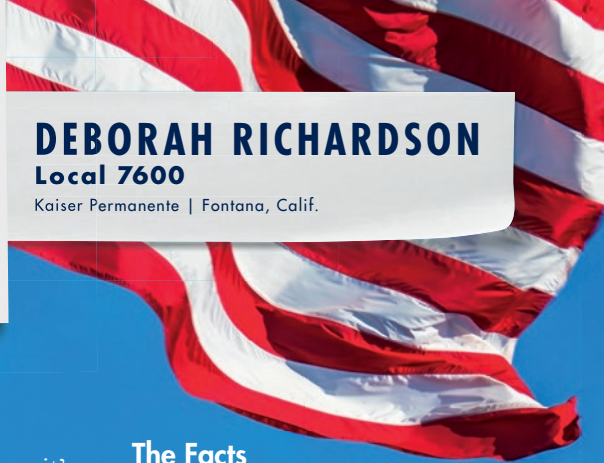
Kaiser Permanente | Fontana, Calif.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

“As a health care worker, it’s important to me that Kamala Harris has fought hard to make sure that Americans can get the health care they need at an affordable cost. It can be a real struggle for a lot of people, whether it’s for physical health care or mental health care, and it’s important to have a strong leader who stands up for people.”

The Facts

As a U.S. Senator, Kamala Harris sponsored legislation to make it easier for Medicare beneficiaries to receive mental health services and to help mental health professionals repay their student loans. She also led efforts to curb racism in health care settings and to improve maternal health.



SAFER WORKPLACES

“Kamala Harris has already helped us build the middle class with legislation like the CHIPS and Science Act, which has supported a number of USW employers, like those of us in the copper industry. She will work to strengthen the National Labor Relations Board and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to make our workplaces safer. All workers deserve to come home safely at the end of the day.”





BOB TRIBBLE

Local 1014

U.S. Steel | Gary, Ind.

INFRASTRUCTURE

“The most important thing is educating members on the issues and making sure that they get out to vote. The infrastructure bill alone has made a huge difference in our plant. We make structural steel, and that has kept us busy. It has meant that we are hiring, not pulling back, and it has meant steady employment for Local 1014 members.”

The Facts

The Biden-Harris Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provided \$1.2 trillion to upgrade U.S. roads, bridges, railways, water pipes, electrical systems, broadband networks and other crucial needs, supporting good jobs for USW members and other workers through strong Buy American provisions. The law is estimated to support more than 700,000 new jobs per year over 10 years.

EARKIEL EATON

Local 593

Aurubis Copper Foundry
Buffalo, N.Y.



CLINT BLAKE

Local 13434

Clean Harbors Environmental
El Dorado, Ark.

PRO-WORKER LAWS

“Look at the pro-worker legislation that has been passed, and the choice could not be more clear. Kamala Harris helped pass the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the American Rescue Plan, the CHIPS and Science Act. That’s enough to make it clear to those of us in labor that she’s with us.”

The Facts

The Biden-Harris CHIPS and Science Act allocated \$280 billion to boost semiconductor production, chip manufacturing, research and education. It strengthened supply chains and bolstered U.S. manufacturing. The administration also created a national manufacturing policy and supported legislation to raise wages, make child care affordable, and expand the child tax credit.

The Facts

Through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the Biden-Harris administration has fought for numerous safety and health standards, including rules limiting exposure to silica dust and extreme heat, and expanding workers’ rights during workplace inspections.





DAVE SMITH

Local 2660

Keetac Iron Ore Mine | Hibbing, Minn.

CREATING GOOD JOBS

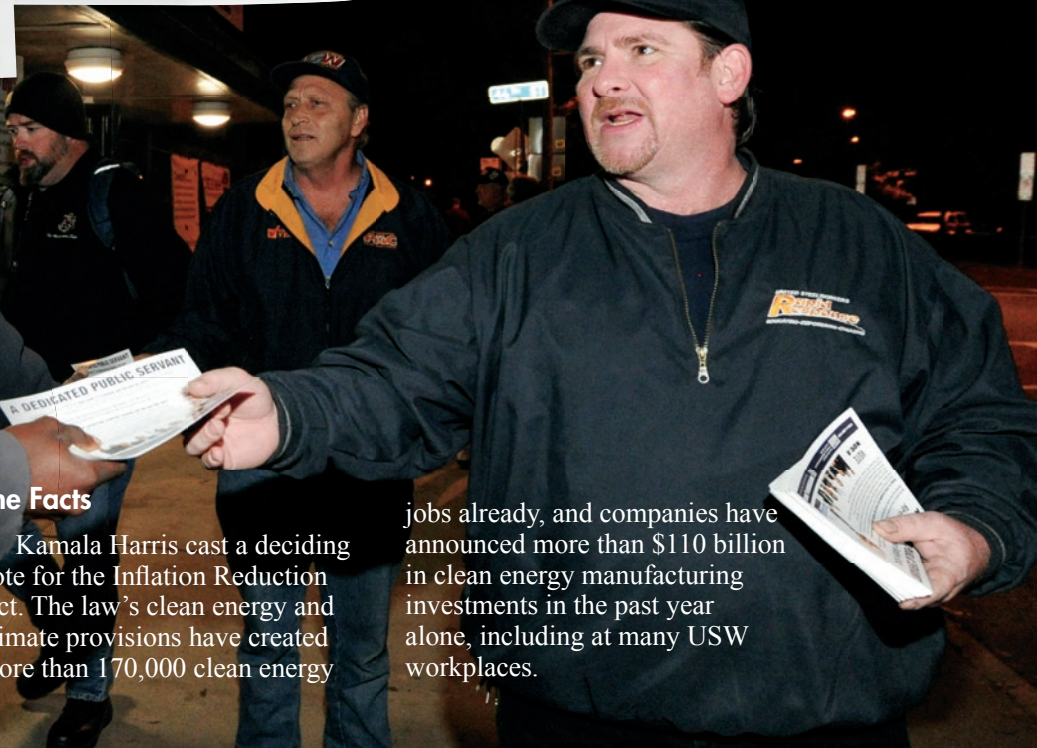
“I like to support candidates that support our union’s core values – things like good jobs, workers’ rights, secure retirements, safe workplaces, health care, fair trade. I will oppose people who want to take those things away from us.

“Those of us in labor, we want clean water and clean air, too, because we live in these communities. We have to have both – good jobs and a clean environment. It’s a challenge, but we have to meet it, because our future is at stake.”

The Facts

Kamala Harris cast a deciding vote for the Inflation Reduction Act. The law’s clean energy and climate provisions have created more than 170,000 clean energy

jobs already, and companies have announced more than \$110 billion in clean energy manufacturing investments in the past year alone, including at many USW workplaces.



JIMMY BEACH

Local 1693

Hussey Copper | Louisville, Ky.

A FAIR ECONOMY

“Kamala Harris understands that when we stand together as union members, we can fight for fair wages and safe working conditions. Her support for legislation that strengthens unions gives me hope that our voices will be heard and that we can negotiate for better benefits and protections.

“Kamala Harris understands our struggles and is willing to fight for us. I believe that under her leadership we can create a more just and equitable economy where working families are

valued and have a real shot at success.”

The Facts

The Biden-Harris administration established a national minimum staffing requirement for Medicare- and Medicaid-certified nursing homes. In the U.S. Senate, Kamala Harris fought for legislation to raise wages, cut costs for families and address workplace violence. As California’s attorney general, she cracked down on corporate greed and defended vulnerable workers against wage theft.



SECURE RETIREMENTS

“My dad’s pension would have been insolvent by 2031, if not for the Butch Lewis Act. He plans to retire soon, and he would not have been able to think about that if not for that legislation. Without that pension, he would not have much retirement savings at all.”

The Facts

Kamala Harris cast the critical tie-breaking vote for the American Rescue Plan of 2021, which included the Butch Lewis Act, saving the pensions of more than a million workers, including 120,000 active and retired USW members.



“Kamala Harris listens to working people, she understands their concerns, and she works hard to address those issues head-on, with real results.”

DAVID McCALL
International President
United Steelworkers

STEELWORKERS FOR HARRIS WALZ



NOLAN TOME
Local 10-326
Smurfit Westrock | York, Pa.



USW ENDORSES HARRIS FOR PRESIDENT

The USW joined dozens of other U.S. labor organizations this summer when the union announced its endorsement of Vice President Kamala Harris for president.

“When our union endorses a candidate, we first and foremost consider their values, and even more importantly, how they put those values into action,” said International President David McCall. “And Vice President Harris is a crucial part of the most pro-labor administration of our lifetimes, backing innumerable initiatives to help advance the interests of working families.”

Other labor groups to support the Harris-Walz ticket included the 12.5 million-member AFL-CIO and some of the nation’s largest unions, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

McCall pointed to Harris’ strong record of delivering for workers during her time in office, noting that the

USW enthusiastically endorsed her twice before as a vice presidential candidate.

“Vice President Harris cast the critical, tie-breaking vote when it came to securing more than a million workers’ pensions, including those of 120,000 USW members,” said McCall.

“She also was essential in the administration’s efforts to return the National Labor Relations Board to its mission of empowering working people, rather than serving the interests of wealthy corporations,” McCall said. “And her efforts chairing the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment are proving to be an essential part of the administration’s goal of helping more workers realize the benefits of union membership.”

These include more than 1,500 workers at bus manufacturer Blue Bird Corp. in Fort Valley, Ga., who now know the power of a union contract after voting in May 2023 to join the USW.

“Kamala Harris listens to working people, she understands their

concerns, and she works hard to address those issues head-on, with real results,” McCall said. “We need to look no further than the fact that she has been instrumental in the administration developing this nation’s first real industrial policy in decades.”

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler called Harris a “tenacious fighter for working people and a visionary leader” and said workers could count on her to stand up for them.

“From taking on Wall Street and corporate greed to leading efforts to expand affordable child care and support vulnerable workers, she’s shown time and again that she’s on our side,” Shuler said.

Harris helped to rebuild the nation’s infrastructure, investing in good-paying union jobs, bringing manufacturing back to America, lowering prescription drug costs and raising wages, McCall said.

“Vice President Harris has been a true partner,” he said. “We look forward to continuing to work with her, and we are proud to give her our endorsement.”

SAFETY IN NUMBERS



USW Health, Safety and Environment Activists Renew Commitment to the Cause

Before Christopher Burks and his 325 co-workers at Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga., ratified their first contract in August 2023, they had little recourse to address their concerns about health and safety on the job.

Now, after a six-year fight against long odds to join the USW, the members of Local 9008 are working under their first union contract, with health and safety language covering training, a workplace safety committee, incident investigations and other important provisions to prevent recurrence.

“It was such a long battle. It was a hard fight,” Burks said. “In our first contract, we didn’t get everything we wanted, but we are better than we were before we started, and we are going to continue to grow.”

Not long after that first contract took effect at Kumho, in April 2024, 57-year-old worker Steven Brookins was killed in a tragic workplace incident. If not for the USW contract there, members might not have been able to fully participate in the investigation and aftermath of that incident.

Founding Principle

It is that work – fighting for workers’ safety and health – that is the bedrock principle of union membership, International President David McCall said in August in his address to almost 1,700 members and guests at the USW Health, Safety and Environment Conference in Pittsburgh.

“Health and safety is the foundation

of the labor movement,” McCall said, emphasizing the importance of steadfast solidarity when it comes to safety. “No matter what the issues are, it’s about workers. It takes every one of us to make things better.”

McCall spoke on the conference’s opening day, just after hosting meetings with acting U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su, along with Burks and other new USW members from Kumho Tire and Blue Bird bus company in Fort Valley, Ga.

Su congratulated the workers on their victories and made the case that having a union to fight for worker protections is the most basic aspect of a good job.

“No job should be a death sentence,” Su said. “Every worker should know that they’re going to come home healthy and safe at the end of their work shift.”

Protecting Workers

Organizing more workers into the union, as USW members have done at Kumho, Blue Bird, the University of Pittsburgh and elsewhere in recent years, is the best way to protect workers, she said.

“It happened because you organized, and it happened because you acted in solidarity,” Su said of the recent surge in union activism. “It also happened because leadership matters. Together, we are ushering in a new era of a pro-worker, pro-union America.”

Ted Campiso, Rapid Response and safety representative for Local 13-447 in Westwego, La., said that making sure workers are safer on the job is not just a union issue – it also is a political one.

“We have to have the right legisla-

tion,” Campiso said. “Elections have consequences, and bad things can happen very quickly.”

In his address, McCall noted a number of the positive consequences of the Biden-Harris administration’s election in 2020, including new rules limiting worker exposure to silica dust, ensuring safe staffing in nursing facilities, and expanding the rights of workers to participate in incident investigations.

Workers across the country made all of those gains thanks to the activism of USW members, McCall said.

“We’ve weathered a lot of rough times, but we now have leaders who listen to what our issues are and are sincere about helping us with those problems,” he said. “It’s good to have so many friends who have our backs.”

Heat Standard

Another victory for worker safety could be on the way in the form of a standard protecting workers from the effects of extreme heat, said James Frederick, a former USW health and safety representative now serving as deputy assistant secretary of labor for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Frederick spoke to members at the conference about the progress his agency has made since January 2021.

The heat standard, which the Biden administration proposed this summer and which is currently in the review process, would cover 36 million workers in both indoor and outdoor workplaces, he said.

Joining Frederick in addressing the conference was Steve Owens, chair of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) along with

“

No job should be a death sentence. Every worker should know that they're going to come home healthy and safe at the end of their work shift.”

U.S. Secretary of Labor Julie Su



other health and safety regulators.

Refinery Tragedy

Owens and Frederick led a discussion of the importance of thorough incident investigations, focusing on the tragic loss of two USW members and brothers, Ben and Max Morrissey of Local 1-346, in September 2022 at the BP-Husky oil refinery in Oregon, Ohio.

The CSB investigation of that tragedy found a series of failures on the part of refinery management and led the agency to issue seven recommendations to refinery operators, and others, to prevent future tragedies by addressing the safety gaps that led to the fire.

“Nearly everything that could go wrong did go wrong during this incident,” Owens said. “The tragic loss of life resulting from this fire underscores the importance of putting in place the tools that employees need to perform tasks safely.”

Making sure workers have those tools requires support from the USW and employers, and securing those commitments is one of the most important jobs of a union-management health and safety committee, said USW Health, Safety and Environment Director Steve Sallman.

“We are here to do everything we can to prevent this from happening again,” he said.

Training and Education

For USW members, the work of preventing such fatal and life-altering incidents on the job takes on many forms, including investigating, training workers, inspecting work sites, identifying and eliminating potential hazards, and communicating with members and

management about issues of concern.

To help members do that work, the weeklong conference provided 303 workshops covering topics such as incident investigation, fatigue, active shooter, whistleblower protections, ergonomics, workplace stress, chemical safety, fall protection, industrial hygiene, cancer in the workplace, reducing toxic exposures, safe patient handling for health care workers, and the first-ever industry/sector breakout meetings.

Elaine Stewart, a personal support worker at Cogir and member of Local 8300, said the conference gave her a chance to learn how her fellow health care workers are addressing their on-the-job issues.

“I leave knowing other people are going through the same issues of short staffing and workplace violence that we are,” she said. “I know that we can help each other and work together to solve these issues.”

Help for Members

Campiso said the Health, Safety and Environment Conference is one of the most important events for USW members to attend, because it arms local union leaders with the tools and the knowledge they need to make their workplaces safer.

“Our union has so many resources, and members need to know about them,” he said.

Those resources include assistance with incident investigations, training and education through the USW’s grant-funded Tony Mazzocchi Center, and help in the aftermath of tragic events through the union’s Emergency

Response Team (ERT).

The ERT provides members and families with immediate aid, counseling and help in investigating root causes of accidents, as well as assistance with legal, financial and other needs.

ERT Director Duronda Pope, formerly a member of Local 8031 in Denver, said that even though the work of ERT coordinators can be extremely difficult and stressful, it also can be the most rewarding work union members do. The ERT currently has 62 team members across the United States and Canada.

“We advocate for people during the worst time in their lives,” Pope said. “Looking after each other is key, because we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers.”

The conference’s second day began with a solemn reminder of why that work is so critical. The conference hall fell silent as video screens displayed the traditional memorial scroll with the names of workers who had their lives taken from them at USW-represented workplaces since the union’s last health, safety and environment conference in April 2023.

That memorial, McCall said, is the most important part of the event.

“It really is a stark reminder that our work is never done,” McCall said. “We don’t know how many lives we’ve saved. There’s no way to measure it, but it’s work that can never stop, and we can never quit.”

Related stories: For a look at bargaining mental health language in contracts, see Page 20. For a breakdown of workers’ rights to safer workplaces, see Page 29.

WAKE UP WITH

Union-Made POP-TARTS



Elizabeth West

WHO THEY ARE
LOCAL 9345

WHERE THEY ARE
PIKEVILLE, KY.

WHAT THEY DO
**PRODUCE POP-TARTS
AND NUTRI-GRAIN BARS
FOR KELLANOVA**

#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.

Like so many other American children, Elizabeth West loved Pop-Tarts when she was a kid. Today, she's one of about 340 USW members in Pikeville, Ky., who spend their days producing the iconic breakfast treats for consumers around the world.

"Pop-Tarts and cereal were always a go-to for breakfast in our house," she said. "They still are, honestly."

West, in her second term as president of Local 9345, has worked at the factory for about 17 years. She spends her days packing cases of the beloved baked goods for shipment to locations in the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany and Great Britain.

While there are a few other Pop-Tart factories in the United States, the Pikeville location – where members also make Nutri-Grain bars – produces some of the most popular flavors, including strawberry and cinnamon, while also turning out test runs of new and limited-edition flavors.

USW members are involved throughout the process, from the mixing of the dough and filling, to the baking, wrapping and packaging of the tarts, to preparing them for shipping.

Pop-Tarts, a product of Kellogg's, made their debut 60 years ago with four simple, unfrosted flavors and instantly grew into a nationwide phenomenon. Today, the Pop-Tarts brand boasts more than two dozen standard flavors and a number of special releases, as well as a cereal, and even a college football bowl game that bears the Pop-Tarts name.

This spring, comedian Jerry Seinfeld, who has devoted stand-up routines to his love of Pop-Tarts, produced, directed and starred in a feature film, "Unfrosted," that was loosely based on the invention of the toaster pastries, focusing on the real-life race between Kellogg's and Post to see which company could release its version first.

Although West said the film created a "buzz" among workers at the factory, Pop-Tarts have rarely required such publicity to thrive as a brand. Sales have increased every year since their creation in 1964 and, in 2023, reached almost \$1 billion.

"Everybody knows Pop-Tarts, everybody loves Pop-Tarts," West said. "It is very cool to be a part of something that has been around for so long and is so iconic."



HISTORY IN THE MAKING

*Institute for
Career Development Helps
Local 135L Member
on Educational Journey*

It started with a question from his wife: “What are you most passionate about?” One word came to Frank Bystrzak’s mind: history.

A self-described history buff, Bystrzak had always been passionate about American history but never quite acted on it. After high school, Bystrzak joined his father at what is now Sumitomo Rubber in Buffalo, N.Y., and became a member of USW Local 135L. Though Bystrzak has spent 35 years of his career at the plant, his plan was always to continue with school and receive an education.

In 2014, Bystrzak decided it was time to return to college. He was aware of the USW Institute for Career Development (ICD), a contractually negotiated joint labor-management training program where union members can participate in self-directed learning opportunities. Bystrzak called Mary Ennis, his local ICD Coordinator, to see what might be possible.

“Things prevent you from pursuing an education,” recounted Bystrzak. “Time is a big one, but financially, it’s not easy to come up with a couple thousand dollars to take a few classes. It’s a lot to put aside on top of paying your bills and your mortgage. But the ICD opened the door for me with a minimum financial impact.”

Shortly after his conversation with Ennis, Bystrzak enrolled at Empire State University, a public university part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system, where he began pursuing his Bachelor of Arts in History and Education. The process was slow-go-

ing, but Bystrzak never faltered. After working 50 hours weekly and pursuing his degree part-time, Bystrzak finally reached the finish line in 2023.

“You get to the end, and it’s emotional,” remembers Bystrzak. “I just thought I’d walk across the stage at graduation, but my wife handed me a box of tissues and said, ‘Here, you’ll need these.’ I don’t think I realized the gravity of that moment until I hit that graduation stage, and the university president called my name and handed me my diploma. There was no better moment; mission complete.”

“Frank is a great example of what the ICD benefit can provide for Steelworkers,” said ICD Director Sean Hayden. “We call it the 3 F’s: freedom, flexibility, and financing. The ICD program was created to allow members to pursue whatever educational or training goals they have on their own time, and we try to do it in a way that fits their schedules without resulting in substantial out-of-pocket expenses.”

The ICD is currently part of the USW’s collective bargaining agreements with more than a dozen employers and provides educational opportunities to more than 50,000 members in 65 locations in steel, rubber and tire, glass, container and utility sectors.

Bystrzak encouraged his fellow union siblings to take advantage of the benefits members have available to them through the program.

“To anyone on the fence, I’d say to them that the key is knowing what you’re passionate about,” said Bystrzak. “You need to be passionate about it to



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Things prevent you from pursuing an education. Time is a big one, but financially, it’s not easy to come up with a couple thousand dollars to take a few classes. It’s a lot to put aside on top of paying your bills and your mortgage. But the ICD opened the door for me with a minimum financial impact.”

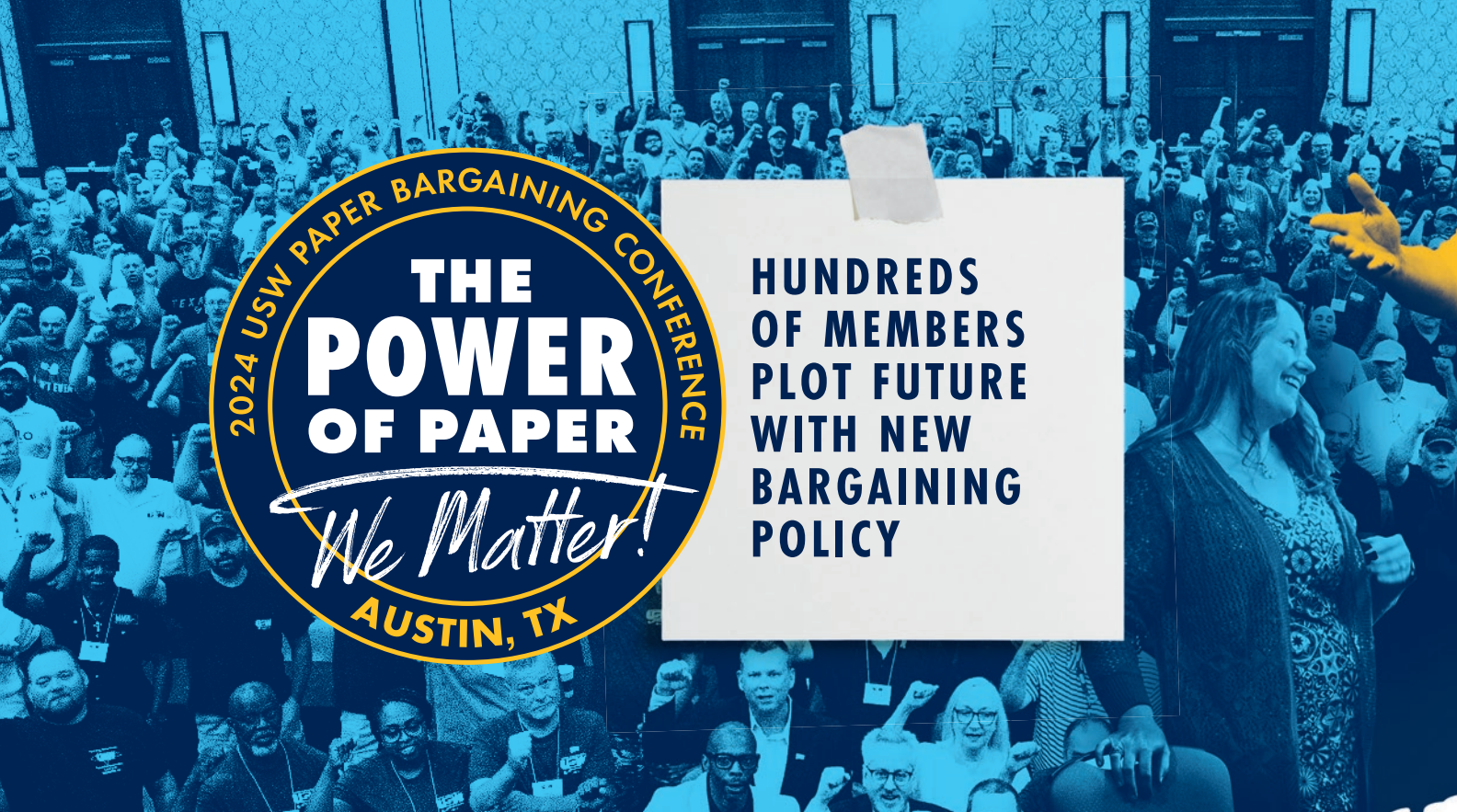
Frank Bystrzak, Local 135L

carve out the time and the extra money. Find your passion, embrace it, and do it. It’s one step at a time, but eventually, one step becomes 10 steps.”

Bystrzak credits his wife for being his source of inspiration and support during his educational journey and ICD Coordinator Ennis for helping him open his eyes to what’s possible.

For now, the journey continues. Bystrzak has his sights set on May of 2026, when he will graduate with his Master’s Degree in Emerging Technologies and Educational Design.

“At ICD, we say that learning is your benefit for life,” Hayden said. “What you learn and achieve through the ICD can never be taken away from you. It’s yours forever.”



2024 USW PAPER BARGAINING CONFERENCE
THE POWER OF PAPER
We Matter!
AUSTIN, TX

HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS PLOT FUTURE WITH NEW BARGAINING POLICY

As president of Local 1327, Jennifer Beard represents the production workers at Domtar’s paper facility in Ashdown, Ark.

This August, she got her first opportunity to join her USW siblings from across the industry at the union’s paper bargaining policy conference, where they set a new agenda for their industry and prepared to meet those goals with a schedule packed with training sessions and discussions on the future of their craft.

“We have to continue to produce quality products in a sustainable way,” Beard said. “And we must continue to be innovative by finding ways to produce products or ways to use our products that will set us up for a positive future.”

Those items were on the agenda for Beard and her colleagues at the four-day conference, which included 500 members from across North America. The union’s 10th paper bargaining conference, with the theme “The Power of Paper: We Matter,” brought together a diverse group of workers from one of the union’s largest sectors.

For Beard, the conference offered a chance to network with union lead-

ers from across the USW who, despite working in other states or for other companies, shared many of the same issues on the shop floor.

“The conference is a way for us to share commonalities and learn from one another,” she said.

Aside from kitchen table issues like wages, benefits and retirement security, the conference included presentations and panel discussions on legislative issues, the sector’s efforts on “Raising the Bar for Women’s Health and Safety,” the importance of adding domestic violence leave language to union contracts, and updates from the union’s global allies in the paper industry.

International Vice President Luis Mendoza oversees bargaining for about 80,000 members across 550 paper locals and 30 bargaining councils. Fighting for safer and healthier workplaces for each of those members is the most essential aspect of union leadership, he said.

“There’s nothing more important than making sure workers get home safely at the end of their day,” Mendoza said. “Fighting for safer workplaces is our most important mission as union leaders.”

In addition to Mendoza, the conference included remarks from International President David McCall, International Vice Presidents Emil Ramirez, Kevin Mapp and Roxanne Brown, and Directors Larry Burchfield of District 13, Donnie Blatt of District 1, Cathy Drummond of District 11 and Daniel Flippo of District 9.

Randall Child, president of 9-738 at the International Paper mill in Riegelwood, N.C., was attending his fourth paper conference as a union leader.

Child, who represents about 380 members at his mill, said it was important for all members to support the union’s national paper bargaining policy and its 10-point safety action plan for making and converting paper.

That plan updated the safety priorities for the sector, such as green-on-green training and mental health awareness, and added more focus items, including developing a program for safe work conversations based on critical hazards and underlying factors.

“All of those things are critical to making the paper industry safer,” said Child. “This has historically been a very dangerous industry to work in.”



“

There's nothing more important than making sure workers get home safely at the end of their day.

Fighting for safer workplaces is our most important mission as union leaders.”

Luis Mendoza,
International Vice President

Also critical, Child said, is making sure local leaders employ the USW's "Raising the Bar" document, an action guide with sample contract language aimed at helping workers experiencing intimate partner abuse, as well as other issues including harassment, gender identity, ergonomics, work-life balance, restrooms and change rooms, uniforms, personal protective equipment and reproductive health.

Beard agreed that focusing on those issues would improve the environment for all paper workers.

"Working in a male-dominated industry, awareness around women's health and safety is something we all could use," said Beard.

Having a safety and health program in every shop, with buy-in from both rank-and-file members and plant managers, is critical, Child said. That doesn't happen without USW leaders who advocate on behalf of their members.

"The only way you're going to be safer is to get the workers engaged and bring it down to the workers' level," he



said. "It doesn't happen overnight, but things like the conference, where you get to hear from the entire membership, are essential."

Participants also took part in multiple workshops on relevant topics including health and safety, mental health in the workplace, organizing, collective bargaining, Women of Steel, and the USW's legislative efforts.

The union's legislative work on the federal, state and local levels can be a key factor in building a strong, sustainable future for the industry, Beard said.

"We must be active and pressure our legislators to work with us," she said, "to advocate and produce reasonable solutions when making policy and regular decisions concerning the paper industry."

In one of the key pieces of business at the conference, delegates voted to adopt the 2024-2026 Paper Bargaining Policy as recommended by the elected policy committee. The new policy amends the previous document that members put in place at their 2021 conference, including updates on retirement security language, successorship language and benefit administration, and improvements in vacation at all levels of seniority.

"I hope that all of the conference attendees go back to their locals energized to take what they have learned in the plenary sessions and workshops," Mendoza said. "I hope that through networking and discussions with other local leaders, they can continue the work they do for their members fighting for the economic security, safety and benefits for all workers in the paper sector."



MINDFUL BARGAINING

*Unions Can Play Major Role
in Addressing Mental Health*

Union contracts can be a powerful tool in addressing mental health among members and their families, and USW bargaining committees must push for progress on that issue just as they would any other health care language.

That was the central message of a daylong educational program for rank-and-file USW leaders this summer at the union's education center at Linden Hall in Pennsylvania.

Health and Safety

For Mayson Fulk of Local 2699-09 in London, Ontario, efforts to improve workers' mental health are a natural part of the work that USW local leaders do on behalf of all of their members.

"We are a health and safety union," Fulk said, "and that includes our mental health and safety."

Aside from simply providing affordable and accessible mental health care, unions can fight for language on numerous topics that can address members' mental health needs, including limiting excessive overtime, providing adequate vacation time and paid sick leave, and ensuring safer workplaces free from danger.

Dangers in the workplace, Fulk noted, can include both physical hazards and psychological hazards such as bullying and harassment. The threat of both can lead to mental health challenges, but bargaining for affordable health care coverage that takes mental health needs

into account is the first step to addressing the issue, Fulk said.

"We can tell our members and our employees all we want that mental health matters, but if we aren't bargaining for access to mental health care that our members can afford, it does no good," said Fulk, who serves as unit chair as well as local president, co-chair of the District 6 Human Rights Committee, District 6 Trans Liaison and as a member of the international's 2SLGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee.

Common Problem

During the Linden Hall program, which was packed with several dozen USW members from across North America, facilitator Waleed Sami, a professor of psychology at the City College of New York, asked participants to raise their hands if they had dealt with a mental health-related issue in their workplace. Every member's hand went up.

"Many of the elements that contribute to better mental health are things that a union can improve," said Sami, who wrote his 115-page doctoral dissertation on the relationship between union membership and mental health.

"Income inequality and poverty exert a profound health and mental health cost on the citizens of the United States," Sami wrote. But the strong wages and benefits that union membership provides can help to combat those

factors, not just for workers but entire communities.

Besides good pay, unions, in general, provide workers with increased job security, greater work-life balance, more opportunity for advancement, more flexible scheduling and safer environments than non-union workplaces. All of those factors can be improved through contract bargaining, Sami said.

Voice on the Job

In addition, unions provide workers with an avenue to address concerns about their working conditions in a way that non-union workers don't have, which also can lead to improved mental health, said Tom Woodgate of Local 2-585 in Mount Pleasant, Mich.

"The contract gives our members a concrete way of managing their lives, working conditions, wages, benefits. Negotiating a contract can be stressful, but not having any contract is more stressful," Woodgate said. "Having the union gives us the strength to stand up."

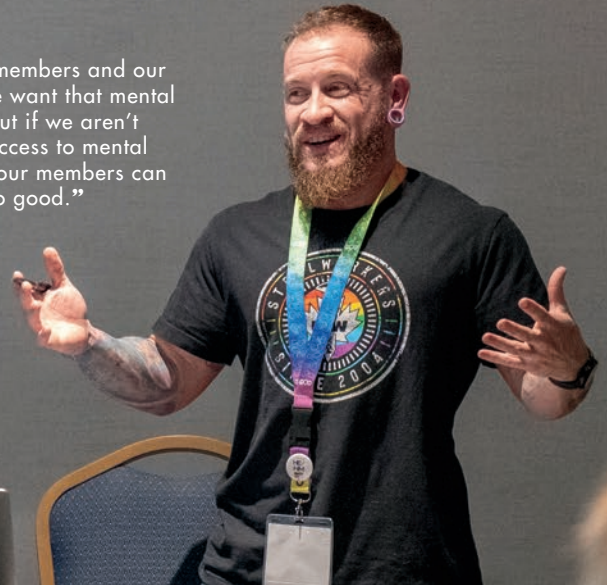
In addition to providing a voice for workers, union contracts offer a degree of certainty about the future, Woodgate said, which gives workers feelings of comfort and safety.

"There are rules, and the mechanisms of the contract give people stability, and a clear process on how things work," he said. "This gives people a sense of agency in their workplace, that even in small ways, or not-so-small



We can tell our members and our employees all we want that mental health matters, but if we aren't bargaining for access to mental health care that our members can afford, it does no good."

Mayson Fulk
Local 2699-09



ways, they can make informed decisions about their lives and livelihoods."

Paid Time Off

Specific contract provisions also can contribute to the mental well-being of workers, said Sederick Wilson, vice president of Local 9558 at Howmet Aerospace in Hampton, Va.

One of those provisions is adequate bereavement leave so that workers have time to process their grief after the loss of a close loved one, Wilson said.

"You really don't know the impact until you go through it," he said.

Another helpful provision is paid family leave that allows workers flexibility when they are sick or caring for a sick or terminally ill family member.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought into stark relief the need for such policies across all workplaces. Still, union contracts are the best way to ensure those benefits, Woodgate said.

Employee Assistance

Providing workers who are dealing with post-traumatic stress, depression or substance abuse, or who are facing violent domestic situations or other threats, with the support, time off and flexibility they need to change their lives can be among the most important provisions in a union contract, Woodgate said.

Many USW locals bargain contract language for employee-assistance programs (EAPs) that offer benefits such

as counseling, legal aid, education and training opportunities, child care, financial assistance, housing placement and other help to workers struggling with a host of issues that can negatively affect their mental health.

"These types of issues can require a lot of patience and guidance," Wilson said.

In recent years, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has recognized issues of mental health and stress as workplace hazards and begun to provide resources and tools for workers and managers to address those problems. For more information, members can visit [osha.gov](https://www.osha.gov).

Raising the Bar

The idea of addressing issues of domestic violence and other forms of abuse through the union's collective bargaining process led to the creation of the recently updated "Action Guide for Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety," a handbook to give union leaders tools, including model contract language, to better address members' needs through bargaining and union activism.

In addition to violence and abuse, the guide provides members with help in addressing other issues, including harassment, gender identity, ergonomics, work-life balance, restrooms and change rooms, uniforms, personal protective equipment, and reproductive health. Members can find the guide at usw.to/raisingthebar.

"The job of any union is to recognize the needs of workers and their families and do everything we can to help them meet those needs," International President David McCall said. "Ensuring the health, safety and security of workers and families is something we should be fighting for every day, in our workplaces and in our communities."

Sense of Belonging

Besides the benefits that their contract language or an EAP may offer, Sami said, unions provide workers with other, less tangible benefits that positively affect mental health, including feelings of friendship and community that may be less prevalent in non-union workplaces.

Holding union-led events such as picnics, holiday parties, charity drives and other social gatherings, Sami said, can give members a feeling of purpose and a sense of belonging that they may not get elsewhere.

"Being a part of our union can give you something to get involved in, a chance to help others around you and in your community, a network of folks across North America that genuinely care about your well-being," Fulk said.

All of those factors can contribute positively not only to workers' mental health, but that of their families, Woodgate said.

"Just having a union," he said, "gives you hope that things will improve."



DIGGING DEEPER

USW Members Foresee Strong Future for Mining Industry

About 100 USW members who work at mining facilities across the United States and Canada spent four days together this July setting an ambitious agenda for their industry.

The group's first gathering since 2022, with the theme of "Digging Deeper: Mining to Manufacture our Future," gave members the chance to come together with their fellow workers who face similar challenges to discuss the state of their industry. They then used that knowledge to plot a future of responsible mining through worker-driven policies and new member organizing.

Kyle Lamppa of Local 6115, which represents iron ore miners at the Cleveland-Cliffs Minorca Mine in Virginia, Minn., has worked at the facility for 13 years. He said he looks forward to convening with his fellow miners to learn about their issues.

"It can be good and bad," Lamppa said. "There are a lot of success stories from all over the industry, both in the United States and Canada, and there are challenges in all mines, regardless of what you mine and where you are."

Facing those challenges and finding solutions as a group is a key reason why events like the mining conference are so important, Lamppa said.

Working directly with communities, and in particular Indigenous peoples, to make sure mining is done in a safe and sustainable way, is an important part of the path forward for the industry, he said.

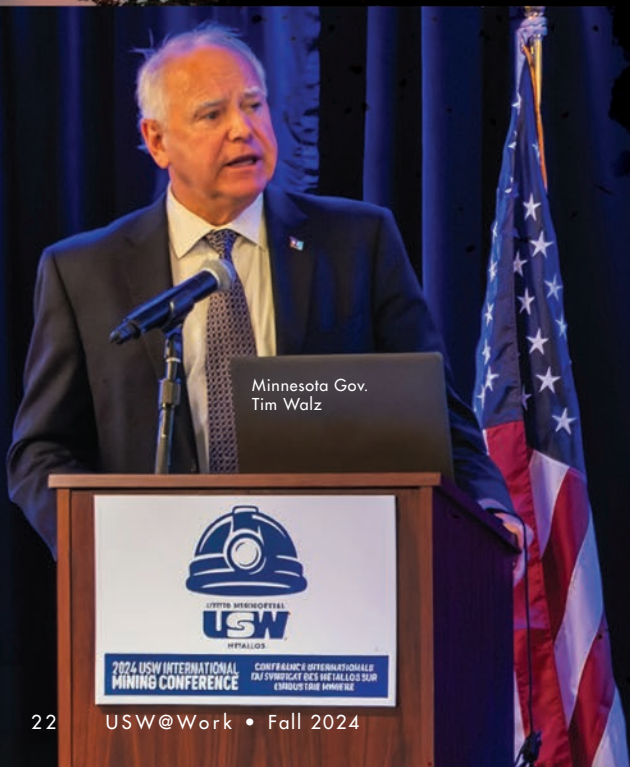
"Canada so far has taken a bit of a more proactive approach on that issue," Lamppa said, "so we are trying to gain their perspective about how they get everyone in the community on the same page."

The idea of creating and sustaining good, family-supporting jobs is the backbone of the USW's "Principles for Responsible Mining," which members reviewed and discussed at the conference.

International Vice President Emil Ramirez, who oversees bargaining in the union's mining sector, said the USW still has work to do in partnering with employers to ensure the future for new responsible and sustainable mining projects.

"It is our goal as a union to incentivize and expand the use of responsibly produced minerals and materials, and to anchor supply chains in North America," Ramirez said. "We can't continue to allow countries like China to dominate the supply of critical minerals."

In addition to workshops, panel discussions and industry-specific breakout sessions, the conference also included an address from Minnesota



Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz

“

Mining is part of our past, in Minnesota and around the country, but it also is critically important to our future. Demand for the materials that USW members mine is only going to grow.”

District 11 Director
Cathy Drummond

Gov. Tim Walz, who just days later became the running mate of Vice President Kamala Harris. Walz said he would continue to work with the USW to expand mining in the state.

The conference also included a tour of a USW-represented mine, U.S. Steel's MinnTac iron ore mine on the Mesabi Iron Range in northern Minnesota.

“Mining is part of our past, in Minnesota and around the country, but it also is critically important to our future,” said District 11 Director Cathy Drummond. “Demand for the materials that USW members mine is only going to grow.”

In a video address to the delegation, International President David McCall reinforced members' goals, which included building relationships with Indigenous communities and acknowledging their connection to the land on which many resources are mined, while also addressing ongoing gender disparities in the industry.

“We look to the future because of the critical importance that mining will continue to play in the economy,” McCall said. “Demand for mined materials will grow exponentially as countries around the world build out their infrastructure and shift to cleaner technologies.”

Charting a course for a strong future for the mining industry takes buy-in from everyone involved, Lamppa said.

“The industry is changing, and there is a lot of uncertainty right now,” he said. “We need to make sure our companies invest in mining so we can stay ahead of the curve.”

As part of the largest mining union in North America, USW members have an opportunity and an obligation to hold companies accountable while helping them grow the industry in a responsible and sustainable manner, McCall said.

Responsible mining, he said, ensures shared economic benefit with workers and communities, respect for worker and community safety, stakeholder engagement – including with Indigenous communities – and environmental protections.

“We can lead on the responsible development and expansion of this industry, but we need to work together,” McCall said. “We face ever-changing challenges but we must remember to remain focused on the future and the well-being of USW members and their families.”



District 11 Director
Cathy Drummond (left)
and USW Organizing
Director Maria Somma





International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn (left) and International Vice President Luis Mendoza

USW CELEBRATES LABOR DAY

Thousands of rank-and-file USW members joined thousands more union workers and allies around the country in celebrating Labor Day on Sept. 2 with parades, picnics, rallies and other events.

In Pittsburgh, USW International President David McCall marched in the city's annual Labor Day parade, which organizers said was the largest such event in the country. Joining McCall in marching were International Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn and International Vice Presidents Emil Ramirez and Luis Mendoza.

Later in the day, President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and a group of U.S. labor leaders joined McCall and other USW members for a celebration and rally.



International President David McCall (left) and International Vice President Emil Ramirez



BIDEN, HARRIS BOTH OPPOSE U.S. STEEL DEAL



The proposed merger of U.S. Steel with a subsidiary of Japan's Nippon Steel faced increasing opposition this fall as President Joe Biden continued to speak out against the deal, and Vice President Kamala Harris signaled her opposition to it as well.

As *USW@Work* went to press, federal regulators were reviewing the possible consequences of the \$15 billion transaction, and the White House was considering whether it could block the deal.

Those reports came in September, just days after Harris, in a Labor Day address to a crowd of Steelworkers and other union members in Pittsburgh, signaled her agreement with Biden's statement that the iconic steelmaker should remain a U.S.-owned company.

"It is vital for our nation to maintain strong American steel companies," Harris told the crowd. "U.S. Steel should remain American-owned and American-operated."

Meanwhile, the USW remained steadfast in its opposition to the proposed merger.

USW leaders have regularly held meetings with members and published flyers, websites, videos and other communications, expressing the union's numerous objections to the agreement. For more on the USW's position on the proposed transaction, visit keepsteelusowned.com.

Following Harris' statement of opposition to the deal, U.S. Steel executives arranged a public "rally" at the company's headquarters in Pittsburgh

and stepped up their public relations campaign to sway public opinion by issuing threats to move the company's headquarters and accelerate investment in non-union operations.

The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which consists of representatives of the U.S. Departments of Treasury, State, Defense, Justice, Commerce, Energy and Homeland Security, has been reviewing the deal, announced in December, for potential risks. That committee hasn't yet made a formal recommendation to Biden, but news reports indicate that the committee communicated its national security concerns to U.S. Steel.

"For us, it's about the future and our economic security, our employment security and retirement security," said International President David McCall. "It's also about national security and about critical supply chain issues."

So far, McCall said, Nippon's commitments have amounted only to "non-promises" which put the security of USW members at risk.

McCall pointed out that Wall Street shareholders and U.S. Steel executives stand to gain the most from the \$15 billion deal, with U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt in line to make \$70 million and his vice presidents raking in tens of millions of dollars each.

"That concerns us," he said. "It's not just about the stockholders. It's about our long-term security and long-term viability in our plants."

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TRADE WATCH

USW BACKS SOLAR TRADE CASE

The USW announced in August its strong support for anti-dumping and countervailing duty petitions that the American Alliance for Solar Manufacturing Trade Committee filed earlier this year against foreign manufacturers of solar energy products.

In a letter to the Department of Commerce and the U.S. International Trade Commission, International President David McCall said the case is about supporting good jobs and also about asserting the nation's energy independence.

"Our energy security must be rooted in American jobs," McCall said. "That is the only way we are truly secure. If we're serious about meeting our energy needs and addressing the threat of climate change, we cannot allow unfairly traded solar products to choke out our domestic industry."

The petitions, primarily against Chinese-owned companies operating in Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, identify a number of entities that were previously found to engage in unfair and illegal trade practices.

"This case is a perfect example of the kind of tactics that Chinese firms repeatedly use," McCall said. "They target our market, they are found guilty and then they use other countries to flood our market with their

unfairly and illegally priced products. Fair trade requires constant vigilance."

USW members produce a number of materials that go into solar products. The union also reached an agreement this summer with Convalt Energy, a firm seeking to produce solar products in the United States, where the company will respect the rights of workers to form a union.

International Vice President Roxanne Brown said the Convalt agreement is an example of the promise of the Biden-Harris administration's energy policy.

"This announcement is a tribute to the Biden-Harris administration's leadership and commitment to workers," Brown said. "Built into the bedrock of their efforts to breathe new life into our nation's solar industry is the idea that workers must have a voice in what comes next."

McCall said ensuring fair trade in the sector is one of the keys to the future of the domestic renewable energy manufacturing.

"The investments we're seeing are truly historic and will transform our energy landscape," McCall said. "But we can't allow China's cheating to undermine this progress. This case is a critical part of that progress."

USW GLASS WORKER SUPPORTS WINE BOTTLE CASE

Derrick Smith, the president of Local 50M in Seattle and a 35-year USW member, testified at a U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) hearing this summer in support of a petition seeking duties on unfairly traded wine bottles.

Smith's employer, Ardagh Glass, idled its Seattle facility and laid off more than 200 USW members as a result of unfair imports, and petitioned the ITC for relief.

In his testimony, Smith described the increasing worry that he and his co-workers felt as the plant's inventory increased amid growing pressure from imports.

"These are good-paying jobs, which I've used to support my family for the last 35 years," Smith said. "It got to the point where we were shutting down on all holidays because we had so many bottles in inventory, and those weren't selling. Our union folks used to bank on working holidays and getting that overtime."

The USW joined Ardagh and other U.S. glassmakers in petitioning for relief in December. The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) issued



Local 50M
President
Derrick Smith

USW SEEKS DUTIES ON CORROSION- RESISTANT STEEL



a preliminary determination this June finding that China unfairly subsidizes imports of bottles from a range of producers. Final determinations in that case are expected this fall.

A concurrent investigation into dumping of wine bottle imports from China, Mexico and Chile is also ongoing, and Ardagh has said that, with sufficient relief from the trade imbalance, it could reopen its Seattle facility.

Investigations into unfair trade are conducted through both the ITC and DOC. The ITC determines whether the U.S. industry has suffered harm as a result of the imports, while the DOC determines the extent of the damage and assesses duties based on the findings. Both agencies must make affirmative final decisions in order for duties to be implemented.

A positive final ruling could have a significant effect on the community, Smith said.

“My co-workers and I take great pride in our work and commitment to our craft,” he said. “For some families, including mine, working at the Seattle plant has gone back generations.”

The United Steelworkers joined with domestic steel producers in September to file trade petitions seeking anti-dumping and countervailing duties on imports of corrosion-resistant, flat-rolled steel imports from nine countries.

Corrosion-resistant steel, known as CORE, is among the most important value-added flat-rolled steel products in the industry.

“CORE imports from these nine countries almost doubled from 690,000 tons in the first half of 2023 to 1.35 million tons in the first half of 2024,” said International President David McCall. “These imports are destroying good union jobs in the United States and causing harm to U.S. companies.

“In particular, imports from Vietnam almost quadrupled from 122,000 to 468,000 tons,” McCall said. “Vietnam is ramping up its steel industry and exports at the expense of U.S. workers, and we can’t repeat the mistakes with Vietnam that we’ve made with China in the past.”

In addition to Vietnam, the nations included in the petitions are Australia, Brazil, Mexico,

the Netherlands, South Africa, Taiwan, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

Numerous USW employers manufacture CORE products, including Cleveland-Cliffs, U.S. Steel, NLMK, Wheeling-Nippon, Apollo Metals, Gregory Industries, Steelscape California and Thomas Steel Strip.

Corrosion-resistant steel is widely used in vehicles, appliances and construction, as well as in other industries. The U.S. market consumes an estimated 22 million tons of CORE products annually.

“In a strong economy with strong steel demand, the U.S. industry is only operating at 77 percent capacity utilization this year and has seen sharply reduced profits compared to 2022 and 2023,” McCall said. “Once again, the U.S. has become the dumping ground for excess steel capacity, and the USW will stand up against any unfair trade that hurts American workers.”



TRADE WATCH

BIDEN ISSUES ORDERS ON 'MELTED AND POURED'

The USW commended President Joe Biden's proclamation in June strengthening trade rules for steel and aluminum to qualify for trade benefits under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

The proclamation requires that steel be "melted and poured" and aluminum be "smelted and cast" in North America to be considered as "originating" in the USMCA region for

trade purposes. "President Biden's actions today are yet another example of his support for domestic steel and aluminum workers," International President David McCall said. "The president is helping to close loopholes in the USMCA that allowed for foreign steel and aluminum to enter the United States through Mexico without significant value being created in that country."

ITC: SHOPPING BAG IMPORTS HARM WORKERS

The United States International Trade Commission (ITC) determined this summer that dumping of imported bags from nine countries is causing material injury to the U.S. shopping bag industry.

In addition, the ITC determined that China's unfair subsidies of paper bag manufacturers are causing harm to the industry.

As a result of the investigations, the U.S. Department of Commerce issued anti-dumping duty orders on products imported

from Cambodia, China, Colombia, India, Malaysia, Portugal, Taiwan and Vietnam. The department also issued countervailing duty orders on paper bag imports from China and India.

The investigations originated with a petition from the USW in partnership with Novolex and the Coalition for Fair Trade in Shopping Bags. About 375 USW members produce paper shopping bags at Novolex facilities in Florence, Walton, and Erlanger, Ky.

CONGRESS CLOSES AIRPORT LOOPHOLE

In a victory for U.S. manufacturing workers, Congress voted to close a loophole in the law that allowed for the purchase of Chinese-manufactured products for use in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airport transit projects.

The vote to close the loophole came as part of the 2024 FAA Reauthorization Act.

U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell, a California Democrat, among the chief sponsors of the legislation to close the loophole, said the situation presented a risk to U.S. national security.

The new law, he said, "will ensure that Chinese companies do not undercut American competitors."

Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing, said the move was a step toward strengthening the U.S. market and creating a level playing field.

"Workers and manufacturers have had to com-

pete for taxpayer-funded contracts against companies that have benefited from the predatory practices deployed by China's government," Paul said.



Check out the latest episode of the USW's *Solidarity Works* podcast about the union's fight for fair trade. Visit usw.to/podcast.



usw.to/podcast



USW MEMBER TESTIFIES AT ITC

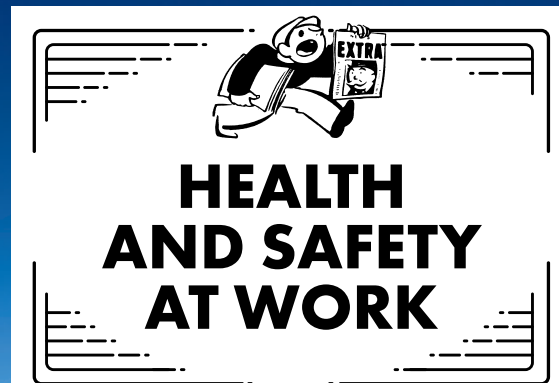
Local 0639 President Jeremy Brooks and USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman testified in September before the U.S. International Trade Commission in support of continued duties on imports of silicomanganese from China and Ukraine.

Brooks, who works at Eramet in Marietta, Ohio, represents members at one of the last two remaining facilities in the United States that make silicomanganese, a product used as a deoxidizer and an alloying element in steel manufacturing.

A decision on the sunset review is expected later this year.

UNITED STATES
INTERNATIONAL TRADE
COMMISSION

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



In the United States, numerous federal, state and local laws are designed to protect the health and safety of workers on the job. USW members and other workers with union contracts have additional rights and protections that they bargain into their contract agreements.

Workers Have the Right to:

- Speak up about on-the-job hazards without fear of retaliation.
- Receive necessary personal protective equipment, such as gloves, respirators, protective clothing, or personal fall arrest systems (harnesses and lifelines) and more, at no cost to workers.
- Refuse to work in unsafe/unhealthy situations in which they would be exposed to hazards that could cause injury, illness and/or a fatality. Report injuries or illnesses and review records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Request an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) inspection or whistleblower investigation, and speak to the inspector.
- Receive workplace safety and health training in a language that they understand.
- Work with machines and equipment that are safer. Be protected from toxic and hazardous substances by applying the hierarchy of controls.

In USW Workplaces

According to the USW constitution, USW locals are required to establish safety and health committees. Members should maintain a committee even if management does not agree to establish one.

Union members, not management, should choose the union's health and safety committee members.

USW locals should push employers to create union-management safety and health committees with equal numbers of representatives from the local union and the employer. Management representatives should have the authority to make decisions so that committee members can address issues efficiently.

Union representatives should caucus among themselves as often or more often than they meet with management. Separate meetings are important to plan, strategize and set priorities.

Programs that focus on behavior don't make our workplaces safer. USW members are the solution, not the problem. The solution is to find, eliminate and/or control hazards by following the hierarchy of controls.

Unsafe Conditions

If you believe working conditions are unsafe or unhealthy, you may file a confidential complaint with the assistance of your local union with OSHA or MSHA and ask for an inspection. USW members should speak with their local union leadership and safety committee, and if possible, inform their employer about their concerns.

Member Resources

The USW Health, Safety and Environment Department offers a wide range of assistance on health and safety issues. Members can reach the department at 412-562-2581 or safety@usw.org.

The Tony Mazzocchi Center provides an array of educational and training opportunities to members. For more information, visit uswtmc.org.

The Emergency Response Team (ERT) offers assistance following tragic incidents. The 24-hour hotline can be reached at 866-526-3480.

NEWS BRIEFS

\$20 MILLION IN BACK PAY FOR VIRGIN ISLANDS WORKERS

USW members who serve as government support staff in the U.S. Virgin Islands secured a major victory this summer when the union and government agreed to a \$20.4 million arbitration settlement following a 12-year fight for back pay.

Under the USW contract with the territorial government, about 500 USW members were owed pay increases covering 2009

to 2013, which they never received. The USW fought back, filing grievances and a lawsuit, and holding public events calling on the government to fairly compensate the members of Locals 8249 and 8677 on St. Thomas and Local 8248 on St. Croix.

“These hard-working and dedicated union members are the backbone of public services on the islands,” said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, whose territory includes the

U.S. Virgin Islands and seven Southern U.S. states. “It’s a shame that it took 12 years, but they kept fighting and never gave up.”

The fight faced a series of delays, including changes in governmental leadership, a series of devastating hurricanes, and the COVID-19 pandemic. USW leaders said they would make sure that the territorial legislature includes the back pay funds in its fiscal 2025 budget.

EOS ENERGY WORKERS VOTE TO JOIN USW

About 160 workers at Eos Energy Enterprises in Pittsburgh voted in September to join the USW, marking a significant step in their pursuit of stronger job security, fair wages, and improved working conditions.

Eos workers manufacture batteries used to store electricity from renewable sources like solar and wind energy. The decision to unionize reflects the workers’ desire for a voice in shaping the future of their jobs in the expanding

clean energy sector.

“Today’s victory at Eos is a pivotal moment for these workers who are eager to be part of this new and growing part of our economy,” said District 10 Director Bernie Hall.

“We’re proud to be contributing to our nation’s energy future, but for that future to succeed, we need to earn fair wages and be treated with respect,” said Dante Williams, an assembly operator at Eos.

USW MEMBERS HELP KEEP DEMOCRACY UNION STRONG

For Tony DeGrado and the other members of Local 17U, servicing millions of square feet of convention space across Chicago isn’t just a matter of professional pride. This summer, as the Democratic National Convention (DNC) swept the city, it was an important opportunity to contribute to democracy.

“We’re proud to be doing our part to help elect pro-worker candidates,” said DeGrado, Local 17U president.

As part of their work providing convention services for the United Center, McCormick Place, Rosemont Center and other convention locations,

the group installed signs, banners and other branding, hung pipe and drape and even set up the tents used as security checkpoints for the DNC.

DeGrado said that while the DNC shined a big spotlight on their work, it wasn’t the biggest job the group would tackle this summer in terms of signage.

As soon as the balloons dropped, they started their next project: preparing for the International Machine Tool Show, the largest manufacturing technology trade show in North America.

“Our members are incredibly skilled,” DeGrado, “and we’re ready to get to work putting on a great event.”





500 PUERTO RICO ENERGY WORKERS VOTE TO JOIN USW

Nearly 500 workers at Genera PR voted this summer to join the USW.

The newly unionized workers serve as technicians, electricians, field operators, instrumentalists, maintenance workers, and more in 17 locations across Puerto Rico. Genera PR is an independently managed subsidiary of the New York-based energy company New Fortress, Inc., which generates electricity for the entire island.

“This is a historic moment for not only the USW but also our new members at Genera PR,” said District 4 Director David Wasiura. “This victory has significant implications for electricity generation in Puerto Rico as well as our ability to hold companies that seek to enrich themselves by privatizing public services to account.”

Puerto Rico began privatizing the island’s power generation in 2017 after the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA) declared bankruptcy. Genera PR officially took over for the Auto-

ridad de Energía Eléctrica (AEE) on July 1, 2023. Genera refused to recognize any of the unions that represented workers at AEE.

“The transition to the private sector left us without the protection of a collective bargaining agreement,” said Stephany Resto Sierra, an electrician at the Genera PR San Juan plant. “Winning our union was a priority because uncertainty reigned here previously. Now, through our union, we’ll be able to improve our working conditions and have a say in the decisions that affect us. We now call on Genera PR to sit down with us and swiftly negotiate a fair first contract.”

“Working in the private sector brings new challenges, and the surest way for us to improve our working conditions and defend our labor rights was through securing union representation,” said Oscar Roque, a worker at Genera PR’s Palo Seco plant. “We trust that future collective bargaining will be done in good faith and for the benefit of all parties.”

MEMBERS AT COOPER TIRE RATIFY NEW AGREEMENT

Members of Local 752L voted overwhelmingly this summer to ratify a new contract at Cooper Tire and Rubber Co. in Texarkana, Ark.

The new agree-

ment covers about 1,500 workers and includes wage increases, lump-sum payments and benefit enhancements.

Local 752L members ratified the

union’s previous agreement with Cooper in 2019 and extended that agreement for one year in 2023.

Goodyear purchased Findlay, Ohio-based Cooper in 2021.

MUSEUM WORKERS AT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH VOTE TO JOIN USW

Workers at The Frick Pittsburgh Museums and Gardens voted overwhelmingly this August to join the USW.

The newly formed unit consists of approximately 100 employees, including café staff, maintenance and housekeeping teams, groundskeepers, gift store and visitor center associates, public safety personnel, gallery attendants, museum experience associates, docents, educators, curators, and others vital to the museum’s operations.

The workers are eager to negotiate a contract that addresses key issues such as job security, fair wages, health insurance, understaffing, and respect in the workplace.

“We are the backbone of this institution, and we’re excited to finally have a voice in shaping our work environment, our pay, and our benefits,” said John Payne, a groundskeeper at The Frick.

The Frick Museums are set on the grounds of historic

buildings once occupied by steel magnate Henry Clay Frick, who was infamous for his anti-union stance, notably during the Battle of Homestead, where many striking steelworkers lost their lives.

“This is a historic and symbolic victory for the labor movement, as we unionize in the very house of Henry Clay Frick, a notorious opponent of unions,” Payne said. “In a way, this is retribution for the workers who died at Homestead.”

The USW also represents more than 500 museum employees across Pittsburgh’s four Carnegie Museums, which, as of last year, constituted the largest museum union in the United States.

“It’s an honor to welcome the dedicated staff of The Frick Museums to our union,” said Bernie Hall, District 10 Director. “These workers are essential to providing a welcoming and enriching environment at this important cultural and historical institution.”

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



VOTE NOV. 5

Election Day 2024 is coming up on Tues. Nov. 5, and USW members are out in force making sure their fellow workers make their voices heard at the polls.

SEE ELECTION INFO PAGE 8

