

USW@WORK

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A Powerful Voice for Workers



Celebrating **40 YEARS of ACTIVISM**





BILL PIENTA
SOAR President

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, I would like to give a heads-up to those of you who plan to attend regarding what will take place.

SOAR will celebrate 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 the members of the SOAR Executive Board.

The SOAR delegates in attendance will debate and vote on resolutions submitted by chapters and the 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- ▶ The recent passage of the Social Security Fairness Act that repealed the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset, two pieces of federal law that robbed millions of public servants of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 three 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.

I hope to see you at the Conference, and I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year!

SOAR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED



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

SOAR chapters or members interested in attending the Conference as non-voting delegates should contact the SOAR office in Pittsburgh for registration details. Participants are responsible for their own expenses, including meals, travel, and accommodations. To attend as a non-voting delegate, you must be a SOAR member in good standing. The registration deadline is March 15, 2025. SOAR Office: toll-free 866-208-4420



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

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.

JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

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 bi-partisan 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.



2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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



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Celebrating Four Decades of Activism



It was March 28, 1980, when Frank Lumpkin showed up at Wisconsin Steel Works on the south side of Chicago, where he'd worked for 30 years, to find that the gates were locked with no explanation. They never reopened.

What followed was a years-long fight for the pensions, pay and benefits the company owed to more than 3,200 workers. Lumpkin and his wife, Bea (shown above), organized workers, families and community residents into the "Save our Jobs Committee." With help from USW members and other workers in the region, along with many more across the country, the group ultimately won \$17.7 million in court settlements.

"We put up a big fight and the union, the USW, took us in," said Bea Lumpkin, whose husband died in 2010. "In turn, the unemployed Wisconsin Steelworkers became the best union supporters."

Retiree Activism

The Lumpkins' story was one of many similar struggles that played out across the country that helped to pave the way for the creation of Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), a group that USW leaders founded 40 years ago, during the depths of the steel industry crisis in the United States.

SOAR was a descendant of the "Old-timers Foundation," established in 1978 and administrated by the Steelworkers' Department of Older and Retired Workers. That program, created by International President Lloyd McBride, advocated for housing, health care, transit and other services for seniors.

At the time, then-International Treasurer Frank McKee described the goals of the organization as "to improve the quality of life of retired Steelworkers and other older people in steel communities."

By the time SOAR was established in 1985, its goals had evolved into helping to "meet the social, economic, political and legislative challenges faced by the elderly."

Crisis in Steel

Her involvement in the Save our Jobs Committee was a precursor to Lumpkin's decades of activism as a SOAR member.

"Frank and I were very proud of the role we played in building solidarity," Lumpkin said, calling their efforts a labor of love. "We were especially proud of any part we played in the founding of SOAR."

Strengthening Ties

Prior to the creation of SOAR, USW retiree organizations were largely social in nature, bringing together seniors from similar workplaces or regions with little connection to the larger union. The establishment of SOAR, under the direction of then-International President Lynn Williams, gave those organizations a central structure and provided retired members with an opportunity to strengthen their ties to the union, and to each other.

"In the 1980s, the steel industry and related industries were really under attack. There were massive layoffs, bankruptcies, closures," said SOAR Vice President Doug MacPherson. "Lynn believed that if we could energize the retiree population, we could find creative ways to deal with the stress that this was causing on the industry, the workers and the retirees."

As SOAR International President William Pienta explained, the organization also gave union leaders an avenue to communicate with retirees



about their pensions and health care benefits, many of which were under attack from employers struggling in the face of increased foreign competition and outdated technology.

“These groups also became more involved in levels of activism pertaining to supporting the active members, who in return supported the concerns of the retirees,” Pienta said.

Remaining Active

That component of ongoing activism and solidarity is part of what has kept Lumpkin, now 106 years old, active in SOAR over many decades.

“The most important issue is to protect and expand the right to organize,” said Lumpkin, who began her career as a union organizer when she was still a teenager and since then has participated in numerous efforts to protect women’s rights, civil rights, Social Security and Medicare, among other efforts.

Those fights have become part of SOAR’s mission as the group’s purpose has expanded, Pienta said.

“In the past 40 years SOAR has undergone significant changes,” he said. “SOAR members and active members have become more dependent on each other over the years.”

Preserving History

Joel Buchanan, who retired in 2013 after a USW career that spanned more than four decades, now serves as SOAR vice president and president of his local chapter.

Buchanan said that in addition to providing a vehicle to keep retirees active in the labor movement, and in



Doug MacPherson



Bill Pienta



Joel Buchanan



Denise Edwards

political campaigns, SOAR has helped to boost solidarity during strikes, lockouts and contract disputes.

“I had about two weeks of retirement and I’ve been involved with SOAR ever since,” he said. Buchanan, who also serves on the executive board of the Colorado AFL-CIO and on the Southern Colorado Labor Council, said another important SOAR function is mentoring younger workers about the importance of the movement.

“Younger folks can learn from our history and not lose it,” he said.

Supporting Workers

SOAR members must support the struggles of active members, because better pay and benefits mean that workers put less of a strain on the social programs retirees rely on, Pienta said. In turn, active members must advocate for programs like Social Security and Medicare to ensure they remain viable for future generations.

“That makes it easy for us to work together to make both of our lives better,” Pienta said.

For SOAR Secretary-Treasurer Denise Edwards, the ability of SOAR members to collaborate with active workers and other allies is essential to preserving the benefits retirees earned over a lifetime of work.

“The future for SOAR is going to depend on our willingness to deliver

and defend our standard of living,” said Edwards, who pointed out that the fight to preserve and strengthen retiree programs has been going on for decades. “A lot of these issues, including Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, we’ve been there and we’ve done that. This isn’t the first time these programs have been considered for changes that could threaten our survival.”

Edwards said she was optimistic about the future, as SOAR members work more closely with Rapid Response, Women of Steel, Veterans of Steel, and other activists throughout the labor movement to uphold the union’s values.

In particular, SOAR members have worked to build relationships with NextGen members. SOAR members attended the past two NextGen conferences to give the two groups a chance to collaborate and learn from each other.

“We have to move forward, and we have to do it together,” Pienta said.

Founded in 1985

It was that goal—of encouraging active and retired workers to collaborate—that inspired Williams, who served as USW leader from 1983 to 1993 and was the driving force behind the creation of SOAR.

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On May 23, 1985, at the Union’s 30th International Convention, USW delegates voted unanimously to add an amendment to the USW Constitution recognizing SOAR as an affiliate organization of the USW.



FIGHTING for DIGNITY

How the NDP is Supporting Canada's Seniors and Retirees

By Matthew Green, NDP Member of Parliament for Hamilton Centre

The New Democratic Party (NDP) has long stood as a voice for seniors and retirees, recognizing your immense contributions to Canada's social and economic fabric. In recent months, NDP Members of Parliament (MPs) have been hard at work championing policies to enhance the lives of older Canadians, particularly in the face of rising costs, underfunded social programs and inadequate protections for pensions. As the NDP Labour Critic, I'm proud to highlight our collective efforts and how these initiatives directly impact retirees.



Matthew Green, NDP Member of Parliament for Hamilton Centre.

Addressing Affordability for Seniors

Affordability remains a critical issue for seniors, many of whom live on fixed incomes that are increasingly strained by inflation and rising housing costs. The NDP has been vocal in advocating for measures to alleviate these pressures. We successfully pushed the federal government to deliver a one-time \$500 payment to low-income renters through the Canada Housing Benefit. While this is a step forward, the NDP continues to demand long-term solutions, including the construction of affordable housing specifically designed for seniors and the indexing of Old Age Security (OAS) to reflect real inflation rates.

Furthermore, we have called for the expansion of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) to ensure retirees receive adequate income. By increasing CPP contributions and benefits, we aim to protect seniors from poverty while ensuring the system remains sustainable for future generations.

Protecting Pensions Against Pierre Poilievre

The NDP has also been the champion in defending pensions against corporate greed. Too often, we have seen companies declare bankruptcy, leaving retirees without the pensions they have worked their entire lives to secure. That's why we introduced a bill to make pensioners secured creditors in cases of corporate insolvency. This change would ensure pensions are prioritized over executive bonuses and other payouts when a company goes under.

We are also fighting to close loopholes that allow employers to under-

fund pension plans. Through robust legislative proposals, the NDP is working to guarantee that every Canadian can retire with dignity, knowing their pension will be there when they need it most.

Enhancing Health Care Access

Health care remains a top concern for seniors, and the NDP continues to push for the expansion of Medicare to include comprehensive coverage for prescription drugs, dental care, and vision care. With pharmacare, we can end the injustice of seniors having to choose between medication and other essentials. The NDP's universal dental care proposal, which we secured a solid first step towards in the confidence-and-supply agreement with the Liberals, will help ensure low-income seniors get the care they need.

Additionally, the NDP has been advocating for improved long-term care standards. We've introduced legislation to ensure federally regulated long-term care facilities prioritize the well-being of residents over profits. These measures include adequate staffing levels, better working conditions for caregivers, and stricter accountability for facilities.

Fighting for Retiree Rights

As part of our commitment to fairness, the NDP has been actively involved in strengthening workers' rights, which directly impacts retirees. Our proposed sectoral bargaining policy, "A Plan for Canadian Workers," includes provisions that protect benefits for retirees in unionized workplaces. These protections are vital in industries like steel manufacturing, where pensions and benefits

Our Concerns About Health Care

are hard-won achievements of collective bargaining.

Moreover, we've consistently defended public services that seniors rely on, from affordable public transit to accessible community centres. By securing federal investments in these areas, the NDP ensures that seniors can live independently while remaining active in their communities.

**“Courage, my friends;
'tis not too late to build
a better world.”**

– Tommy Douglas

Looking Ahead

The challenges facing seniors and retirees in Canada are significant, but they are not insurmountable. The NDP remains undeterred in our commitment to fighting for a fairer system that respects and supports the people who built this country. Whether it's through enhanced pensions, affordable health care, or protecting the rights of retirees, we will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with seniors and organizations like the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

To our SOAR members: your activism and advocacy inspire our work in Parliament. Together, we can ensure that every senior in Canada has the support they need to live with dignity and security. As always, the NDP will keep pressing the government to deliver meaningful, lasting change. Retirees deserve nothing less.



By Bob Sutton, Recording Secretary, SOAR Chapter 10, Hamilton, Ont.

Residents of Canada do not have to pay for private health care coverage. Health care in Canada, however, is not free, it is funded through tax revenues at the provincial, territorial and federal levels. By spreading the cost of health care across the entire population, everyone is assured of the care they need, without the great financial burden that medical expenses could pose on a family or individual.

One of the overarching objectives of the Canada Health Act is to ensure that Canadians have access to medically necessary care based on their health care needs and not their ability to pay.

The cost of Canadian health care is shared by the federal government and each province and territory. Since the creation of the Canada Health Act, the sharing amounts have varied, but the federal contribution is contingent on the following principles: portability, accessibility, universality, comprehensiveness, no extra billing for services and public administration.

During the present minority federal government, the New Democratic Party (NDP), the party of labour, agreed to support the Liberals with the following pact: the government would introduce a paid prescription drug plan, a paid dental program and anti-scab legislation.

The anti-scab legislation is for federally regulated employees and takes effect in June 2025.

We were successful in achieving all three of these demands, however, the prescription legislation is a framework, covering free diabetic needs and birth control products.

The dental program initially provided dental coverage for those over 65 and under 18. In 2025, all remaining eligible Canadian residents between ages 18 and 65 will be able to apply. The dental care benefit program covers Canadian residents without dental coverage, with a household income under \$90,000. It covers most routine dental care, including cleanings, x-rays, fillings, root canals and dentures. Some more complex dental services, such as partial dentures and crowns, require federal pre-authorization of payment.

It has taken decades to bring our publicly funded health system to where it is today. Unfortunately, right wing governments in many of our provinces are doing their best to try and dismantle our public programs. They are claiming the costs are excessive for our tax system and are listening to private health care providers who see the huge profits that they could reap.

Over 100 years, Ontario built a system of local public hospitals that operates on a non-profit basis. The Conservative government of Doug Ford has made plans to privatize public hospital services, including surgeries and diagnostics to private, for-profit hospitals and clinics. This is just the start of his privatization of our health care.

Federally, if the Conservative party under Pierre Poilievre is elected, most likely our dental care and pharmacare will be history.

The Canadian health care system and now our dental program are among the best and most cost-effective in the world. Progressive people, organizations and the labour movement fought for decades to achieve these benefits for all Canadians.

Now, the fight is on to keep them. We must all do whatever we can. There are elections both provincially and federally expected this year and Steelworkers, SOAR members and other like-minded organizations and people must fight to elect the only party, the NDP, that truly believe in public Medicare.



It's Time to Bring Opportunity Back to Ontario

By Marit Stiles

Leader of the Official Opposition Ontario NDP

I moved to Ontario from Newfoundland in the mid-1990s for many of the same reasons people from all over Canada and the world are moving to this province today—in search of better opportunities and a better life.

Back then, Ontario was the shining star of Canada, its economic powerhouse. It was a place of possibilities, where you could get a good job that paid well, afford a home to raise your kids, have a family doctor, and so much more. After having spent decades building a life in this province, making a home here and raising a family that includes two daughters, I can't imagine telling my younger self that Ontario—the economic powerhouse so rich in resources and talent would become a have-not province.

In 2022, my impetus to run to be Ontario NDP's next leader was driven by frustration at where consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have led us: hallway health care, ludicrously high housing prices both to rent and buy, a broken education system and a cost of living that most are struggling to sustain. Above all, I ran to become leader because I have a deep love for Ontario, for the people who work so hard to turn their dreams into reality, and for a bright future I know we can all have.

It has been seven long and tiring years under Doug Ford's Conservatives. Let me show you where we are today: Ontario has the lowest housing starts since 1955. This government was elected on a single mandate to build more housing, and the premier himself promised 1.5 million new homes by 2031. The Conservatives are nowhere close to achieving that. Mr. Ford's housing plan was ripping open the Greenbelt, Ontario's coveted farmland. When we uncovered the corruption behind it, we also laid bare this government's housing plan—which is, in fact, no plan at all. Now, the government is under a criminal investigation by the RCMP because of their corruption in the Greenbelt scandal.

Doug Ford's commitment to affordable housing has been dubious from the start. One of the first things he did after forming government in 2018 was to remove rent control. Every day seniors, people on fixed incomes, young people on minimum wage are left to wonder whether their next rent hike will show them the door to the streets.

Ontario's premier has failed Ontarians on housing on every front at a time when we are in the deepest housing crisis in decades. This is reason enough for why we need

new leadership in this province, and a premier with bold ideas who is not working for a select few friends and insiders.

Housing isn't the only failure of the Conservatives. They have made the crisis in health care, home care and long-term care from terrible to worse. Right now, 2.5 million Ontarians are without a family doctor, a number that is set to double in the next few years.

And instead of strong investments in the care economy, Mr. Ford's cuts have led to a massive staffing crisis across the board, leaving seniors without proper care and attention at their most vulnerable hour.

New Democrats are steadfast in our commitment to protecting public health care—we will make robust investments in health care, long-term care and home care to bring the nurse-to-patient ratio back up in Ontario to ensure our elders are getting the best care and attention when they need it most.

People are also seeing this government's attempts to turn Ontario's public health care system into a private, for-profit model, where your wallet will determine the quality of health care you get, and Ontarians are angry.

The NDP has always been a champion of a strong and public health care system. We are the party of Tommy Douglas after all, the person who introduced Medicare to Canada.

Today, it is because of the NDP that Canada has set into law its first and revolutionary national universal drug coverage program. This will be a game changer, especially now as so many Ontarians are struggling with the high cost of living.

There's no doubt in my mind that this is a critical moment for Ontario. It's what people tell me when I meet them at the door, as I travel to every corner of this province, from rural small towns to big Northern cities. People tell me they are feeling stuck and they are tired of waiting for all the good things promised to them.

My entire caucus and I are ready to deliver what Ontarians have been waiting for: affordable homes, family doctors, and an overall good life. I am not promising the moon and the stars, but a better life that the hardworking people of Ontario deserve.



Marit Stiles, leader of Ontario New Democratic Party; Bob Sutton, Secretary Ch. 10, Hamilton; and Lena Sutton, Canadian National SOAR Coordinator.

Celebrating Four Decades of Activism

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“Lynn’s vision was that the union should be there to help people,” said former International President Leo W. Gerard. “Not just when they are at work, but when they are out of work and retired.”

Gerard, who served as USW president from 2001 to 2019, was elected to the union’s executive board as District 6 director in 1985, just a few weeks after the board voted to create SOAR.

Williams named former International President I.W. Abel, who retired in 1977, as the organization’s first president.

MacPherson, who became member of Local 5528 in 1968 when he went to work as a pipefitter at Stelco in Hamilton, Ontario, remembered SOAR in its earliest days being focused on preserving retirement benefits and health care for retirees.

“It was very clear from early on that this was to be its mandate, and I think SOAR did that quite successfully in a variety of ways,” MacPherson said.

In addition to battles like those Lumpkin and her allies waged, SOAR members built political alliances to gain government aid and advocated for the creation of voluntary employee beneficiary associations, or VEBAs, tax-exempt trust funds designed to pay out retirement

and medical benefits to workers.

With the support of active workers and SOAR members, Williams and his successors George Becker and Gerard were successful in negotiating with employers to establish VEBAs, some of which continue to protect health and retirement benefits decades later.

Evolving Mission

The USW emerged from the steel crisis of the 1980s with a new focus on confronting unfair trade and a determination to push employers to invest in and modernize their facilities. The union also began to diversify and rebuild its membership through strategic mergers and organizing new industries.

These changes not only made the USW a stronger, more diverse union, but also helped spur an evolution in SOAR’s mission, Pienta said.

“Many of our active members today work in health care, and the largest consumer of their services are seniors,” Pienta said. Showing this relationship is an easy way to get both groups supporting an issue like minimum staffing at health care facilities.”

Finding more and more common ground among active and retired workers led SOAR members to expand the organization’s focus to include more political activism, he said.

Lobbying for legislation aimed at strengthening unions, fighting back against unfair trade, and pushing to bolster retirement and health care programs, are just a few of the ways SOAR members have been politically active, MacPherson said.

“It’s been a shift to a more global perspective, but it’s one that we’ve embraced,” he said. “As the world changed, we tried to change with it, and I think we’re doing a fairly successful job of it.”

SOAR members were also instrumental in fighting for passage of the Butch Lewis Act, which President Joe Biden signed as part of the American Rescue Plan in 2021 and which saved the pensions of 1.2 million retirees, including more than 100,000 Steelworkers.

Meanwhile, as the organization’s membership has grown more active, SOAR’s profile has risen within the larger union. Members regularly participate in USW conferences and programs aimed at improving the lives of both active and retired workers.

Lumpkin said she hoped more of her fellow retirees would remain involved in the labor movement after they leave the workforce, explaining that it helps them and also helps the movement.

“It’s good for your health,” she said. “And organized labor needs you.”



SOAR Grieves the Loss of Longtime Activist
DAVE McLIMANS



Dave McLimans drove the 25 miles to Lancaster, Pa., and walked the picket line with workers from Kellogg’s four years ago because he knew only too well the worries weighing on their minds.

He’d been on strike once himself. He’d agonized about paying the bills. He knew the frustration of trying to wrest fair treatment from a greedy corporation.

And he was tired of seeing so many other working people waging the same battle.

“It’s time we all come together and start kicking and screaming,” he explained in a USW blog post, noting that only unions afford working people a true path forward.

Dave, 78, of Parkesburg, Pa., a 56-year USW member who served on SOAR’s executive board and spent most of his life advocating for workers, veterans, retirees and unions, died Oct. 23.

Not even illness diminished his zeal. Just a few weeks before his death, *The Coatesville Times* published a column from Dave supporting the reelection of U.S. Sen. Bob Casey, a longtime friend of labor and veterans.

“You had a conversation with Dave, and you knew immediately where his heart and his loyalty were—with his union and his members,” said SOAR President Bill Pienta.

“He didn’t hide his feelings,” added Pienta, citing Dave’s penchant for straight talk. “You knew who he was. He was a proud Steelworker.”

Dave was born in Coatesville, graduated from Scott High School in 1963 and enlisted in the Army. Exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam, he suffered lifelong health challenges that only fueled his concern for others.

He joined the USW in 1969 after taking a job at the Budd Co.’s Trailer Division and soon became active in the union, serving first as a steward and then as financial secretary and local president.

“That plant closed in 1987, and the company tried to walk away from us,” he recalled two years ago in testimony before the U.S. Senate Aging Committee. “It was the saddest state of affairs, former employees, management, and union personnel hanging by a thread, but we had rights and we had the union.

“We fought for what we were owed and what we had a right to, as outlined in our union contract. We recouped five



weeks back pay for my brothers and sisters, and we fought successfully to recover the pension and benefits that were promised on paper. The pension still pays retirees like myself to this day because of our union and our work.”

Dave went on to take a job with Lukens Steel, where he earned a good living but also encountered more tough times. He and his co-workers weathered a 105-day strike in 1991 and 1992, a victory won partly because of the outpouring of support they received from members of various unions.

He retired from the mill, now owned by Cleveland-Cliffs in 2013. He ended up working longer than intended, he admitted, because he enjoyed the demands of the job as well as the camaraderie on the shop floor.

After retiring, he went to USW Local 1165’s union hall three or four times a week to help out. “He never left his local,” Pienta said.

Dave also dedicated himself to SOAR and other groups serving others. In addition to his responsibilities of representing the SOAR members of USW District 10, he also served his SOAR Chapter 7-4 in Coatesville as vice president.

He was a proud Chester County AFL-CIO Labor Council member and served as its president for 43 years.

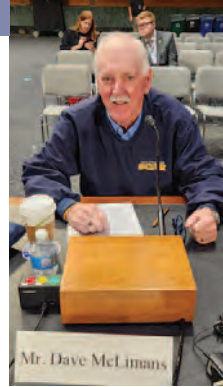
He was actively involved in the USW’s Rapid Response program and in fights to save Social Security and Medicare. In his testimony before the Aging Committee, given at Casey’s request, Dave emphasized the nation’s need to honor its promises and ensure dignified retirements to workers who spend lifetimes earning them.

“I didn’t serve my country to work and pay taxes for 44 years as an active Steelworker just to let my voice fade away and see younger generations lose benefits that I fought for,” he said.

Dave also advocated for passage of the American Rescue Plan, the 2021 law that extended a lifeline to failing multi-employer pension plans and saved the retirements of more than a million workers and retirees.

A longtime activist of the Chester County Democratic Party (CCDC), Dave served as a Parkesburg North Committee Person. He was a passionate Democrat who served as Zone Leader and Zone Leader Caucus Vice Chair. He and his wife Stephannie, fellow Parkesburg North Committee Person, served their community together, always helping to get Democrats elected.

In addition to his wife, he leaves behind four children, two stepchildren, 10 grandchildren, one great grandchild and a special nephew. He will greatly be missed by all who were privileged to know him.



May he rest as he served ~ in power and peace.

District 9 Welcomes New SOAR Chapter in Alabama

New SOAR Chapter 9-GMP-1, also known as USW Local 65B – Albertsville, AL SOAR Chapter, was formally presented with its official charter at the 2024 USW District 9 Education Conference in Destin, Florida.

On August 26, 2024, USW District 9 Director Daniel Flippo presented USW Local Union President Chad Dickerson with their chapter's charter as the newest SOAR chapter in District 9.

Organizing a SOAR chapter is not an easy task; despite this challenge, the local union successfully organized its new chapter and will be home to retirees from USW Local Union 65B, a local that represents over 450 Steelworkers at its facilities in the Albertsville, Alabama, area, that produces and ships fire hydrants all over the world.

Larry Harris, a retired employee from Mueller Water Products, will serve as the chapter's first president. Harris is also a former president for Local 65B, who spent over 26 years

in the fire hydrant facility and then over 16 years as a staff representative. Harris and current local union president Dickerson worked tirelessly over the last year, laying the foundation for this new chapter, which already has approximately 35 members.

Local 65B, the first local from the former GMP (Glass Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers) to merge with the United Steelworkers, has now established the first GMP SOAR chapter in District 9.

President of Local 65B, Chad Dickerson, stated, "Merging with the United Steelworkers was an easy decision due to their vast resources, strength, and national recognition. Getting a chapter started for our retirees was also an easy decision, and we are especially proud that we got it done for them!"

Joining Harris as the first officers of SOAR Chapter 9-GMP-1 are



Presenting the Chapter 9-GMP-1 official charter at the 2024 USW District 9 Education Conference in Destin, Florida, pictured left to right are: USW District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, District 9 SOAR Coordinator Greg England, USW Local 65B President Chad Dickerson, SOAR Director Julie Stein, and District 9 SOAR Executive Board Member Claude Karr.

Barry Parker, Vice President; James Mullinax, Recording Secretary; James Battles, Financial Secretary; Tim Scott, Treasurer; and Trustees Chad Dickerson, Robert Campbell, and Larry Holmes.

The chapter plans to hold monthly meetings, be involved in their communities, and support the work of Local 65B while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.

SOAR welcomes all our new members from Chapter 9-GMP-1, and together, we will continue the fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!

David Harvey Appointed to SOAR Executive Board

In November, United Steelworkers International President David McCall appointed David Harvey as the District 10 SOAR Executive Board Member to fulfill the remaining term of David McLimans, who sadly passed away on October 23, 2024.

David "Dave" Harvey is a retired member of USW Local Union 8042, which represents Steelworkers employed at Duco-Ceramics in Saxonburg, PA, where members manufacture ceramic insulators for electrical components. He worked at the plant for 49 years, beginning as an entry-level laborer and spent much of his career as a maintenance technician.

Harvey reported for work in 1973 and joined the local union. After being elected as a guard, grievance committeeman, and vice president, he served 30 years as unit president. Additionally, he held the amalgamated local union's president's gavel for 25 years while managing both roles concurrently, retiring in 2022.

Not content to sit behind a desk, he focused on building our union, organizing new members across Pennsylvania.

Recognizing that any gains we achieved in the standard of living and quality of life, including a safe working environment, could be jeopardized in the halls of Congress or State Assembly, Dave mobilized members for Rapid Response and political campaigns. During several election cycles, he served as the Western Pennsylvania Political Coordinator for District 10, staffing the "Good Trouble War Room" at USW's headquarters in Pittsburgh. He also traveled to Kentucky as part of a team to elect a pro-worker U.S. Senator.

Since December 2022, when Dave was appointed as the state coordinator for SOAR by USW District 10 Director Bernie Hall, he has been actively reaching out and traveling along the Turnpike to revitalize and establish new retiree chapters throughout the state.

With over 50 years of effective union leadership, organization, experience, and energy, Dave Harvey is a valuable addition to the SOAR Executive Board.

On behalf of SOAR, we welcome Dave to the SOAR Executive Board and look forward to working with him as we continue our mission to protect and enhance the quality of life for retirees and working families.



SOAR in ACTION



Washington, PA—SOAR activists from SOAR Chapter 20-15, Greater Pittsburgh SOAR, staffed a table at the Senior Expo in Crown Center Mall on September 26 to promote our SOAR program. Over 150 people visited the SOAR table at the Expo held in Washington, PA. Pictured are chapter members Andy Zanaglio (wearing a SOAR hat) and Dave Wolfe. Barbara Pugliese not shown. Way to go, SOAR!

Joliet, IL—SOAR Chapter 31-6 members honored Betty Peterson at their chapter meeting on October 8 as they celebrated her 100th birthday! Betty reached this milestone on August 11. She served as the longtime secretary-treasurer of the chapter and decided to step down to let a “younger” member take over the role. She looks forward to continuing her involvement with this regional chapter, which includes local unions in the Joliet, Lockport, and Kankakee areas of Illinois. Happy 100 birthday, Betty, and we’re wishing you many more!



Latham, NY—On Saturday, November 23, the Capital District Area Labor Federation (CDALF) joined a coalition of dedicated organizations, businesses, and individuals to participate in the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY’s most extensive single-day food distribution to date. Held the Saturday before Thanksgiving, this event saw volunteers distribute 150,000 meals at eight mass drive-thru pantries and over 20 senior housing sites across six counties. SOAR Chapter 4-17 activists Michael Blue and Danielle Thompson were there to lend a hand. Way to go, SOAR!

Bettendorf, IA—SOAR Chapter 11-4 held its Annual Chili Supper fundraiser at the USW Local 105 Hall on December 6, 2024. On January 2, group photos were taken at the chapter monthly meeting with checks totaling \$832. The funds raised will be donated to Family Resources–Quad Cities in Bettendorf and to Vietnam Veterans Chapter 669 in Moline, IL. Many thanks to all who participated! Way to go, SOAR!



Orange, CT—Locals 12160, 134L, and 12000-12001 joined forces for a fantastic toy drive supporting the Marines Toys for Tots and the Toy Closet Program at Yale New Haven Children’s Hospital, ensuring every child admitted receives a toy.

On December 12, 2024,

Tammie Hoyt Botelho (chapter president) and SOAR member Dominick Alberino of SOAR Chapter 4-21, Steelworker Retirees of CT, delivered some of the toys to Toys for Tots, with more on the way from various USW work sites across Connecticut.



Pueblo, CO—On Friday, September 13, members of SOAR Chapter 38-3 gathered for their membership meeting and presented the new charter, officially renaming the chapter the Albert “Al” Becco SOAR Chapter to honor the legacy of their late long-time SOAR activist and leader Al Becco, for his many years of service and dedication to the Union and to SOAR. The new charter will be displayed at the union hall in Pueblo.

Pictured, SOAR Chapter 38-3 President Joel Buchanan presents the new charter to members of Al Becco’s family, Michael Orazem and Norma Becco, who are also activists of the chapter.



Syracuse, NY—On December 18, 2024, after 15 incredible years of dedicated service, SOAR chapter members honored Hubert “Mickey” Berger as he retires from his role as President of 4-7, Greater Syracuse SOAR Chapter. His leadership and commitment have left a lasting impact on your community. Thank you, Mickey, for your unwavering dedication and countless contributions. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement!

Seated in the front row is Mickey Berger and his wife, Helen.

Pueblo, CO—On December 13, SOAR Chapter 38-3 members Frank Sandoval, Betty Spinuzzi and Joel Buchanan delivering 500 pairs of socks to Cooperative Care in Pueblo, Colorado. Every year members bring sock donations to the chapters annual holiday luncheon. Hundreds of socks have been donated over the years and distributed at Pueblo Cooperative Care Center to those who need a little help during the holiday season.



Whitehall, NY—SOAR Chapter 4-22, USW Local 4-2 and Irving Tissue management stepped up to support the Whitehall community during their water shortage crisis and delivered a full pallet of drinking water to the town.

On December 12, 2024, Chapter 4-22 President Dave Waters and dedicated volunteers delivered much-needed water supplies to the Whitehall Water Treatment Facility, ensuring that residents have access to clean and safe water. This effort wouldn’t have been possible without the hard work and generosity of our amazing members and supporters. Many thanks to all!



Shannon Sawyer, mill safety manager; sitting is Tom Sherman, Steelworker; Shane Davis SOAR fin. sec; tall guy in the middle is Phil Petteys; Billy Winters SOAR VP; and Chris Lalond, Steelworker member. LU 4-0002.



Dave Waters, chapter president, Dylan Griffin Steelworker, and Marc Baldwin Steelworker and SOAR member.

Above, left to right: Two workers from the water facility helping unload; Marc Baldwin, SOAR member and Whitehall resident; and Shane Davis, chapter fin. sec.



Photo by Getty Images

WILL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING GET CUT by the NEW CONGRESS?

The Trump administration is back in charge in Washington D.C., and it will be interesting to watch how the Republican team oversees some of the landmark legislation that became law during Joe Biden's presidency.



One aggressive achievement that we at the Alliance for American Manufacturing are quite fond of is the \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Finally, after years of stopgap measures, the president and congress collaborated on a real meaningful investment in America's infrastructure.

Lots of revenue. Lots of projects. Lots of jobs.

But Trump and fellow republicans are going to get a shot at slashing it because the Infrastructure Law, which passed in 2021, expires in 2026. Republican lawmakers who now control both branches of congress, may not want to reauthorize any bill with close to its current funding levels.

If President Trump and fellow republicans do not slash the infrastructure funding, they will probably reap credit for all the projects that will soon be taking place through-

out America. The law passed in 2021, but it takes several years for these funds to be utilized and nationwide improvements to begin.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing was strongly in favor of the 2021 law, and particularly of the significant expansion of the Buy America procurement rules it contains. The bill was long overdue: By the year it passed, approximately 230,000 bridges in America were in a state of disrepair. More than 40 percent of public roadways were in dangerous condition. The accumulation of deteriorated assets was predicted by 2039 to cost the United States \$10 trillion in GDP, 3 million in jobs, and \$2.4 trillion in lost exports due to increased business expenses, lost time and wasted fuel.

Rebuilding these assets with American-made materials and manufactured products has been

a positive economic double whammy: It improves the logistics network upon which our economy is built and simultaneously supports American manufacturing industries. A direct line can be drawn from reliable infrastructure to the competitiveness of our manufacturing base.

Letting inattention erode our infrastructure, on the other hand, makes manufacturing in America that much harder. Rolling back infrastructure spending in the name of deficit reduction would be penny-wise and pound-foolish.

It won't be long until we find out if massive improvements to our nation's infrastructure will continue or we return to the shortsighted ways of just fixing as little as we can without a real meaningful investment.

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

Woman of Steel Nellie Caraballo Has High Hopes for Next Generation

Continues Fight for Justice in Retirement

This article is part of the Women of Steel “Sister Stories” series.

When Nellie Caraballo began working for the City of Lorain, Ohio, in September 1986, she was in the early stages of rebuilding her life while going through a divorce and serving in the U.S. Army.

She had a toddler to raise, and she was eager for the good wages and benefits that would help her do that. Perhaps even more importantly, she would now be able to retire with a pension and health care.

This isn't to say her start in the public sector wasn't without challenges. In fact, Nellie spent the first half decade dealing with daily harassment from a foreman. The experience made her dread coming into work every day, and five years in, her local union president visited Nellie in her office. He said he knew she'd been experiencing problems and wanted to know why she had never come to the union for help.

“He encouraged me to file a grievance, and I asked what that was going to do for me,” Nellie said. “He looked at me and said, ‘I’ll show you.’”

The Making of an Activist

Within weeks, Nellie and her local president settled the dispute. Nellie was transferred to a different

department and the foreman was no longer allowed to enter her office or be near her while she was there.

“This sparked my interest in the union,” said Nellie. “How did this guy come into my office and resolve within weeks what I couldn't resolve in five years? I wanted to know what this was all about and learn whatever I could.”

This marked Nellie's involvement and commitment to her local, a decision that would eventually evolve

as she expanded her activism into the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), her Central Labor Council, and, of course, Women of Steel. Sixteen years into her career with the city, she joined the USW as a staff representative in District 1.

The Fight Continues

Now, as a retiree, Nellie continues serving the union as a SOAR activist. But she is also holding space for the next generation of leaders, who she believes is going to play a major role in transforming the idea of justice and progress.

“Young people are out there educating themselves, and it warms my heart,” Nellie said. “They're going to change Americans' thinking, and

I truly believe they're going to change the world and make it more inclusive.”

Nellie said that the fights younger workers are facing are, in many ways, the same fights her generation endured.

“We're still fighting division because there are factions that want to take us back, to erase history, so we still have to fight just to keep what we have,” she said. “We have to fight for our kids.”

Nellie also knows that there are always new fights. The one she was most recently focused on was taking action on the Social Security Fairness Act.

In December 2024, Nellie highlighted a critical issue affecting our union's public sector employees when she was featured in that month's “Sister Story” in the Women of Steel Newsletter which is also when, the U.S. House passed a bill to eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), both of which reduce Social Security benefits for certain retirees who also receive pension income, including public sector workers.

Following the U.S. House's passage of the bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act, Nellie urged all USW members to participate in a Rapid Response action by sending a prewritten letter to their Senators, encouraging support for the bill. The Social Security Fairness Act





Defined Benefit Pensions Help Everyone

By Robert Roach, Jr.

New research from the National Institute on Retirement Security proves what those of us in the labor movement have long known: defined benefit pensions don't just help the retirees who earned them but they drive our nation's economic growth.

"Pensionomics," a report released in January shows that defined benefit pension income significantly fueled the U.S. economy in 2022.

During that time, retirees received more than \$600 billion in public and private pension benefits. NIRS' research shows that these benefits contributed a total of \$1.5 trillion in economic output, supporting \$2.28 for every dollar paid out in pension benefits, and created more than 7 million jobs nationally. Pension income provided a particular boost for the food services, health care, and retail trade sectors.

Pension benefits also bolstered public finances, providing more than \$200 billion in tax revenue. Each

taxpayer dollar invested in state and local pensions generated \$7.79 in economic output nationwide. This influx of government funds spanned the federal, state, and local levels.



These findings dispel the harmful myth that pensions only directly affect retirees. It's clear that pension income is vital for growth and job creation.

That's why the Alliance will continue to fight to make sure retirees get the benefits they earned and that more Americans have access to the security a defined benefit pension provides..

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

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

aims to restore social security benefits for public sector workers who have contributed to the system but may experience deep reductions in their payments due to their employment in the public sector. For some retirees, the restoration of these benefits alleviates the need to ration medication or take on part-time work to make ends meet.

Today, we are pleased to report that our efforts were successful, and on Sunday, January 5, 2025, H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, was signed into law. This legislation eliminates the unjust Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), thereby restoring the promise of a secure and dignified retirement for individuals who have devoted their lives to serving our communities.

Remaining Committed

Nellie Caraballo exemplifies dedication and hard work and has consistently demonstrated her commitment as a vocal union activist. Her journey from serving in the U.S. Army to making significant contributions while working for our union has been an inspiration. She has encouraged others to move beyond merely identifying problems to actively participating in solutions. Now, as a retiree, Nellie remains committed to educating and empowering workers through her active role in SOAR, where she serves as a District 1 SOAR Coordinator.

As we look to the future and the challenges ahead, we recognize that our solidarity is our greatest strength. Collaboratively, USW



programs like SOAR, Women of Steel, Rapid Response, and activists like Nellie will continue to harness our collective power to effect meaningful change for retired and working people, not only to our union's negotiated contracts but in the halls of Congress and statehouses nationwide.



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