

UNITED STEELWORKERS
SOAR
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

CONNECTION

WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER



HAPPY NEW YEAR

UNITED STEELWORKERS
SOAR
STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

It's a New Year, and We Begin With a Conference



I hope everyone enjoyed a healthy and happy holiday season, is well-rested, and is ready to begin another year of activism and involvement in your community and your union through SOAR.

As the International SOAR Conference approaches this year, I would like to give a heads-up to those who plan to attend regarding what will take place.

SOAR will be celebrating our 40th anniversary and will recognize some of the accomplishments of our members and chapters during this time.

During the Conference, we will hold elections to elect or re-elect members of the SOAR Executive Board.

The SOAR delegates in attendance will debate and vote on resolutions submitted by chapters and the SOAR Executive Board concerning how we operate as an organization.

We will discuss the successes of our efforts aimed at improving the quality of life for our members, as well as outline what steps we need to take in the future to maintain or enhance their standard of living. Some of the achievements we will celebrate include:

- The passage of the Butch Lewis Act (which protected the pension of many of our members in multi-employer plans.)
- Passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (which put a cap on out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs and made certain vaccines available without cost-sharing.)
- The recent passage of the Social Security Fairness Act that repealed the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, two pieces of federal law that robbed millions of public servants of Social Security benefits they earned for over 40 years, (which reduced Social Security benefits for nearly 3 million retirees, many of them USW retirees.)

We will also talk about ways we can improve the financial stability of the Social Security Fund and ensure that anyone who believes reducing benefits is a good idea will quickly realize that it is a bad idea.

This will be our first SOAR Conference using the system that was put in place during the last Conference, which will allow for greater participation from our chapters. Larger SOAR chapters can choose to send more delegates, and USW districts with many members, but with smaller chapters could be considered by their Director based on district-wide totals and activism.

Get your resolutions in on time, as the deadline for February 3, 2025, is quickly approaching. I hope to see you at the Conference and I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year!

Bill Pienta, SOAR President

Biden Expands Social Security, Supports Domestic Steel During Final Days of Presidency



In early January, concluding what has been said by many to be the most pro-worker administration in history, President Joe Biden acted on two fronts that will directly impact Steelworker members and retirees for years to come.

Most recently, on January 5, President Biden became the first president in more than 20 years to [expand Social Security benefits](#) after signing the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) into law.

The new law passed with large bipartisan majorities in the U.S. House ([327 to 75](#)) and Senate ([76 to 20](#)) and will ensure a dignified retirement for more than three million police officers, firefighters, nurses, postal workers, teachers, and other public sector workers and their surviving family members.

By eliminating the unjust Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), H.R. 82 will lead to an average monthly benefit increase of \$360 for frontline workers who have dedicated their lives to serving our communities.

"The bill I'm signing today is about a simple proposition: Americans who have worked hard all their lives to earn an honest living should be able to retire with economic security and dignity," Biden said.

Additionally, after a year-long campaign by our union to educate lawmakers, stakeholders, USW members and families about the potential drawbacks of the proposal to sell U.S. Steel to Nippon, a campaign aimed to build bipartisan support for our position, President Biden acted on USW members' behalf and blocked the deal.

In a statement following President Biden's action, United Steelworkers International President David McCall said:

"Throughout the past year, as the proposed transaction was under review, our union's first and only concern has been the long-term viability of our facilities as we look to ensure a strong domestic steel industry well into the future.

"Nippon has proven itself to be a serial trade cheater that for decades worked to undermine our domestic industry by dumping its products into our market. Allowing it to purchase U.S. Steel would have offered it the opportunity to further destabilize our trade system from within and in the process, compromise our ability to meet our own national security and critical infrastructure needs.

"It's clear from U.S. Steel's recent financial performance that it can easily remain a strong and resilient company. We now call on U.S. Steel's board of directors to take the necessary steps to allow it to further flourish and remain profitable."

The USW also commended President-elect Donald Trump for his continued opposition to Nippon Steel's acquisition of U.S. Steel. We remain steadfast in our pledge to work with any administration that shares our commitment to sustaining a thriving, domestically owned and operated steel industry.

Click [HERE](#) to see the recent statement on the blocked U.S. Steel/Nippon agreement.

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

Electronic Deposit Available for SOAR Chapter Dues Refunds

Please be advised that SOAR dues refunds can 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 into the SOAR chapter’s bank account is mailed to the officer designated to receive financial mailings. Also included in the mailing is a “SOAR Chapter Refund Summary” report listing the members who paid their SOAR dues during the cycle.

Feel free to contact the SOAR office if you have questions. Toll-free: 866-208-4422

It’s That Time of Year When...

Each new year begins the process of compiling annual financial reports for all SOAR chapters, covering the financial activities of the previous year. The SOAR office requires this information so our USW auditor can prepare the Federal Form 990, which SOAR International must file with the IRS. This form includes all SOAR funds, including the treasury funds of individual SOAR chapters.



In early January, the SOAR office sent the annual mailing to all SOAR chapter officers designated to receive financial mailings and to SOAR chapter presidents. Please note that these reports are due by **March 15**. We appreciate your chapter’s prompt attention to this matter and your cooperation in providing a swift response. **Please note that these reports are due by March 15. Any chapter that does not meet this deadline will have its dues refunds put on hold until this obligation is fulfilled.**



SOAR's 40th Anniversary Charter Photo Project

In celebration of SOAR's upcoming 40th anniversary this May, we are thrilled to be working on a special project to capture the official charters of our SOAR chapters. We will use these photos to promote future SOAR activities and commemorate this significant milestone.

** Our Request **

We want to gather as many photos of our SOAR chapters' official charters as possible. Our request has two parts:



1. Please take a clear close-up photo of your chapter's framed charter for our archives.
 2. Take a group photo that includes members holding your framed charter.
- We plan to use these images for future promotional SOAR activities, such as our SOAR Facebook page posts, SOAR in Action magazine publications, and more.



Kindly send these photos via email to jstein@usw.org or text them to 920-475-4288. Please identify the individuals in the images so we can add this information where needed.

Feel free to call the SOAR office at our toll-free number 866-208-4420, if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your help with this project.

In solidarity,

Julie Stein, SOAR Director

SOAR Chapter Officer Election Reports

Reminder: If your chapter hasn't yet submitted the results of its recent SOAR chapter officer elections, please do so to the SOAR office in Pittsburgh as soon as possible so we may update your chapter's records. Thank you for all you do for SOAR!





Below are some remarks made by the late President Jimmy Carter at the USWA Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on September 20, 1978:

“It’s an honor to be introduced by one of the most outstanding leaders in America today, your president, Lloyd McBride.

“I’m here to point out to you that we are partners; we are brothers and sisters in a great effort to make our country and the world better, and I’m also here to reaffirm my solidarity with the working people of our Nation in pursuing the goals that we share. There is no clearer expression of my commitment to this solidarity with working people than my appointment of Ray Marshall as Secretary of Labor. He’s my friend and he’s yours.

“You have been part of the conscience of America. Conscience is what motivated Phil Murray to organize this union in the beginning. Conscience is what motivated one of the most decent and honorable men ever to serve as a union president, my friend, I.W. Abel.”

President Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, passed away on December 29, 2024. As a man of deep conviction, compassion, and integrity, Carter dedicated his life to public service and humanitarian work. He was the longest-lived former president in U.S. history and the first to reach the age of 100.

Awarded the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring peace to international conflicts and to advance democracy and human rights, may he rest as he served our nation ~ *In power and peace.*



2024 Highlights: Rapid Response in Action!

January 3, 2025

Today we bid farewell to the 118th U.S. Congress and welcome in the 119th. We wanted to take this moment to reflect on just a few of the remarkable achievements of 2024. Your unwavering dedication, solidarity, and tireless efforts have been the driving force behind these successes. Together, we’ve made incredible strides in protecting and advancing the values that unite us. Thank you for standing strong and advocating for workers everywhere!

Key Moments from 2024:

Empowering Workers through Collective Bargaining: In a landmark victory for workers, the Illinois Worker Freedom of Speech Act (SB 3649) was signed into law in July. This groundbreaking legislation puts an end to employer-led “captive audience” meetings aimed at undermining union organizing efforts. This achievement represents a major step forward in protecting workers' rights and strengthening the labor movement.

Championing Safety and Health: Our members in Massachusetts made their voices heard by sending over 1,100 letters to legislators, urging them to remove two dangerous amendments from an energy bill. These amendments posed a threat to the critical work of our gas workers and community safety. Thanks to this collective action, the amendments were excluded from the final legislation. While this issue may reemerge, we are prepared to remain vigilant and proactive in protecting our members and the environment.

Fighting for Job Security and Fair Trade: USW has been relentless in its fight for workers impacted by unfair trade deals and offshoring. Despite challenges, we continue to push for the reauthorization of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), which provides robust job training for workers affected by trade-related layoffs. In 2024, we brought the voices of impacted workers to Congress, advocating for action to ensure their future.

Improving Health Care Standards: April 22 marked a significant milestone when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services proposed a regulation requiring safe staffing levels in nursing homes. This rule ensures that registered nurses (RNs) and nursing assistants (NAs) are always on duty, addressing the staffing crisis and prioritizing quality care for patients.

Securing Retirement Fairness: On December 21, the U.S. Senate passed the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) with overwhelming bipartisan support. This legislation eliminates provisions that unfairly reduce or eliminate Social Security benefits for public employees. President Biden is scheduled to sign this historic bill into law on January 6, 2025.

Continued on next page.

Investing in Our Future: Throughout the year, significant federal investments through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) strengthened our communities and industries. These initiatives underscore the power of federal support in building a robust economy, and we remain committed to championing these transformative efforts.

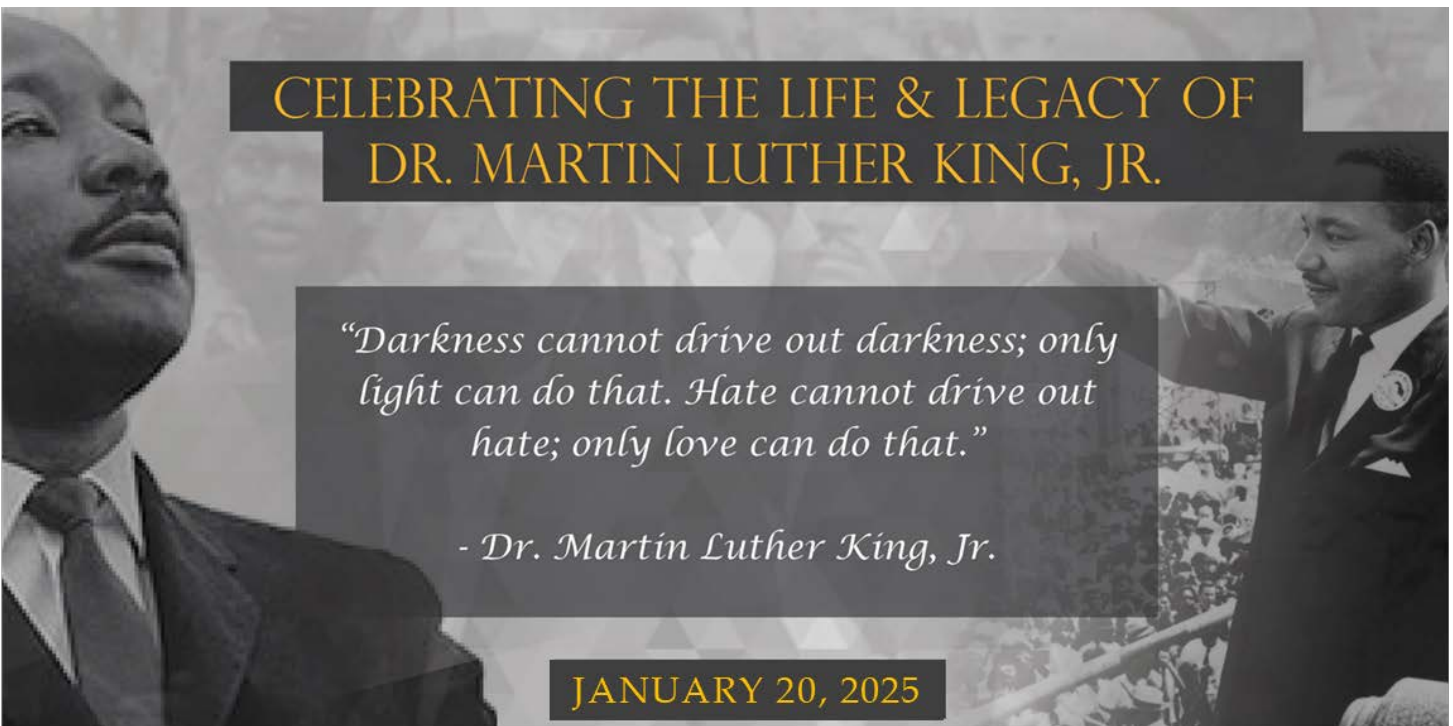
Supporting Veterans: USW has been championing legislation across the country that requires a standardized workplace posting that includes basic information about benefits to which veterans are entitled and a way to learn more about programs designed to help them. In 2024, this legislation was passed in Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Utah, and Virginia.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2024, we also look forward with excitement and determination around the opportunities and challenges ahead. Thank you for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to advancing our core values.

Get ready to continue to stand up for workers and retirees in 2025!

“Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make yourself a greater person of yourself, a greater nation for your country, and a finer world to live in.”

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (18 April 1959, Washington, D.C.)



The SOAR Office 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



**SOAR Chapter
Connection**

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of SOAR

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Articles and Photos Requested

The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be April 22, 2025 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 15, 2025. Email your article to soar3@icloud.com.

“I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.” (10 December 1964, Oslo, Norway)

~ Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.

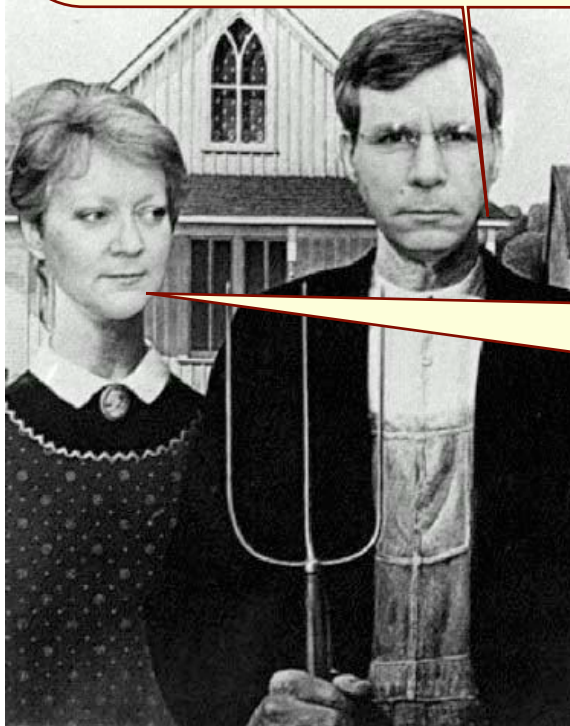
Just Sit Back and Relax

If you're like me, you will most likely be waiting anxiously for our next edition of this exciting world-renowned newsletter. But, because of the upcoming Int'l SOAR Conference and USW Int'l Convention, there won't be a March/April publication. So, we will just have to sit back and relax and wait for the May/June edition of the Connection newsletter instead. So sorry, folks. *Charlie*



Old Charlie & Elaine Say:

My New Year's resolution is to tackle Elaine's kitchen. She has way too many coffee mugs and wine glasses. I'll leave TWO of each. Next I'll do the silverware drawer...who needs THAT many teaspoons? Or forks? Half will go to the basement. After that, I'll rearrange her spice cupboard. Seriously, those little containers need to be in ALPHABETICAL ORDER! Lastly, those canned goods! I'll put them in one of those DOZENS of Amazon boxes in the basement and if she needs anything, it's good exercise to climb stairs. I think she'll be pleasantly surprised! Brilliant!



Groan!

The China Select Committee is Back in the 119th Congress



The 119th Congress is now in session and a welcome return from last year is the renewal of the House’s Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

With the new Congress, there is unlikely to be a lot of bipartisan legislation passed since Republicans and Democrats just don’t see eye to eye on many of the issues of 2025.

But this is not the case when it comes to the House’s China committee, which has been reauthorized for another session. During the last Congress, when it was founded, the committee was one of the few spots on Capitol Hill where you could reliably find genuine bipartisan collaboration.

There are two main reasons for the success of the China Select Committee:

First, it’s a select committee, not a standing one meaning it must be authorized in each session of Congress, and as such it’s not part of the legislative sausage-making; rather it’s investigative and makes recommendations about what kind of legislation Congress should pursue.

Secondly, the committee is meant to train lawmakers’ focus on the United States’ economic and military rivalry with China. And in recent years, this is something that both parties have been able to get behind.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing in a letter to Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) stumped for a return of the committee in the 119th Congress:

“The Select Committee is uniquely equipped to represent the shared concern among Americans regarding the economic and security challenges presented by the policies of the CCP. Thus, as the 119th Congress approaches, we hope that the Select Committee will continue its bipartisan work on identifying and examining key issues and policies in the U.S.-China bilateral relationship so that committees of jurisdiction are better positioned to advance legislative solutions to those challenges.”

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

Let’s Do Our Part

The Select Committee on China in the House of Representatives is one that we all can encourage our Congressperson to work well with the other members of that committee in a bipartisan way so that good legislation can be advanced and to let them know that we will be watching, expecting them to be cooperative. We can do our part with a simple letter or phone call to their district office. *Charlie*

Union Retirees Must Keep Fighting for a Fair Economy

by Robert Roach, Jr.



CEOs made an average of \$17.7 million in total compensation last year, according to the [AFL-CIO's latest "Executive Paywatch" report](#). Executive compensation has continued to rise steadily since 2016, increasing by 6% between 2022 and 2023. The gap between CEO and worker pay [narrowed slightly](#), with CEOs making 268 times more than the average worker compared to 272 times more in 2022.

Meanwhile, employee wages have increased slightly, but the rate of these gains has declined, going from a 7% increase in March 2022 to a mere 3.9% increase in November 2024. Workers also [have less of a share in corporate income](#) than they used to, going from a nearly 80% share of corporate income in 2020 to a 71% share as of July 2024.

As AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said, on average, the median worker at an S&P 500 company would have had to start working in 1755 (before the start of the American Revolution) to earn what the average CEO received in 2023.

The first step to solving any problem is understanding how big it is. Working people need to understand how our economic system is rigged against us and that it will take collective action, organizing, and mobilizing to restore fairness.

As retirees, we have a role to play in making sure that today and tomorrow's workers have a fair shot at the American dream, including a secure retirement. That's why the Alliance will always stand with organized labor.

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.

What is the Alliance for Retired Americans?

The Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA) is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization and nonpartisan organization of retired trade union members affiliated with the AFL-CIO, which was founded in 2001. The group's membership also includes non-union, community-based activists.

Often working in coalitions, ARA educates the public and policymakers about critical issues facing older Americans and working families. Their members lobby elected officials, take direct action through creative demonstrations and protests, organize online, and fight for labor movement priorities. Their offices are in the AFL-CIO building in Washington, D.C. Currently, the USW International President, SOAR Director, and the retired SOAR Director serve on the ARA Executive Board.



15 New Drugs Selected for 2025 Medicare Price Negotiation

On, Friday, January 17, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [released a list](#) of 15 new prescription drugs that Medicare will negotiate lower prices for. Under the law, HHS is required to negotiate a specific number of drugs each year.

[The list contains](#) a number of drugs that older Americans use, including Janumet, which is used to treat diabetes, and Otezla, which is used to treat psoriatic arthritis. Ozempic, Rybelsus, and Wegovy – which are used to treat diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity – are the most widely used drugs on the list, with about 2.2 million Medicare Part D beneficiaries taking them between November 2023 and October 2024. Trelegy Ellipta, used to treat Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, is the next most widely used drug, with about 1.2 million Part D enrollees using it for treatment.

FIFTEEN MORE DRUGS SELECTED FOR MEDICARE PRICE NEGOTIATION

UNDER THE BIDEN-HARRIS ADMINISTRATION

<p>1 OZEMPIC; RYBELSUS; WEGOVY <i>For Type 2 diabetes; Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease; obesity/overweight and cardiovascular disease</i></p> <p>2 TRELEGY ELLIPTA <i>For Asthma; Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</i></p> <p>3 XTANDI <i>For Prostate Cancer</i></p> <p>4 POMALYST <i>For Kaposi sarcoma; multiple myeloma</i></p> <p>5 IBRANCE <i>For Breast Cancer</i></p> <p>6 OFEV <i>For Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis</i></p> <p>7 LINZESS <i>Chronic idiopathic constipation; Irritable bowel syndrome with constipation</i></p> <p>8 CALQUENCE <i>Chronic lymphocytic leukemia/small lymphocytic lymphoma; Mantle cell lymphoma</i></p>	<p>9 AUSTEDO; AUSTEDO XR <i>For Chorea in Huntington's disease; Tardive dyskinesia</i></p> <p>10 BREO ELLIPTA <i>For Asthma; Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</i></p> <p>11 TRADJENTA <i>For Type 2 diabetes</i></p> <p>12 XIFAXAN <i>For Hepatic encephalopathy; Irritable bowel syndrome with diarrhea</i></p> <p>13 VRAYLAR <i>For Bipolar I disorder; Major depressive disorder; Schizophrenia</i></p> <p>14 JANUMET; JANUMET XR <i>For Type 2 diabetes</i></p> <p>15 OTEZLA <i>For Oral ulcers in Behcet's Disease; Plaque psoriasis; Psoriatic arthritis</i></p>
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“Lower prices for these drugs are needed and will save patients and taxpayers billions of dollars a year,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We call on President-elect Trump and the next Administration to follow the law and negotiate a fair deal that puts the needs of patients first.”

Drug corporations will have until February 28, 2025, to indicate whether they will participate in the negotiations.



SOAR Member Non-Delegate Registration Form
14th International SOAR Conference
Caesars Forum Convention Center ~ Las Vegas, Nevada
April 4-5, 2025

Chapter Number _____ **District** _____ **SOAR ID** _____

1) Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Chapter Number _____ **District** _____ **SOAR ID** _____

2) Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Please register the above-mentioned SOAR member(s)* as guest(s) to observe the 14th Int'l SOAR Conference. As a guest participant, I understand that I am a non-voting delegate to this conference. No registration fee is required; however, each guest participant must bear the expenses of attending this conference, including meals, travel and hotel. *To be eligible to attend the SOAR Conference as a non-voting delegate (guest), a person must be a SOAR member in good standing.

_____ SOAR Member #1 (signature required)	_____ Date
_____ SOAR Member #2 (signature required)	_____ Date

The completed form must be received in the SOAR office no later than March 1, 2025. Please scan to jstein@usw.org or mail to:

Julie Stein, Director
 SOAR
 60 Blvd. of the Allies
 Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Please make a copy for your records and bring it to the SOAR Conference to present to the registration committee as proof of registration.

Duplicate as needed



Hotel Info for Non-Voting Conference Delegates
14th International SOAR Conference
Caesars Forum Convention Center ~ Las Vegas, Nevada
April 4-5, 2025

The 14th International SOAR Conference will be held at the Caesars Forum Convention Center located at 3911 Koval Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89109.

As a courtesy to our non-voting delegates (guests) attending the SOAR Conference, a block of rooms has been reserved at Harrah’s Las Vegas and Flamingo Las Vegas that are a short walk from where the conference will be held. Please use the below link to reserve at convention rates. If you do not use this link, you will not get the reduced block price.

Harrah’s Las Vegas
 3475 Las Vegas Boulevard South
 Las Vegas, NV 89109

Flamingo Las Vegas
 3555 Las Vegas Boulevard South
 Las Vegas, NV 89109

BOOK HERE:

- [United Steel Workers Convention - Learn about the event and search for hotels](#)
- Or, go to: <https://book.passkey.com/gt/220178009?gtid=1ec913133c3b7a54e0dc1925fe818756>

Both Harrah’s and Flamingo Hotels strongly recommend that reservations be made online and charges be paid via credit card.

The deadline to book your hotel reservation at the USW discounted rate is February 15, 2025. The negotiated nightly rate at Harrah’s is \$165, the nightly rate for the Flamingo is \$160 for single or double occupancy, not including nightly resort fees and taxes. All rooms are subject to a \$25 per night resort fee. Currently the room tax is 13.38% per night. If you are unable to make reservations online or need to pay for your accommodations via check, please contact Harrah’s or the Flamingo at 1-800-223-7277 and an agent will assist you.

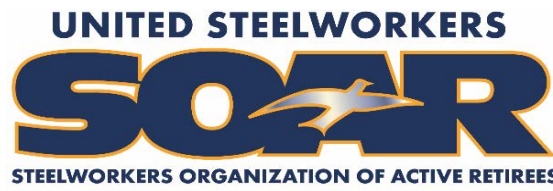
Please be aware that any payments by check must be made out to the hotel in which the reservations are being made and must be received by the hotel no later than March 3, 2025. Checks should include the name(s) and confirmation code(s) and be mailed to:

Via FedEx*
 Caesars Entertainment (Hotel Name)
 Attn: Accounts Receivable
 One Caesars Palace Drive
 Las Vegas, NV 89109

*Caesars Entertainment requires that all payments made by check be shipped by FedEx only, to the address above.

All requests are based upon hotel availability; however, the hotel will do their best to honor all requests.

2025



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