



CONNECTION

WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER



YOUR UNION YOUR VOICE

#USWVOICES

Dave McCall, USW International President

2024 Your Union, Your Voice Membership Survey

TAKE THE SURVEY



Your Union, Your Voice: We want to hear from you!

Take the survey at [USW Voices](https://www.uswvoices.org) or go to www.uswvoices.org

You can fill out the survey online at the above web address.

Or, you can access printable surveys in English and Spanish at the same web address.

Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts about what matters most to you.

Please return all completed surveys to:

USW Voices
60 Blvd of the Allies
7th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Your Union, Your Voice



Based on the cover of this newsletter, you've likely concluded that our union is embarking upon another round of the *Your Union, Your Voice* campaign.

Our union first launched *Your Union, Your Voice* in 2020 to ensure USW members' and retirees' opinions were reflected at every level of our union's work.

We circulated a union-wide membership survey and held dozens of town hall meetings, providing valuable opportunities for our district directors, other elected union leaders and staff to hear what was on our members' and retirees' minds.

Because this feedback proved so vital in shaping our union's work, we repeated this effort in 2022 (see the results on page 9 of this newsletter), and it continues to inform our efforts as we head into 2024.

Beginning in April, USW districts will again hold town hall meetings in locations across the United States. All USW members, retirees, and families are welcome to attend and participate in these important discussions.

Additionally, our union has launched another membership survey to gauge our members' and retirees' views on some of the biggest issues facing working and retired Americans today.

You can access the survey at www.uswvoices.org. Town hall meetings will be posted on this website, publicized through our social media channels, and shared by USW districts.

Our common values, such as fair pay, safe workplaces, a secure retirement, and vibrant communities, connect us as union members.

Please take the time to attend a town hall meeting, participate in this survey, and share this information widely throughout your SOAR chapters and fellow USW retirees and families.

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

Reminder Notice for SOAR Chapters



Please contact the SOAR Office immediately if your chapter hasn't returned its required Annual Financial Report for 2023.

SOAR Office toll-free number:
866-208-4420



One of SOAR’s Three-Fold Purposes



SOAR has identified its purpose as threefold. Per the SOAR constitution, one of the three reasons for our existence is "to engage in political and legislative action." The USW has given us a number of ways to do this. One of the ways SOAR members can be involved is by participating in an online membership survey currently accessible on the **USWvoices.org** website. Information on how to access this survey is available on the cover page of this newsletter. This survey asks you to identify priorities regarding important issues facing working and retired Americans today.

As you know, the USW endorses candidates, not parties. Therefore, candidates must commit to supporting the core issues deemed important by our members. In April, the USW will begin holding town hall meetings to hear from our members so they can weigh in on the matters we consider most important to us. I encourage SOAR members to participate in these meetings when scheduled in your area.

In May, the SOAR Executive Board will meet in Washington, D.C., and then participate in the **USW Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Conference**.

One of the tools SOAR representatives will be armed with when meeting with our elected representatives to discuss the issues our union has identified as a priority is their voting record compiled by the **Alliance for Retired Americans**, whose mission is "to protect and expand retirement security for all Americans." The Alliance publishes all U.S. senators’ and representatives’ annual and lifetime voting records on key retirement security issues. Learn more about the **2023 Congressional Voting Record** on page 11 of this newsletter.

SOAR Chapters will soon be asked to get involved in helping to elect candidates whose values best align with ours as a union and who support our position on issues determined to be important by our members. SOAR members can volunteer by attending rallies, making phone calls, helping to write postcards to our members, and writing letters to the editor to ensure our members understand who stands with us on our issues and who does not.

The link for signing up to volunteer to write postcards is already active on the USWvoices.org website. <https://uswvoices.org/take-action/write-postcards>

Whether taking the survey, participating in a town hall meeting, or writing postcards, SOAR members have plenty of opportunities to engage in political and legislative action.

Bill Pienta, SOAR President



When Is the Next Election for SOAR Chapter Officers?

SOAR Chapter - Standard Bylaws Article 6 Section 2 reads as follows:

Nomination of officers shall be held at a membership meeting during the month of October 1992, and nomination and election of officers will be held in November 1992 and every four years thereafter. Each term of office shall be for a period of four (4) years commencing with the month of November 1992. No member shall hold more than one (1) office in a Chapter; however, Chapter officers shall be eligible to serve on the SOAR Executive Board or as a District SOAR Coordinator.

Answer: Based on the four-year schedule outlined above, the nomination of SOAR chapter officers will occur this October and again in November. Then, also in November, the election of chapter officers will be held.

Now Available!

There Is Still Time Before Our Next Round of Soar Chapter Dues Refunds

Please be advised that SOAR dues refunds can now be electronically deposited into your SOAR chapter's bank account rather than by receiving a paper check.

To set up your chapter to receive electronic deposits, please mail the following items to the SOAR office:

- 1) A voided check from your SOAR chapter's checking account.
- 2) The most recent copy of a bank statement to confirm the complete title/name of the chapter's bank account and the current mailing address listed on the account.
- 3) A note requesting that you want your chapter to be set up for automatic deposit of SOAR dues refunds.

Send the above items to:

SOAR
Attn. Julie Stein, SOAR Director
60 Blvd of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Or, you can scan the items to jstein@usw.org

As a reminder, SOAR dues refunds are sent three times per year, in April, August and November. Once on direct deposit, a confirmation receipt for the sum transferred to the SOAR chapter's bank account will be mailed to the officer designated to receive financial mailings. Also included in the mailing will be a "SOAR Chapter Refund Summary" report listing the members who paid SOAR dues during the cycle.

Feel free to contact the SOAR office if you have questions. Toll-free: 866-208-4420

**SOAR Chapter
Connection**

A bi-monthly publication
of SOAR

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60 Blvd of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222



Articles and Photos Requested

The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be June 11, 2024 and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director Julie Stein at jstein@usw.org



The deadline to submit material for the next issue of the SOAR Connection newsletter is May 10, 2024. email your article to soar3@icloud.com.

After a quick lunch, I went out to get the mail. Then, I looked for Elaine in the bedroom, anxiously looking forward to our nap. She wasn't there, so I looked in her quilt room and saw her lying on a couch. I asked if she was going to take a nap. All she said was, "Purdue." I hate this March Madness stuff. ~ *Charlie*

The McNeil Report

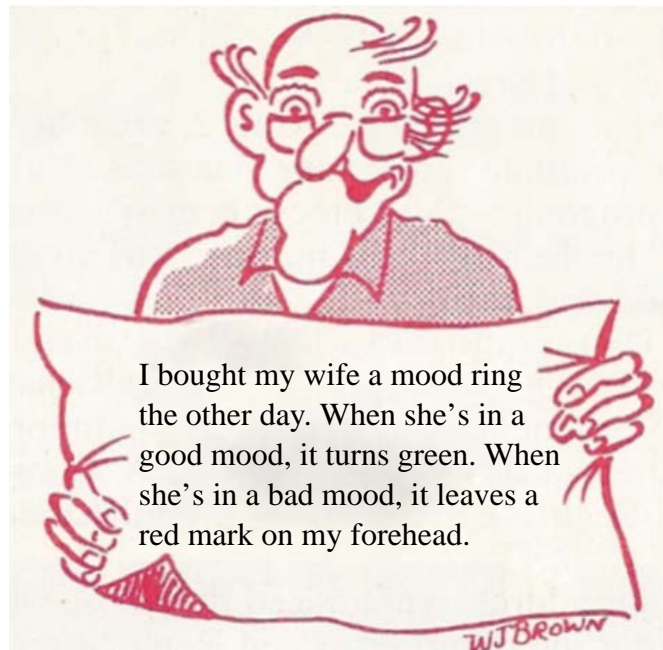


We do not experience happiness because of what we get. We experience happiness because of how we live each moment. It is a skill, an ability we must master, just like learning how to be a good painter or an excellent athlete. Having a tennis racket and ball does not make us a tennis player. Knowing how to play does. Having certain experiences does not make me happy - Knowing how to live them fully and be mindful of each moment will make me happy.

If you can't be happy now with what you have and who you are, you will not be happy when you get what you think you want. If you don't know how to enjoy \$500 fully, you won't enjoy \$5,000 or \$5,000,000. If you can't fully enjoy taking a walk around the block with your mate, you won't enjoy going to Hawaii or Paris. I'm not saying that having more money or recreation won't make your life easier—it will. But it will not make you happy because it can't. Only you can do that by learning to live with more real moments.

Compliments of the late Dan McNeil

Old Charlie Sez:



I bought my wife a mood ring the other day. When she's in a good mood, it turns green. When she's in a bad mood, it leaves a red mark on my forehead.

Honoring Frances Perkins, the “Woman Behind the Social Security Act in 1935”



Frances Perkins is standing directly behind FDR while he is signing the Social Security Act into Law 1935

Since March is Women’s History Month, we should all honor Frances Perkins, the woman behind the Social Security Act in 1935. In the iconic photo of Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the Social Security Act of 1935, the dignitaries crowded around the president stare intently at the legislation on his desk. Only one looks directly into the camera. She is the woman without whom we likely would not have Social Security today: Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins – alone in a sea of men, wearing a slim black dress with white buttons and a fashionable tricorner hat.

When President-elect Roosevelt asked Frances Perkins to serve in his cabinet as Secretary of Labor, she outlined for him a set of policy priorities she would pursue: a 40-hour work week; a minimum wage; unemployment compensation; worker’s compensation; abolition of child labor; direct federal aid to the states for unemployment relief; Social Security; a revitalized federal employment service; and universal health insurance.

She made it clear to Roosevelt that his agreement with these priorities was a condition of her joining his cabinet. Roosevelt said he endorsed them all, and Frances Perkins became the first woman in the nation to serve in a Presidential cabinet. Without Frances Perkins we would not have Social Security today.

<https://www.ssa.gov/history/fperkins.html>

Article submitted by Dennis Barker, SOAR Chapter 7-34-2 President

The SOAR Office Now Has T-shirts and Ball Caps Available for Purchase!

Now Available!

\$15



\$15 each + the cost of shipping. Contact the SOAR Office.

866-208-4420

Now Available!



SOAR ball caps for purchase!
\$20 each + the cost of shipping.
Contact the SOAR Office.
866-208-4420

\$20

DID YOU KNOW THAT A WOMAN CREATED:

- Social Security
- Minimum wage
- Unemployment insurance
- The 40-hour work week
- Child labor laws
- Welfare
- Protections of labor rights

...all while the first ever female member of a U.S. cabinet?

THAT WOMAN WAS FRANCES PERKINS

MARCH - WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2024

Francesperkinscenter.org

It's Time to Right the Ship



On March 12, the United Steelworkers (USW) and a coalition of labor organizations requested that the United States Trade Representative (USTR) investigate China's maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors. The 4,000-page Section 301 petition filed by these groups identifies a broad range of unreasonable and discriminatory acts, policies, and practices of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to dominate these sectors.

This PRC strategy to dominate global transportation and logistics networks threatens both the U.S. economy and our national security.

In 1975, the U.S. was a leader in global shipbuilding employing more than 180,000 workers and securing more than 70 commercial ship orders annually. Over the past several decades the

U.S. has lost more than 70,000 shipyard jobs. China built more than 1,000 ships in 2023 while the U.S. produced fewer than 10.

The lack of U.S. shipbuilding is not just an economic challenge, it's also a threat to national security. Communist China's Navy has already surpassed that of the U.S. and our lack of domestic shipbuilding capacity is making us more reliant on China – the last three dry docks for ship repair purchased by the U.S. Navy were supplied by China.

“The United Steelworkers and its allies in this trade case have identified a major threat to U.S. economic and national security,” said Alliance for American Manufacturing President Scott Paul. “If we fail to rebuild America's shipbuilding capacity, we give China an overwhelming strategic advantage with disastrous repercussions.

“Strong measures in response to this petition are an essential first step to rebuilding America's maritime independence, and it's an urgent one. The Biden administration must act now to level the playing field for our shipbuilders.”

A revitalized domestic industry will not only lead to the return of shipbuilding jobs but will also benefit steelworkers and American steel companies.

The USTR will have reviewed the petition by May and will decide whether to pursue a full investigation.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing believes it is time to right the ship.

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

Alliance Members Join Biden Campaign to Focus on Protecting Social Security and Medicare; Trump Talks About Slashing Them

by Robert Roach, Jr.



Donald Trump matter of factly told us that cuts to Social Security and Medicare will happen if he is re-elected president. In so doing, he told us exactly why older Americans should vote for President Biden.

During an interview on *CNBC's* Squawkbox program, Trump told host Joe Kernen that there “is a lot you can do to cut” Social Security and Medicare. The Biden campaign released a rapid response ad reiterating Biden’s promise to stop anyone who tries to put Social Security or Medicare on the chopping block or raise the retirement age. Alliance members in Nevada, Arizona and Michigan were interviewed by the media and said how disastrous that would be for older Americans.

It is no surprise that Trump is joining the growing chorus of Republican extremists who are threatening our retirement security. Back in 2020 Trump declared that cutting “entitlements” would be a second term issue, and every year he served as President, he proposed cuts to Medicare and Social Security. He has said Social Security is a “Ponzi scheme” and called for privatizing it.

On the other hand, President Biden has always stood up for older Americans and protected Social Security and Medicare from attacks. He even has a plan to strengthen them by making the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share. The contrast between Biden and Trump on protecting our hard earned Social Security and Medicare benefits is plain to see. We need to make sure that all retirees vote in their best interest this year.

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary – Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

Your Union, Your Voice 2022 Survey Results - Your Top Priorities

<p>#1</p> <p>Retirement Security</p>	<p>#2</p> <p>Affordable Health Care and Prescription Drugs</p>	<p>#3</p> <p>Workers Rights</p>
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Alliance for Retired Americans Enthusiastically Endorses Joe Biden for Reelection

Washington, DC -- Citing President Biden's record of commitment to retirement security for every American, the Alliance for Retired Americans, a national grassroots advocacy organization, today endorsed Joe Biden for reelection as President and Kamala Harris as Vice President.

The Alliance has 4.4 million members nationwide including more than 900,000 who live in the battleground states of Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

"Older Americans can trust Joe Biden because he always fights for us. With another term, he will do even more to strengthen and expand Social Security and Medicare, lower drug prices and protect the pension benefits we have earned," said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance.

"Everything is at stake for seniors in this election," said Roach. "Our members know how to get things done and will be talking with their friends and family about the Biden-Harris record, making calls, knocking on doors and ensuring people know when and where to vote. They are going to work enthusiastically every day to help keep the President and Vice President in the White House."

"Thanks to President Biden, all Medicare beneficiaries are paying no more than \$35 per month for insulin; all recommended vaccines are free; and Medicare Part D beneficiaries will pay no more than \$3,200 out of pocket annually for drugs. President Biden also forced wealthy pharmaceutical corporations to negotiate lower drug prices with Medicare for the first time in history, which will save seniors and taxpayers billions of dollars over the next several years," Roach continued.

In addition, retirees with pensions are going to receive the benefits they earned. The Butch Lewis Act, signed into law by Biden as part of the American Rescue Plan in 2021, is keeping 2 to 3 million workers' pension plans solvent and able to pay full benefits through at least 2051.

"President Biden insisted that Congress solve the multi-employer pension crisis," said Roach. "Thanks to him millions of workers and retirees will have the retirement security they counted on."

The Alliance also commended President Biden's and Vice President Harris' unwavering opposition to cuts to Social Security and Medicare, support for caregivers, and work to eliminate junk fees that chip away at Americans' savings and investments.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national grassroots organization with 4.4 million members nationwide that advocates for retirement security for all Americans. www.retiredamericans.org

New Retiree Voting Record Released

On March 11, the **Alliance for Retired Americans** released its **2023 Congressional Voting Record**, which scored each U.S. Senator and Representative on critical retirement security issues.

"Almost every member of Congress claims to care about seniors," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Our annual voting record shows which House and Senate members actually back up their words with actions and vote in older Americans' best interests."

Ten Senate and House floor votes are considered in the report. They include votes on bills and amendments to establish a fiscal commission — leading to potentially deep cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other essential government programs; avoid default on the national debt; and undermine numerous health care protections for older Americans in the Affordable Care Act.

In addition, Congress cast key votes on cutting funding for senior programs and expanding voting access for millions of Americans.

"What happens in Washington, DC has real everyday consequences for retirees and their families nationally. Votes in Congress can either strengthen Americans' retirement security or make it more difficult to achieve," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

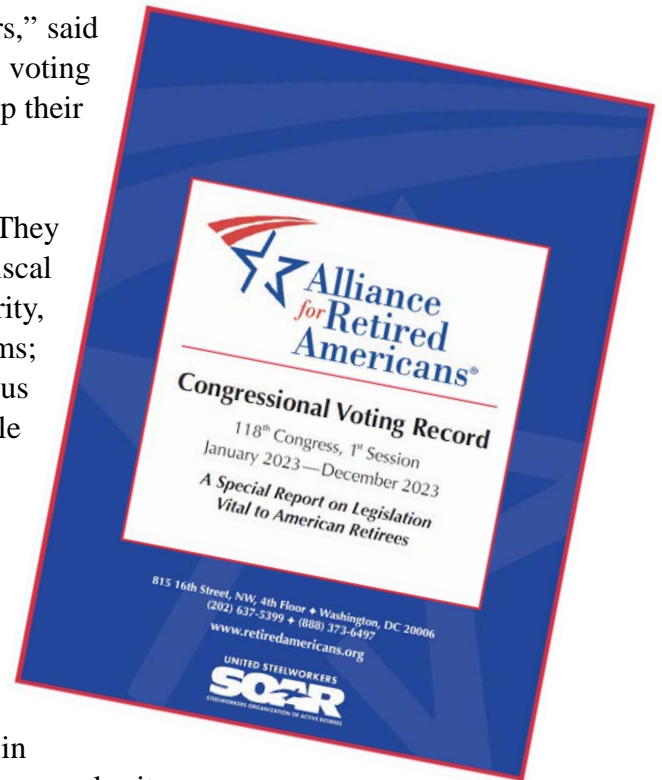
Forty-four members of the U.S. Senate and 210 members of the U.S. House of Representatives earned perfect 100 percent scores. Twenty-three senators earned scores of 0%, including Rick Scott (FL), who has been at the forefront of GOP plans to cut Social Security and Medicare, and Ted Cruz (TX). 174 House members earned a score of 0%.

Among the senators earning a score of 90% or higher were **Tammy Baldwin** (WI), **Sherrod Brown** (OH); **Bob Casey, Jr.** (PA), **Jacky Rosen** (NV), and **Jon Tester** (MT).

The senior vote is always crucial in any election, "Fiesta added. "The Alliance voting record is a valuable tool for older voters as they consider who to support in November's elections.

Both the national 2023 Congressional Voting Record and a version for each state delegation is available on the Alliance's website.

Download the national report or a state report by going to <https://retiredamericans.org/voting-record/>





Here are 3 tips to protect yourself from Medicare fraud and scams:

1. If you get a call, text or email asking for your Medicare Number, don't respond. Don't give your Medicare card or Medicare Number to anyone except your doctor or people you know should have it.
2. Check your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) or claims statements carefully. If you see a charge for a service you didn't get or a product you didn't order, it may be fraud. If you suspect fraud, report it at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).
3. Guard your Medicare card like it's a credit card.

Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov), the official source for Medicare information, to learn more about preventing Medicare fraud and medical identity theft.

Sincerely,

The Medicare Team

Putting Money in Workers' Pockets

By Dave McCall
 USW International President



Joe Biden at a USW picnic in 2022

Libbi Urban’s co-workers broke into applause at the union hall last year when they learned that their new contract with Cleveland-Cliffs not only increased wages by a whopping 20 percent but provided greater work-life balance and even enabled them to retire earlier than planned.

They’d spent years fighting for some of the improvements. But this time, they wielded extra bargaining power because of the hot economy that President Joe Biden engineered with bold investments and a deep commitment to working people.

Workers in aluminum, auto, steel, tire, mining, paper, heavy equipment, service, health care and package delivery, among other industries, all racked up historic contract gains as the economy exploded under the current administration.

Biden inherited a nation battered by COVID-19. But under his steady leadership, America turned the tide.

His Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) unleashed \$1.2 trillion to upgrade transportation, communications and energy networks with union labor and union-made materials and parts. His CHIPS and Science Act catalyzed billions more to boost production of semiconductors and rebuild crucial supply chains.

“We came out of COVID. The demand for steel was picking up,” said Urban, a longtime vice president with USW Local 9231 who is now retired and a member of SOAR Chapter 7-7 in New Carlisle, Ind., recalling the backdrop for negotiations with Cleveland-Cliffs.



Libbi Urban

“People were starting to buy and build. Everything hit just right for us,” continued Urban, one of 12,000 USW members in six states to benefit from the new contract.

The same scenario is playing out in one industry after another.

Wages nationwide are now growing at a faster rate than they did in the years before the pandemic. They're outpacing inflation, which under Biden's careful handling has dropped for months in a row without triggering the recession doubters feared.

The nation's unemployment rate soared to 14.7 percent during the early days of the pandemic, the highest level since the Great Depression. But it's plummeted since Biden took the helm, registering just 3.7 percent—a historic low—last month.

“Figures don't lie. They're telling a very good story,” observed Urban, noting the low unemployment helps to drive workers' bargaining power.

“You can set your price,” she explained.

Even better, employers keep adding to the 14 million jobs already created during the past three years—about 800,000 of them in manufacturing—as Bidenomics continues to spur growth and grow worker power.

Cory Small and his 315 co-workers at Green Bay Packaging in Morrilton, Ark., took note of the strong contracts negotiated by workers at other employers in recent years.

And they went into bargaining this year realizing that this was their moment, too, thanks to a growing economy that Small, president of USW Local 13-01965, likened to a “rocket out of a cannon.”

“This was not going to be just another round of negotiations,” recounted Small, stressing that workers sacrificed to continue producing corrugated container board—an essential packaging product—during COVID-19. “We were demanding much more than we had expected to get in the past. We went in with high expectations.”



Cory Small

In the end, workers exceeded those expectations, achieving a wage package 7 percent higher than in previous labor agreements. They also preserved affordable health care and enhanced retirement security, among other improvements.

“It was a major win,” said Small, a third-generation union member, noting the gains enable workers to better support their communities.

Empowering workers to bargain stronger contracts is just one example of how Biden has workers' backs.

He shored up dozens of struggling multiemployer pension plans, saving the retirements of 1.3 million Americans. He thwarted Republicans' plans to cut Social Security. He also capped seniors' insulin expenses at \$35 a month and took other steps to bring down prescription drug costs.

Bill Alexander, president SOAR Chapter 31-9 in Southeast Chicago, said one of his family members previously spent \$300 a month on insulin.

“Now, he pays \$35,” Alexander said, noting the lower costs helped his relative afford a new car. “He can buy other things with that money, things he can enjoy, other than spending it just to live.”

Biden also stood up to oil company gouging, helping Americans keep even more money in their pockets.

Gas prices, falling for months, cost an average of 30 cents a gallon less than they did at this time last year. Alexander now fills up for about \$2.79 a gallon in nearby Indiana. “He’s doing everything he can to bring prices down,” Alexander said, citing Biden’s bold use of strategic oil reserves to stabilize the market.



Bill Alexander

Urban planned to work another couple of years. But she retired in April because of the big pension boost provided by her new union contract and Biden’s economy.

“He’s just an average Joe,” she said of Biden.

“He talks about how the working class built the country. If it weren’t for unions and people of labor doing what we’ve done all these years, the country wouldn’t be where it is now. Without us, there wouldn’t be a 1 percent. I think he’s trying to bring that back into focus.”

Urban intends to spend some of her free time as a political activist, communicating with voters about the importance of re-electing Biden and putting pro-worker Democrats back in charge of the House.

“A rising tide floats all boats,” she said. “It’s imperative that we make sure people know that the economy is going in the right direction and we’re making progress.”



STRUCTURE OF SOAR

UNITED STEELWORKERS EXECUTIVE BOARD

USW top four officers and National Director of Canada and District Directors.



USW LEADERSHIP TEAM

USW Director of SOAR, Julie Stein. She attends all USW Executive Board meetings (except executive sessions) as an observer and reports on the state of the SOAR Dept.

SOAR DEPARTMENT

Julie Stein, Director; Lori Bookwood, SOAR Program Facilitator and Cheryl Omlor, Administrative Assistant. Lena Sutfon, Canadian National Coordinator and Monica Mark, Canadian Administrative Assistant.

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS (ARA)

David McCall, USW Int'l President; Julie Stein, SOAR Director and Jim Centner, retired SOAR Director, serve on this board.

INTERNATIONAL SOAR EXECUTIVE BOARD

Bill Pienta, President; Doug MacPherson, SOAR VP (East); Scott Marshall, SOAR VP (West); Denise Edwards, Secretary-Treasurer; Connie Entrekin, President Emeritus; Charlie Averill, Emeritus Member; Bill Gibbons, Emeritus Member; and Jay McMurrin, Emeritus Member. Each District is represented by a SOAR District Board Member.

CHAPTERS

Chapters in both United States and Canada.

MEMBERSHIP