

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers



BLUE BIRD 'FAMILY' 04

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CUTS THREATEN JOBS 24

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"It is more important than ever that we lift our collective voices together and fight. So much of what we value as working people, as a labor movement, is being decimated by those who think they know what's best for workers. We've got work to do, but we are powerful. The fight is within us."

INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT ROXANNE BROWN, JULY 21, 2025, DURING "IT'S BETTER IN A UNION" BUS TOUR

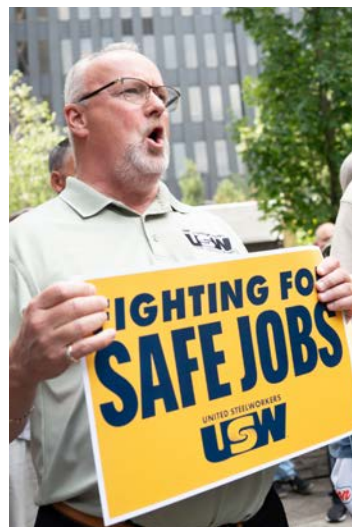
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The Trump administration's budget cuts are threatening to destroy vital programs that help keep workers safe on the job and protect their communities.

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Delushundra Thomas is the vice president of Local 697 at the Blue Bird Corp. school bus factory in Fort Valley, Ga.

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Focus on Safety Remakes Foundry

In recent years, Local 121B worked with Neenah Foundry management with a renewed commitment to safety. As a result, we created a safer working environment for our union brothers and sisters.

In 2022, Neenah Foundry had a total recordable incident rate above the industry average. This was not acceptable, and with new ownership and a renewed commitment to safety, we looked at ways to improve.

Local 121B proposed, and was able to create, a full-time union safety steward position. This was a new position within the safety department to provide hands-on work related to safety and safety training.

This position helped us develop training programs for new employees, provided a revamp of our orientation process, and provided hands-on training. It also resulted in safety policies that make sense for our environment and our workers.

As a result, the incident rate at Neenah Foundry improved considerably, to the point where, so far in 2025, there have been zero recordable injuries.

We are working every day to find and fix hazards so we can provide a safe environment where our union brothers and sisters can go home to their families the same way they came in – safe. We are proud that we were recently recognized for these outstanding safety efforts by the Wisconsin Safety Council.

*Mike Zimmerman
Local 121B
Neenah, Wis.*

Medicaid Cuts Hurt Patients, Caregivers

As a licensed practical nurse, I want to express my concerns regarding the

recent Medicaid cuts and the detrimental effects they will have on those who rely on nursing homes for care and employment.

Many of the residents where I work receive Medicaid funding. These cuts will result in reduced funding for patients and financial strain on facilities already facing challenges. Many nursing homes will have to make difficult decisions that could adversely affect patient care.

Nursing home staffing is already a challenge. Now, facilities may struggle to offer competitive wages, making it more difficult to retain qualified staff. This could lead to delays in patient care and inadequate attention to their needs.

Smaller nursing homes will be forced to shut down, potentially displacing patients. This transition will place additional financial and emotional burdens on families.

Medicaid cuts also limit access to essential community resources that support caregivers at home, such as meals and transportation. Physical therapy and other critical services also face reductions, which will diminish the quality of care for patients everywhere.

We must recognize the effects that these cuts will have on patients' health and well-being. For instance, an elderly patient who requires assistance with mobility may not receive physical therapy, leading to a decline in their physical abilities. This results in increased hospital readmissions for preventable conditions, further straining our system.

I urge everyone to consider the far-reaching consequences of these cuts on patients and workers. Our patients deserve compassionate and comprehensive care, and we must advocate for their needs.

*Desirae Beatty
Local 9002
Braddock, Pa.*

Fight for Future of Social Security

As a retiree, I'm not sure I've ever been more worried about the future of Social Security.

Even though President Trump said repeatedly that he "wouldn't touch" the program, his actions say otherwise. His plan to cut thousands of jobs in the Social Security Administration could directly affect the ability of retirees like me to receive monthly benefit checks on time.

These cuts are being made in the name of going after "waste, fraud and abuse," even though there is barely any there – an amount representing less than 1 percent of payments.

Still, people like me who paid into Social Security our whole working lives now are facing uncertainty, with a new federal budget that increases the rate at which the program will become insolvent.

Dozens of SSA offices are closing, and the Trump administration's plan for requiring in-person identity checks and discontinuing paper checks will pose even more challenges for older Americans.

The sad thing is, there is an easy fix that would extend the life of Social Security and preserve benefits for future retirees, but it often gets ignored. Did you know that a person who makes \$176,100 pays the same amount in Social Security tax as Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, or Donald Trump? This is the definition of a regressive tax.

Simply removing that income cap would make the system fairer and would raise billions more each year for the fund. It's a solution staring us in the face, but one that most of our politicians refuse to touch, because they would prefer to cut taxes on the rich and cut services for the rest of us.

*Scott Marshall
SOAR Chapter 31-9
Chicago*

STAY CONNECTED

We welcome correspondence from USW members, retirees and their families. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. You can reach us via email at editor@usw.org or by mail at 60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.



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Patrick
Watkins

After Historic Wins, Blue Bird Workers Look to Future

Three years ago, Ciera McClinton and many of her co-workers at Blue Bird Corp. were struggling at times to make ends meet and facing issues of favoritism, forced overtime and other unfair conditions on the job.

Now, the more than 1,500 members of Local 697 have a union contract – including wage increases, expanded benefits, improved scheduling and job security – that changed the lives of the workers at the school bus factory in Fort Valley, Ga.

“We wanted to at least be treated fairly,” said McClinton, a dispatcher who has worked for Blue Bird for six years. “We have seen a lot of progress.”

That progress began in 2022, when the workers launched a campaign to become USW members. They voted in May 2023, by a two-thirds majority, to do just that, in the largest organizing victory at a manufacturing plant in the South in 15 years. A year later, they signed their first contract.

“We were very excited about it after all the hard work that we put into it,” said Local 697 President Patrick Watkins. “I’m proud of what we accomplished. We created a family.”



Thomas
Smith



District 9 Director
Daniel Flippo,
Delushundra Thomas,
Alex Perkins



Danielle
Ballard



Jeffrey Johnson

Nakia Keen

NEW USW CONTRACT INCLUDES:

- WAGE INCREASES
- EXPANDED BENEFITS
- JOB SECURITY
- IMPROVED SCHEDULING

Part of a Team

That family consists of teams of workers who assemble, on average, 40 buses per day, about one quarter of which are electric vehicles. USW members work in a half-dozen “cells” spread across the sprawling manufacturing site.

The process begins in the chassis bay, a football-field-sized area where the sounds of electric screwdrivers, welders and rivet guns fill the air as members begin to assemble the bodies of the vehicles, starting with large metal beams.

From there, workers install the engines and other mechanical elements of the vehicles, then place windows, doors, steps, lights, heating and air conditioning, paint, mirrors, decals and other customized accessories as each bus moves along a carefully organized and choreographed assembly line.

Safety a Priority

When the vehicles are complete, members inspect every detail to ensure the buses meet strict quality-control and safety standards. Because 7 million people, mostly schoolchildren, ride Blue Bird vehicles each day, members prioritize safety, both for the workers at the plant and the passengers who ultimately make use of their products.

“It makes me proud to know that we put safety first,” McClinton said. “A lot of people depend on Blue Bird.”

In addition to students across the country, the people depending on Blue Bird include the residents of Fort Valley, where the company is by far the largest employer, with more than 2,000 workers.



Joanne Gooden



Lafallis
Anderson

Central Georgia's Peach County, where Fort Valley is the county seat, has fewer than 30,000 residents, so businesses across the region know the significant economic ripple effects that the strong wages and benefits Local 697 members provide.

"It's going to be big for the whole middle Georgia area," said Sam Porter, who has worked at the factory for 15 years. "People, they're starting to want to come to Blue Bird now. They know they're going to be treated properly."

When they ratified their contract last spring, some of the workers at Blue Bird received wage increases of as much as 40 percent, Watkins said. Overall, the three-year agreement, which runs through 2027, raises wages at least 12 percent across the board, while establishing vital health and safety, retirement and job security protections.

Local 697 Vice President Delushundra Thomas said having a union gives workers like her a voice and respect on the job, and she hoped other workers in the region would follow their lead.

"We are the ones who make change happen on the job," Thomas said. "If people see others doing good things, they will follow."



Boost from Biden

After the workers' historic vote to join the USW, then-President Joe Biden invited Thomas and other union leaders from across the United States to the White House for a discussion about union organizing.

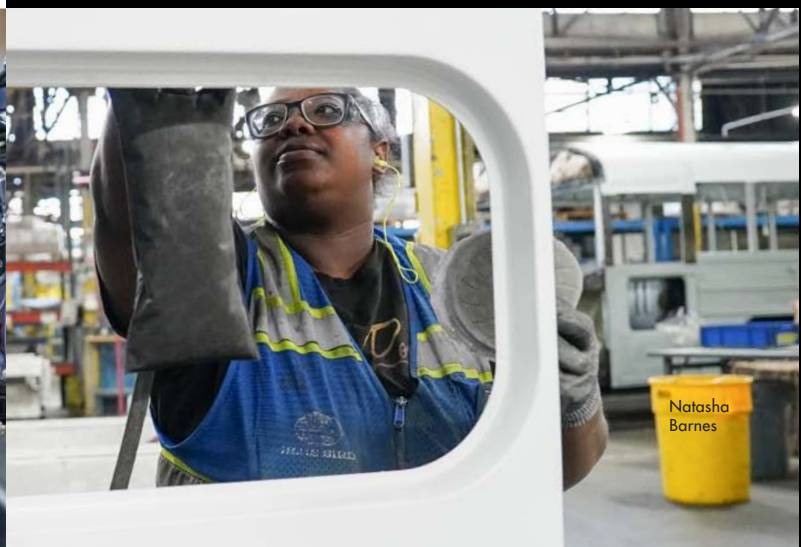
In addition, Blue Bird received an \$80 million federal grant last year from the Biden administration to help expand its production of low-emission and zero-emission vehicles. That project, underway at an adjacent site, is expected to create as many as 500 new jobs.

"The infrastructure bill, which our members pushed hard to get passed, that really helped this location," said Daniel Flippo, director of District 9, which includes USW members in Georgia as well as Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Since taking office in January, President Trump has repeatedly attempted to halt the distribution of funds Congress approved as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act and other Biden initiatives, jeopardizing investments in many similar projects and threatening thousands of jobs across the country.



Tatyiana
Rumph



Natasha
Barnes



Union Energy

Because Blue Bird's funding came with conditions meant to encourage union labor, it helped pave the way for the workers in Fort Valley to organize despite the historically difficult environment for labor in the region, Flippo said.

"Investments like these must come with a seat at the table for workers," he said. "The thing that makes this all work is the energy and engagement of the local union members."

That energy is evident throughout the plant as members go about their work day with a sense of pride and togetherness that comes with being part of a union community.

"People look forward to coming to Blue Bird every morning," McClinton said. "It means a lot to know that we were able to keep the community growing."

For Local 697 member and 14-year employee Shawn Cliett, the union contract – which members ratified by more than 95 percent – has been the difference between just scraping by and truly making a living.

"It was a rough time," Cliett said in describing life before the workers joined the USW. "We had to sacrifice a lot of things to even make a living."

Now, he said, workers are looking toward a future of growth and prosperity for their employer, their families, and their community.

Craig Corbin, a 20-year Blue Bird worker, said wages and benefits are just the tip of the iceberg when he thinks of all of the advantages of being a member of the USW.

Corbin said his union card also means improved communication with management, a sharper focus from the company on health and safety issues, and a sense of belonging.

"We are the ones who make change happen on the job. If people see others doing good things, they will follow." Local 697 Vice President Delushundra Thomas



Jaquasha
Troutman

Organizing the South

It's a feeling that Corbin hopes other workers in the South will try to replicate by becoming part of the labor movement.

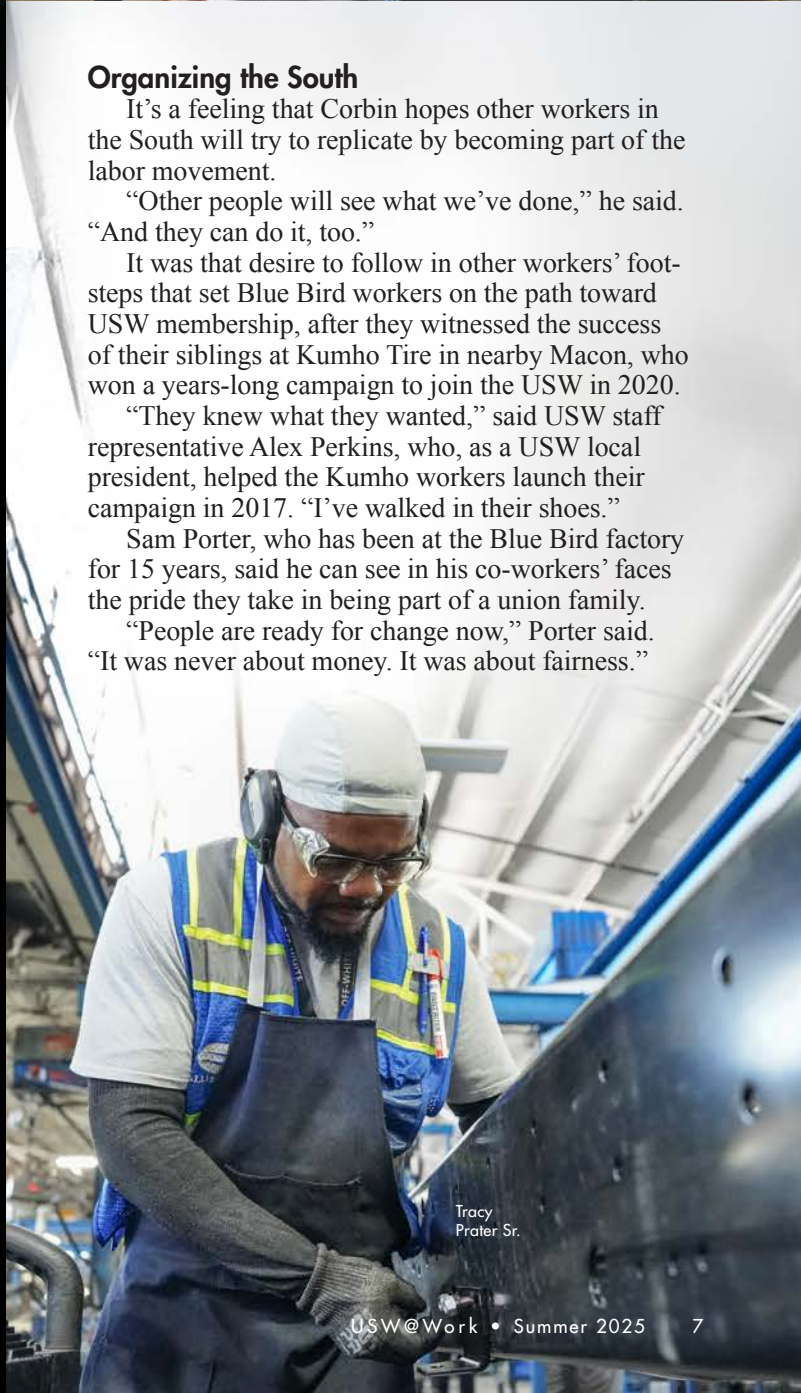
"Other people will see what we've done," he said. "And they can do it, too."

It was that desire to follow in other workers' footsteps that set Blue Bird workers on the path toward USW membership, after they witnessed the success of their siblings at Kumho Tire in nearby Macon, who won a years-long campaign to join the USW in 2020.

"They knew what they wanted," said USW staff representative Alex Perkins, who, as a USW local president, helped the Kumho workers launch their campaign in 2017. "I've walked in their shoes."

Sam Porter, who has been at the Blue Bird factory for 15 years, said he can see in his co-workers' faces the pride they take in being part of a union family.

"People are ready for change now," Porter said. "It was never about money. It was about fairness."



Tracy
Prater Sr.

SAFETY AGENCIES IN DANGER

SCHEME TO GUT FEDERAL WATCHDOGS PUTS WORKERS AT RISK

When an explosion at the BP-Husky refinery in Oregon, Ohio, took the lives of Ben and Max Morrissey – siblings by blood and USW membership – in September 2022, workers knew that a full investigation of the tragedy

was the best way to honor them while making their workplace safer.

Members of Local 1-346 looked to the one federal agency with the skill and tenacity to do so – the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, known as the CSB.

The CSB investigates chemical-related incidents, issues detailed reports on

what went wrong, and recommends steps to prevent future disasters. Since its inception in 1998, the agency has investigated nearly 180 incidents that included more than 200 fatalities and billions of dollars in damage to workplaces and communities.

Now, the agency is in danger of disappearing.

Throughout its history, the CSB has issued more than 1,000 recommendations aimed at keeping American workers safer. The agency's budget last year was \$14.4 million, and it employs a staff of just 50 people, meaning that eliminating it would save the government a minuscule fraction of its more than \$7 trillion budget, while putting Americans at greater risk.

"You know that they just want to find the answers," said Kyle Downour, unit chair for Local 1-346 at the Oregon refinery. He worked closely with investigators and said USW members were able to raise questions and had input into every phase of the investigation. "You don't want anybody else to ever go through this."

Eliminating Protections

Despite an outcry from unions, including the USW, industry groups, safety groups, lawmakers and environmental organizations, the Trump administration wants



UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
LOCAL 1-346

to abolish the CSB by 2026, a goal it failed to accomplish in its first term.

The scheme is part of a broader campaign to gut agencies that are essential to keeping workers safe, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA).

While all four agencies have separate roles, together they compose an essential safety net for workers.

“The administration’s baseless assault on safety agencies puts workers and communities in peril,” said International President David McCall.

In May, a coalition of unions, nonprofit organizations and industry groups sued the administration over what the group called an “unlawful shutdown” of NIOSH operations.

“Working people have fought too hard for these critical protections” to watch them disappear with the stroke of a pen, said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler.

More than 5,000 U.S. workers die on the job each year, while an estimated 135,000 succumb to occupational diseases.

Calls for Change

Following the tragedy at the Ohio refinery, the CSB recommended sweeping improvements to refinery operations. It also called for industry-wide safety enhancements and urged two trade organizations, the American Petroleum Institute and the International Society of Automation, to help drive safer practices among their members.

Similarly, following a massive explosion in 2019 at the Philadelphia Energy Solutions refinery, the agency called for improved safeguards and updated technology to protect workers and surrounding communities from disaster.

Life-saving findings like that “last forever,” helping more workers every day, said Local 248 President Bob Garrou, who works at a Packaging Corp. of America (PCA) facility in Tomahawk, Wis.

In 2008, three of Garrou’s co-workers died and a fourth sustained injuries

when a tank containing recycled water and fiber waste exploded during welding repairs.

‘It Opened Our Eyes’

After an investigation, CSB warned paper companies and workers nationwide about the flammable nature of decomposing pulp, a previously unrecognized hazard.

“You don’t think about rotting wood being explosive, but it is,” said Garrou, who ensures that all newly hired workers at PCA understand the danger and believes that their counterparts at other facilities are safer today because of the CSB’s work.

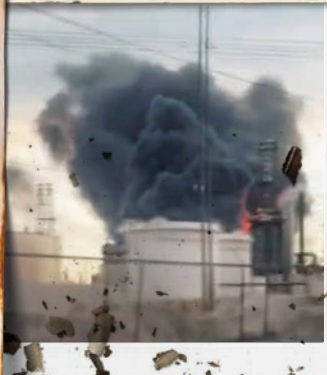
“The CSB really opened our eyes,” he said. “The CSB educated me and gave me really good tools for educating my members.”

For Garrou, the push to eliminate safety agencies like the CSB isn’t about trimming the budget, but instead about the Trump administration’s desire to help corporations cut corners wherever they can.

“They pay for themselves every day,” Garrou said of the CSB’s experts. “I can’t believe they’re on the chopping block.”



Ben and Max Morrissey



**SAVE
THE
CSB**

**“The administration’s
baseless assault
on safety agencies
puts workers and
communities in peril.”**

International President
David McCall



DEFENDING OUR DEFENDERS

Union Members March in D.C. to Demand Action on Veterans' Benefits

More than 40 Veterans of Steel activists traveled to Washington, D.C., on June 5th and 6th to lobby and rally on behalf of military veterans and to pressure Congress to protect those who protected their country.

John Stevens of Local 341 was one of them. A U.S. Army veteran, Stevens jumped at the chance to speak with officials about the Saving Veterans' Lives Act (H.R. 1987). The bill would direct Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish a program that provides free firearm lockboxes to veterans, along with educational materials about secure weapon storage.

For Stevens, this legislation isn't political—it's personal. His older brother also served in the military and struggled with his mental health for years after multiple deployments in the Middle East.

"He was dealing with the VA for a long time, and they kept pushing his

treatment back," said Stevens. "He ended up taking his own life in 2017 before they could get him in."

Since President Trump was inaugurated, his administration has been shedding employees of Veterans Affairs, which provides health care to roughly 9 million veterans. VA Secretary Doug Collins has proposed cutting around 80,000 employees—about 15 percent—from the agency's work force, of which 25 percent are veterans.

Stevens fears that gutting this agency, which already experiences bottlenecks, will worsen conditions for those suffering with mental health issues.

"You can't postpone things like this," he said. "It has to happen immediately."

Reversing the Rollback

The group of activists also spoke with their elected officials about the Protect America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550), which, like H.R. 1987, has bipartisan support. It aims

to reverse Trump's executive order issued in March that stripped collective bargaining rights from 1.5 million federal workers.

These rights are protected under Title 5 of the U.S. Code, which includes vital workplace protections such as fair pay, equitable treatment, protection against workplace retaliation, whistleblower protections, health and safety standards, and due process in grievance and disciplinary matters.

Federal workers—roughly one-third of whom are veterans—already surrender many rights that private-sector employees enjoy, including the ability to negotiate wages and benefits and the fundamental right to strike.

A Powerful Reminder

The following day, the USW activists joined thousands of other union members, veterans and allies for a rally on the National Mall organized by the Union Veterans Council.

"This is about protecting the promises we made to our veterans,"

USW activists joined thousands of other union members, veterans and allies for a rally on the National Mall organized by the Union Veterans Council. The rally featured an explosive performance by the American Celtic punk band Dropkick Murphys.



said Kate Logan, an Iraq War veteran and immigrant who emceed the rally, which also featured an explosive performance by the American Celtic punk band Dropkick Murphys.

The event was made all the more powerful by being held on D-Day, commonly known as the day the Western Allied effort landed in France to liberate western Europe from Nazi Germany.

Speakers addressed the duty veterans and active military members have to not only honor the memory of those lost during that historic battle for freedom abroad, but to continue the fight here at home.

“Our mission has not changed,” said Everett Kelly, national president of the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the union currently fighting like hell to reinstate bargaining rights for their workers. Kelly is also a veteran himself. “Our mission is to protect and serve, to support and defend, and that has not changed.”

He’s also part of the coalition working to protect the VA as the current administration has already cut many key benefits and programs, including a new mortgage-rescue program that so far has helped about

20,000 veterans avoid foreclosure and keep their homes.

“What has changed, however, is the government’s promise to be there for us when we get home,” said Kelly.

The Fight Continues

Will Attig served alongside Logan as a rally emcee and works full-time as the executive director of the Union Veterans Council. Attig knows personally how hard the transition is from military to civilian life, which is why he fights just as hard now to help his fellow veterans. It’s also why protecting and enhancing benefits for veterans is so necessary.

“When I left the military, I brought

home a pretty big bag of issues and was trying, like many veterans, to find work during the recession,” said Attig. “I was able to find a job through a welding program that allowed me to become a union pipefitter, and I knew I had to find a way to help others get that same kind of opportunity.”

Stevens also knows how important it is for unions to support their members who have served through programs like Veterans of Steel.

“It’s a voice for veterans and helps push important legislation,” said Stevens. “There’s also the camaraderie aspect that you can’t find a whole lot of outside the military.”

Learn more about Veterans of Steel!
Visit usw.to/vetsofsteel

A UNITED STEELWORKERS PODCAST

SOLIDARITY WORKS

Listen to the Solidarity Works podcast to learn more about the USW's fight to preserve benefits and services for America's veterans. Visit usw.to/podcast.





International President
David McCall

USW Hosts AFL-CIO Bus Tour Promoting Unions, Fighting Trump

USW members helped the AFL-CIO kick off a pro-union bus tour in July with rallies in Pittsburgh and Newport News, Va., denouncing the Trump administration's attacks on labor rights, safety, Medicaid and veterans' services.

The 26-state bus tour—"It's Better in a Union: Fighting for Freedom, Fairness & Security"—marshaled the power of solidarity while sending a clear message to Trump and his Republican lackeys in Congress: Working people are fed up and fighting back.

Speakers noted that unions not only afford workers freedom to organize and ensure fairness in the workplace but provide security amid Trump's onslaughts.

"It's easy to get discouraged," Kayla Flowers, a Local 3657 member who works in the USW's Health, Safety and Environment Department, told hundreds of workers who turned out for the Pittsburgh rally July 21.

"But we have something they don't," she added. "We have each other. We have the labor movement. We have a strong union."

The AFL-CIO launched the bus tour just as Republicans passed a federal spending bill that cuts Medicaid so deeply it's expected to cost about 12 million Americans their health insurance and imperil hundreds of health facilities, while adding more than \$3 trillion to the national debt.

"This bill isn't about balancing the budget or helping

workers. It's about giving more tax handouts to the wealthy at the expense of everyone else," International President David McCall said at the Pittsburgh event, noting the cuts to Medicaid, food support programs and other lifelines will fund a massive redistribution of wealth benefiting billionaires.

Erin Gurley, a physician's assistant at the Squirrel Hill Health Center in Pittsburgh, told the crowd that a quarter of her patients rely on Medicaid.

"They won't just stop getting sick," observed Gurley, who voted along with 40 co-workers to join the USW last year. "Isn't access to medical care a human right?"

That harmful spending bill represents just one part of Trump's wide-ranging assault on working families.

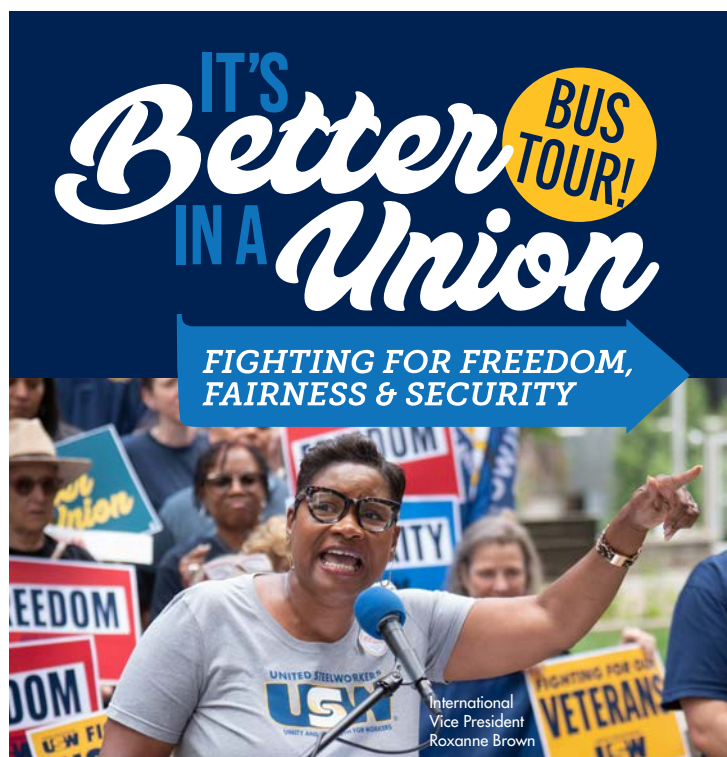
He fired a member of the National Labor Relations Board, paralyzing the agency's efforts to hold employers accountable.

He gutted the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and revealed plans to abolish the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

He even slashed fines issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, where Flowers once worked, inviting bosses to cut corners and put workers' lives at risk.

"The attacks on worker health and safety have been constant over the past six months, with more to come," International Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown warned July 12 in Newport News, the first stop on the bus tour.

Newport News is home to 10,000 members of Local 8888



International
Vice President
Roxanne Brown



Mike
Lewis

District 10 Director
Bernie Hall



who perform critical but hazardous work making aircraft carriers and submarines for the Navy. Trump's decimation of safety agencies makes the union members' jobs all the more dangerous, Brown and Local 8888 members told the gathering.

"The sad truth, as we all know, is that Trump doesn't like us," said Local 8888 Vice President Kenny Lewis, a third-generation shipbuilder, urging workers to step up and defend their rights like previous generations of union members.

"My grandfather did what he had to do. My father did what he had to do. Now, it's up to us to do what we have to do," he said.

AFL-CIO leaders, pro-worker officials and members of various other unions joined the rallies, where speakers also lambasted Trump for stripping federal workers of their

collective bargaining rights, decimating veterans' services and cutting research funding to universities.

"What an incredibly powerful statement we are making together here," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, who accompanied the bus to Pittsburgh. "Working people have had enough."

Brown steeled union members for the tough work ahead. "You punch back," she said. "You kick back."



AFL-CIO
President
Liz Shuler



LABOR DAY: KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM!

As the "It's Better in a Union" bus tour wraps up this August, leaders in the USW and AFL-CIO are urging workers to keep up the momentum they built this summer with public demonstrations of solidarity in conjunction with Labor Day on Sept. 1.

Whether it is a march or a rally, a picnic or a parade, Labor Day events give workers the opportunity to celebrate each other and demonstrate the power of their unity. This year, workers across the United States have a chance to speak out for freedom, fairness, and security – an economy, a government, and a country that works for the people, not the ultra-wealthy.



Union members can find upcoming events in their communities by visiting www.mobilize.us/aflcio/ or by scanning the code.



'It makes EVERYBODY STRONGER'

Union Solidarity Stretches Across Borders, Oceans

When USW members joined thousands of other workers and activists this April for a march through the streets of Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico, it marked two decades of solidarity between U.S. and Mexican workers.

The event also was the latest in a series of powerful examples of USW members uniting across borders and oceans to create a stronger labor movement to push back against the power of multinational corporations.

"In a global economy, we ought to have a global workers' voice," International President David McCall declared at this year's USW convention, just a few weeks before the Lázaro Cárdenas

march. "International solidarity is deeply rooted in our union's identity."

20-Year Partnership

The USW's official partnership with the Mexican mine and metalworkers' union, known as Los Mineros, began at the 2005 USW convention, where the two unions entered into a strategic alliance.

That connection has grown stronger in the two decades since, improving living standards for Mexican workers while helping to safeguard good jobs for USW members. The ultimate goal, leaders of both unions say, is to unify workers across North America.

"Our unions share

common principles, common values and a common history," said Los Mineros President Napoleón Gómez Urrutia. "Employers and politicians try to divide us, so we have to keep fighting together."

The annual rally and march in Lázaro Cárdenas, commemorating two union members who were murdered by security forces during a 2006 strike, is an opportunity for the two unions to publicly demonstrate their unity.

The event also celebrates the resilience of Gómez, who returned to Mexico in 2018 and was sworn in as a member of the Senate after 12 years in exile in Canada, where he successfully fought

bogus corruption charges with help from the USW.

Instant Connection

Erik Alcantar first began to attend the march in 2009, when he was a trustee for Local 9777, outside of Chicago.

Initially serving as a translator, he has gone on to help coordinate the USW's participation as a District 7 staff representative since 2017.

"The connection with Mexican workers was instantaneous," said Alcantar "I feel at home when I'm with the Mineros."

Over the years, District 7 and Alcantar have strengthened their connection to Mexican people, providing



annual donations to local schoolchildren, nursing home residents and others in need.

“It fills my heart to do this work,” he said.

Focus on Trade

While the union’s partnership with Los Mineros stretches back 20 years, the USW’s global focus began decades earlier.

In the early 1970s, multinational corporations began offshoring good jobs to locations such as Mexico and China, where they could maximize profits by paying a fraction of the wages American workers earned. Imports increased, and U.S. manufacturing communities began to suffer.

Then-International President I.W. Abel began sounding the alarm in 1973, urging leaders in Congress to “slow the massive flood of imports that are sweeping away jobs and industries.”

Workers in the United States and around the world soon realized that with fair trade and strong unions in all nations, corporations would have less incentive to offshore jobs, and workers everywhere could have better lives.

Global union partnerships were a crucial part of the fight to reject the Trans-Pacific Partnership nearly a decade ago, as well as the effort to introduce labor protections into the United States-Mex-

ico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the replacement for the failed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Since the USMCA took effect in 2020, the USW has supported Los Mineros and other Mexican unions to bring multiple cases under the agreement’s “rapid response” mechanism in both the U.S. and Canada to address abuses of workers’ rights at individual workplaces, including ContiTech, Goodyear, Grupo Mexico, and Orla Mining.

Global Coalitions

Today, the USW participates in three global union federations – IndustriALL, UNI and Building and Wood

Workers’ International (BWI) – that in total represent more than 82 million workers in more than 150 countries.

In addition, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund works to promote respect for human and workers’ rights in Canada and around the world, while fostering educational opportunities for workers and providing humanitarian aid in emergencies.

“The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is committed to supporting workers around the world, especially in times of crisis,” said Marty Warren, national director for Canada. “Our goal is to provide support and relief to those who need it most.”



“

What kind of people are we if we allow Firestone to get away with this and we don't even try to help?

International Vice President, Kevin Mapp

The USW and its allies also created dozens of global councils for workers at ArcelorMittal, BASF, Bridgestone, Dow-DuPont, Gerdau, Newmont, and other multinational companies. Employers have learned that taking on workers at one factory meant fighting on a global scale.

Through IndustriALL, Kent Holsing, of Local 12075 at Dow in Michigan, has built relationships with workers in Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Turkey and other countries.

Those partners have helped to educate and guide each other through difficult negotiations, mergers, divestments, threats of closure and other difficult situations.

“The opportunity to network, assist and communicate has a direct effect on the success of collective bargaining,” Holsing said.

Far-Reaching Success

With that goal in mind, the USW in 2008 partnered with Unite the Union of Great Britain and Ireland to create Workers Uniting, the first trans-Atlantic union.

Over the years, USW members have stood up against the oppression of their siblings in places like Bangladesh, Guinea, Indonesia, and Madagascar. They've taken on companies like ArcelorMittal, Firestone, Goodyear, Rio Tinto, Vale, and others.

Members have built lasting partnerships with workers in South Africa and Brazil, helping them stand up against greedy employers and right-wing politicians who side with them over their workers.

When contract workers on the Firestone rubber plantation in Liberia sought last year to unionize, the USW and the Solidarity Center came to their aid with power-building workshops, organizing assistance, solidarity actions and public support, calling attention to the poor working and living conditions they faced.

“What kind of people are we if we allow Firestone to get away with this and we don't even try to help?” asked International Vice President Kevin Mapp, who visited as part of a USW delegation. “If they can get away with it, they will.”

In turn, workers around the world have the backs of their USW siblings. In August 2023, 38 members of UNI Global Union from 16 countries walked the picket line with workers from Local 4-200 at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Jersey. USW members credited the visit with lifting morale and helping to turn the tide in their struggle.

This June, members rallied outside the Vancouver offices of Orla Mining to protest violence and intimidation against workers at the company's Camino Rojo mine in Mexico.

That same month, McCall joined Michael Vassiliadis, his counterpart with the German Industrial Union of Mining, Chemical, and Energy Workers, in calling for leaders around the world to adopt a worker-centered agenda.

“Workers all over the world have far more in common with each other than they do with the billionaire class,” McCall said, as the pair signed a compact calling on political and industrial leaders to adopt long-term policies that put workers and their communities ahead of profits. “Workers are ready and willing to do our part, and we expect policymakers and industry leaders to do the same.”

Youth Exchange

USW members from Canada recently traveled to Mexico City as part of a youth exchange program, co-hosted by the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, Los Mineros and other unions.

One of the participants in the exchange was Sharif Ali of Local 3950, a utility operator at Continuous Colour Coat in Toronto.

As a Canadian worker employed by a U.S.-based company, Ali understands firsthand the need to reach across borders. He said workers around the world must renew their commitment to each other.

“We have to build real solidarity,” he said, noting that Telus, a major USW employer in Canada, is currently trying to prevent telecommunications workers in Turkey from forming a union. “If we put pressure on Telus, that could help them in Turkey ... it just makes everybody stronger.”



industri all
global union

International Vice President Roxanne Brown was elected in June as vice president for the North American region of the global labor union IndustriALL.

Brown, who has served as USW international vice president at large since 2019, oversees the union's public policy, legislative and political work. She has spent more than two decades working with USW members to advance pro-worker policies across North America.

IndustriALL spearheads campaigns to improve wages and working conditions across the globe, and fights to build stronger unions, support organizing campaigns, and advocate for workers' rights.

Founded in 2012, IndustriALL includes more than 600 labor organizations in 140 countries.



LOCAL NUMBER		Various USW Locals	
LOCATION		U.S.A	
DESCRIPTION		Notebooks, Paper, Pens, Pencils, Paints, Lunch Trays, and Milk Cartons	

Union-Made School Supplies

USW members are involved in producing a wide variety of items used in schools, from notebooks and paper, to pens, pencils and paints, to lunch trays and milk cartons.

From paper and cards used for classroom handouts and tests, administrative paperwork, student projects and other tasks, schools utilize thousands of sheets every day of the many types of paper USW members make. In addition, schools put to use thousands of sheets of paper towels, bathroom tissue, napkins, facial tissue, sanitizing wipes and other USW-made products every day.

As families across the country get ready to send their kids back to school, here is a sampling of some of the USW-made supplies shoppers can purchase – online or in stores – while also supporting their union siblings.



ROARING SPRINGS NOTEBOOKS
Roaring Spring Paper Products, Roaring Spring, Pa.,
LOCAL 488

MEAD AND FIVE STAR NOTEBOOKS AND PLANNERS
ACCO Brands, Alexandria, Pa.,
LOCAL 1442

PAPER AND CONSTRUCTION PAPER
Hammermill, Accent Opaque, HP Papers, Williamsburg Offset, Springhill Paper,
VARIOUS USW LOCALS

PAPER, POSTER BOARD, NOTEPADS
Sylvamo, Ticonderoga, N.Y.,
LOCAL 4-0005 + LOCAL 497



PENCILS AND ART SUPPLIES
Dixon Ticonderoga, Appleton, Wis.,
LOCAL 2-1822

PENS
BIC Corp., Orange, Conn.,
LOCAL 134

PAINTS AND ART SUPPLIES
Martin F. Weber, Philadelphia,
LOCAL 286





U.S. Steel's new owner, Nippon, could take advantage of its new status as a means to continue its history of violating U.S. trade laws.

'OUR UNION WILL REMAIN'

USW Vows to Hold Nippon Accountable After Sale Closes

The USW promised that the union would use the collective power of its members to hold Nippon accountable after the \$15 billion sale of U.S. Steel to the Japanese steelmaker closed in June.

"We will continue watching, holding Nippon to its commitments," said International President David McCall. "We will use the most powerful tool workers have against global corporations: collective bargaining."

Changing Course

With an executive order on June 13, President Trump reversed course and approved the merger, after more than a year of speaking forcefully against the deal.

In return, the companies provided him with a so-called "golden share," an arrangement that he said gives the president unprecedented power over certain business decisions.

Trump, who initially vowed to block the merger on national security grounds, as President Joe Biden did in January before leaving office, began to misleadingly characterize the deal as a "partnership" in the weeks leading up to his reversal.

USW Skeptical

The USW expressed concerns that, despite the arrangement with the White House, the union was never consulted on the terms of the agreement, and that U.S. Steel's new owner, Nippon, could take advantage of its new status as a means to continue its history of violating U.S. trade laws.

"Nippon has a long history of committing unfair trade practices," McCall said. "The International Trade Commission determined that the company violated U.S. trade laws in 13 different cases. Yet, despite ongoing injury and continuing penalties, Nippon is being rewarded."

Collective Bargaining

District 7 Director Mike Millsap, who chairs the union's negotiations with U.S. Steel, noted that the USW's current contract with the steelmaker expires in September 2026. He said the union will use all of its power during next year's negotiations to make sure that the union's next agreement with Nippon makes progress on behalf of workers.

"If our job security, pensions, retiree health care or other hard-earned benefits are threatened," Millsap said, "we are ready to respond with the full

strength and solidarity of our membership."

McCall and Millsap both promised that, even as public attention on the deal dissipates, the union will never stop holding ownership accountable to its commitments to workers and will always focus on the long-term future.

"Management at U.S. Steel and Nippon have since December of 2023 aggressively promoted their deal, pouring vast amounts of resources into downplaying concerns regarding both the long-term future of USW members' jobs and our national security," McCall said. "As the sale concludes, it seems likely that attention will dissipate. U.S. Steel's PR machine will power down, and the majority of elected officials will turn their attention elsewhere. However, our union will remain."

The USW will continue to look out for the interests of workers and communities, in Washington, at the bargaining table, and anywhere else the fight takes them, he said.

"Our members know from decades of negotiating contracts," McCall said. "Trust nothing until you see it in writing."



USW RECOMMITTS TO FIGHT FOR LGBTQ+ WORKERS

USW leaders vowed that they would step up their fight for the rights of LGBTQ+ workers this June as Americans celebrated Pride Month.

“USW members at our recent Constitutional Convention recommitted ourselves to the fight for civil and human rights, including protecting LGBTQ+ workers – a fight that is as important now as ever,” International President David McCall said in a joint statement with the union’s LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee.

“We are witnessing increasing attacks in both the United States and Canada on the rights of marginalized people, depriving many in our societies of their fundamental freedom to live their everyday lives without fear and oppression.

“It’s on us, as labor activists and as citizens, to stand up for those who only want to live in peace,” the statement declared. “Whether it’s at the bargaining table, in the halls of our elected officials, or in our communities, we will use our power to defend those who face ignorance and abuse.

“We will never turn our backs on our founding principles or on our fellow siblings. It is not the union way, and we won’t be taken in by a cruel distraction that weakens our movement and drives wedges in our democracies.

“Instead, this Pride Month, we recommit ourselves to justice and dignity for all.”





WOMEN OF STEEL MAKE US STRONGER.

20 YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE MEMBERS APPROVED WOS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Bonnie Carey has been a Woman of Steel since 1978, when she went to work at the massive aluminum mill in Davenport, Iowa.

In a male-dominated environment, she became the first woman to operate computer-numerical-control (CNC) mills at the plant and became a safety trainer, instructing others on how to operate trucks and overhead cranes.

Carey became an activist through the union's Rapid Response and Women of Steel programs, serving as a coordinator for both groups until she retired in 2009. Her activism didn't stop there, as she went on to form SOAR Chapter 11-4 and to represent District 11 on the SOAR Executive Board, a position in which she still serves.

"The Women of Steel have worked with me in politics, they've worked with me in safety, now they're working with me in SOAR," Carey said. "These women are awesome."

Since the Beginning

It was 20 years ago — at the 2005 USW Constitutional Convention — that members voted to amplify the voices of those "awesome" women — by amending the union's founding document to ensure that all locals would have Women of Steel (WOS) committees.

While that change came two decades ago, women have been active in the USW since day one. In 1942, the year of the union's founding, Betty Karr became the first woman to serve as a local president.

Over the years, despite the resistance they faced from some co-workers and employers, women continued to make their voices heard in USW union halls, workplaces and events across North America, and, in the process, helped to shape the future for Steelworkers as they fought for justice for themselves and their siblings.

"Women of Steel is an important part of the USW because women are an important part of the USW," said Molly McVay, a Woman of Steel from Local 11228 at AGCO Corp. in Hesston, Kan.

The WOS program "provides mentorship in the form of guidance and support," McVay said. "It creates a welcoming environment where people can openly talk about their feelings and concerns without fear of judgment or retaliation."

Consent Decree

That type of environment has not always been available to women workers, particularly in industrial settings — like steel mills — that were historically dominated by men.

A 1974 consent decree — an agreement between the U.S. government and major American steelmakers — aimed to end discriminatory practices that had long prevented women and people of color from landing good jobs in those workplaces.

That same year, women workers founded the Coalition of Labor Union Women in Chicago.

Those milestones helped to open the door for more Women of Steel to become active members of the USW, and helped the organization grow into the strong, diverse union it is today.

"In so many of our local unions, the Women of Steel are at the heart of what we do," said International Vice President Roxanne Brown. "They are some of our most passionate activists and most skilled organizers. The Women of Steel make us stronger."

USW Leadership

Brown took office in 2019, after years of working with members to craft the union's legislative agenda and advance worker-friendly policies in Washington, D.C., and in statehouses across the country.

Brown succeeded Carol Landry, the union's first woman to serve as USW international vice president and the first woman on the union's International Executive Board. During her 11-year tenure, Landry oversaw tremendous growth in the WOS program.

"If it weren't for the Women of Steel program, I probably wouldn't be where I am today," Landry said in 2016. "It gave me the skills I needed to become an activist."

When Landry retired in 2019, two Women of Steel — Brown and former International Vice President Leeann Foster — joined the executive board.

Cathy Drummond, a WOS member since 1998, became the union's first woman district director in 2023, when she was tapped to lead District 11.



International Vice President
Roxanne Brown



District 11 Director
Cathy Drummond



Bonnie Carey



"It's important that in every one of our workplaces, we make sure that we create space for Women of Steel and that we foster an environment where we can all support and learn from each other," Drummond said.

Workplace Victories

In addition to reshaping the USW with their leadership over the decades, Women of Steel fought for justice for workers across North America.

With help from the union's grassroots Rapid Response and political programs, WOS members fought to pass landmark legislation — such as the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and the Violence Against Women Act — to address issues of discrimination and abuse.

Just as importantly, they fought at bargaining tables across all industries to establish contract language on issues such as sexual harassment, safety and health, child and dependent care, work-life balance, domestic violence and other important advancements, that benefit all USW members, regardless of gender.

They also fought on a global scale — through organizations such as IndustriALL and the International Labour Organization — to address gender-based violence, harassment and other issues affecting women workers around the world.

All the while, WOS members built solidarity with and fought alongside their union brothers, knowing that only through the power of unity could they achieve lasting victories.

"It's important for union brothers to understand Women of Steel," said former WOS Director Ann Flener-Gittlen, who led the organization for 17 years before retiring in 2023. "It strengthens the union as a whole for all of us."

Raising the Bar

Addressing the issue of domestic violence through collective bargaining was a major part of "Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety," the union's 40-page action guide initially developed by WOS and the USW's Canadian office, and later adapted for use by local unions in the United States.

In addition to addressing the need for leave for workers experiencing intimate partner abuse, the guide provides tools members can use to address other issues, including harassment, gender identity, ergonomics, work-life balance, restrooms and change rooms, uniforms, personal protective equipment, and reproductive health.

Members can find the guide and other WOS resources at: usw.org/get-involved/women-of-steel.

Community Service

For all of their activism on an international scale, Women of Steel make perhaps their most visible and tangible impact on the local level, in their own workplaces and communities.

Beth Geary, of Local 1145, has worked at Ebara Elliott Energy in Jeannette, Pa., for 13 years. For her, the WOS program provides both a network of sisters to lean on at work and a group of like-minded people to spearhead community projects outside of work.

The Local 1145 WOS group has provided Thanksgiving dinners for families in need, partnered

WOMEN OF STEEL

FORM THE FOUNDATION OF USW

Article VII of the USW constitution, entitled “Local Unions,” lays out the various standing committees that the union has established to help members carry out the work of the union.

These include local grievance committees, as well as committees concerned with civil and human rights, organizing, Next Generation, workers’ compensation, safety and health and veterans’ issues.

For the past 20 years, since the union’s 2005 convention, USW members have been tasked

with maintaining Women of Steel committees in locals with female membership.

In addition to addressing issues of discrimination and promoting equity in the workplace, Women of Steel members help their bargaining committees craft contract language to support and protect their siblings.

Women of Steel build relationships with other unions to create community-wide solidarity. They promote and provide educational opportunities for their fellow workers. They raise funds and collect goods to support charitable causes and aid their neighbors in need. They ensure safer, more inclusive workplaces for all workers.

Through national constituency groups like the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Women of Steel seek to break down barriers to progress and build connections between the feminist movement and the wider labor movement. They fight on a

national and international level on issues like equal pay, gender-based discrimination and harassment, paid sick leave and family leave, child care and other important needs.

All female-identifying members of the USW are considered Women of Steel, regardless of their union position or the industry or service in which they work.

Women of Steel activists play a variety of roles, from serving on their local committees to spearheading community engagement to mentoring their union sisters. To learn more about Women of Steel, attend your next local union meeting, speak to a local union officer, or scan the QR code on this page.



◀ SCAN HERE OR HEAD TO
[USW.ORG/GET-INVOLVED/
WOMEN-OF-STEEL](https://usw.org/get-involved/women-of-steel)

with Veterans of Steel to collect coats for a nearby community center, raised funds for a local women’s shelter, and sponsored sports teams, among other projects. In addition, they’ve fought for improvements in parental leave and uniform policies in their workplace.

“We try to localize a lot of the things that we do,” said Geary. “We are definitely known throughout the community.”

Geary, the first female president in her unit, credits her union sister, Jen Mullen, with helping to inspire her to take on a larger role in the union.

“None of this would have happened without us working together,” she said.

Inspiration and Education

Angel Ramirez of Local 1014L at Cleveland Clinic Akron General said that the most important aspect of the WOS program has been the education she receives through the WOS Leadership Program.

Ramirez, in year three of the program, said that

when she became a USW member 11 years ago, she was shy and reserved. WOS, she said, brought her out of that shell.

“It was really inspiring,” she said. “Ever since then, I am much more outspoken.”

Now, in addition to serving as treasurer of her local, she is active in WOS, serves as chair of the local NextGen committee and as Rapid Response coordinator. This past April, she served as a delegate at the USW convention.

Like their siblings, the Local 1014L WOS contribute to their community, making blankets for families who lost loved ones, collecting supplies for animal shelters and helping to support local food banks.

The group also wrote contract language for their bargaining committee on issues like providing privacy for lactating women.

“Men don’t have to go through a lot of the same things that women do,” Ramirez said.

Ramirez and her Local 1014L siblings embody what Director Randie Pearson sees as the three pillars of the WOS program: Education, activism and service.

Members must embrace all three of those aspects as they navigate an uncertain future, Pearson said.

“As women continue to face a tougher landscape,” she said, “it’s up to Women of Steel to educate ourselves and our sisters to ensure that we are our siblings’ keepers.”

Memorable Moments

Carey, whose activism stretches back more than 25 years, said that her most memorable moment as a WOS member came during the Iraq War, when members of Local 105 collected supplies and sent care packages to U.S. soldiers stationed overseas.

The boxes, which contained “Rosie the Riveter” stickers, struck a particular chord with one commander, whose late mother had been a “Rosie” during World War II. The sticker, he said, was a much-needed reminder that she was watching over him.

“I was so proud. It truly hit a lot of people’s hearts,” Carey said. “We’ve done a lot of community work, but I can’t top that one.”

JOB KILLING

CUTS



Cuts to IRA and IIJA funding from Trump are threatening investments and jobs at USW-represented facilities.

noting workers at that point had begun relocating the power house to make space for the new furnaces.

But as Trump and his Department of Energy began reneging on IRA commitments in the spring, Libbey confirmed that it would lose its grant after all.

Bixler said the company ultimately pledged to continue operating the Toledo plant—but intended to do so using the old, existing equipment.

Without federal support, he said, Libbey scrapped plans for the new, state-of-the-art furnaces. Off the table as well were dozens of additional jobs that would have accompanied the upgrades, Bixler said, adding that the disappointment in Trump rippled through the community.

The USW and other unions helped to push the IRA through Congress three years ago without a single Republican vote.

By fall 2024, the law had helped to create 150,000 jobs. In all, it was projected to create 13.7 million jobs while growing the economy by \$1.9 trillion, according to an independent

Trump Administration Claws Back Funding, Stunting Growth

USW members at the Libbey Glass plant in Toledo, Ohio, celebrated last year when President Joe Biden's administration awarded the company up to \$45.1 million from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to build a pair of hybrid electric furnaces.

No longer, the workers believed, would they have to jury-rig aging, outdated equipment to maintain production at the century-old plant, a linchpin of Toledo's economy.

The innovative new furnaces—designed to reduce emissions, increase efficiency and usher in a new era of glassmaking—promised long-term stability for their plant and a giant leap forward for American manufacturing.

Workers quickly undertook the first steps in the complex construction project. And then in May, Donald Trump stabbed them all in the back.

Trump summarily canceled \$3.7 billion in IRA grants, including the one at Libbey, killing jobs and bringing a manufacturing resurgence to a screeching halt. Dozens of projects advancing the future of cement, glass, steel and other industries—many of them involving USW members—all fell by the wayside.

"It's been total disbelief," said Tom Bixler, president of Local 65T, one of three USW bargaining units representing about 620 workers at the Toledo plant. "It's been a shock to our system."

Trump began threatening the IRA even before taking office in January, and workers approached Libbey with their concerns.

"We were told straight up that the grant was already granted, already approved by the U.S. government, and will not be taken away," Bixler said of Libbey's response,



study commissioned by the American Clean Power Association, an industry group.

The Department of Energy carefully selected grant recipients based on their potential to build manufacturing capacity, enhance America's global competitiveness and support family-sustaining jobs.

The opportunity proved so historic that the USW and Heidelberg Materials in Mitchell, Ind., worked together to secure up to \$500 million for a modernization of the nation's second-biggest cement plant.

Federal and state officials joined union and company representatives last year at a ceremony to announce the investments, which were among the largest allocated under the IRA. Heidelberg Materials went on to perform significant engineering and site-preparation work for the project, only to have Trump pull the plug.

"It was a big deal," Local 7-00030 President Doug Duncan said of the project, which would have supported 1,000 temporary construction jobs and generated dozens of permanent positions.



Trump likes to talk about building manufacturing capacity and making more goods in America. But that's just bluster.

His rollback of the IRA showed his true feelings – contempt for manufacturing communities and disdain for working people.



BESSEMER,
ALABAMA

USW
LOCAL 2140

TRUMP
CUTS
UPTO

\$75.5
MILLION

“

**This administration
is screwing over
the United States.”**

Ron Woods,
Local 2140
president

"It would have been good for the local economy," continued Duncan, who represents about 115 USW members at the plant. "It would have been a whole new facility that would have been built. I'm not so sure what's going to happen now."

Trump likes to talk about building manufacturing capacity and making more goods in America.

But that's just bluster. His rollback of the IRA showed his true feelings—contempt for manufacturing communities and disdain for working people.

"This isn't 'cute' to me," said USW Local 2140 president Ron Woods, who likened Trump's blithe abandonment of the IRA to the sick amusement that Trump and his crackpot sidekick, Elon Musk, derived from wielding their chainsaw against the federal work force and agencies serving ordinary Americans.

Woods works at U.S. Pipe in Bessemer, Ala., which last year was awarded up to \$75.5 million in IRA funds to install new electric-induction melting furnaces.

As planned, the project had the potential to boost manufacturing capacity and sustainability, securing the future of a plant that's decades old and an anchor of the local economy.

In addition, the plans called for creating dozens of high-paying jobs as well as opportunities for current workers to advance. It's the kind of boost sorely needed in Bessemer, where nearly one-third of the residents live in poverty.

But Trump yanked the grant and pulled the rug out from under the people there.

"This administration is screwing over the United States," Woods said.



Brook
D'Angelo

Member Uses Workers' Comp Fight to Help Others

When Brook D'Angelo suffered a devastating work injury in 2018, she did not know her fight for justice would be going on seven years later, nor did she realize the impact she would have on her fellow workers.

"My whole life is upside down," said D'Angelo, a longtime member of Local 9434 and former city worker in Niagara Falls, N.Y. "I've never stopped fighting. I still haven't, but just in a very different way."

D'Angelo's injury and subsequent complications left her unable to work and thrust her into the workers' compensation system – an unfamiliar maze of doctors, attorneys, investigators and insurance adjusters – while she struggled to cope with pain, loss of more than 40 percent of her income and other changes.

"I had trouble finding doctors who even accepted workers' comp," she said. "Things got constantly denied. Basic things, such as diagnostic scans."

In addition to navigating complicated medical and legal landscapes, she faced harassment and intimidation from some who doubted the severity of her injuries.

"I've had a dozen surgeries," she said. "People still don't want to believe that it's real."

D'Angelo also suffered post-traumatic stress and other struggles as weeks and months turned into years.

"The system is designed to make it

so the injured worker doesn't understand the steps. I have a college degree, graduated with honors, and still couldn't follow the formularies," she said. "The system counts on people losing hope."

Workers' compensation laws differ from state to state, making it difficult, if not impossible, for a worker in D'Angelo's shoes to relocate to be with family.

"I'm trapped," she said. "Unless you know someone who's been going through this, you have no idea how much they are suffering."

That's why, while she struggles to settle her case, she is sharing her story, working to change a system that caused her so much difficulty.

In May 2024, she testified before the New York State Senate, bringing to light the dire need to reform the system.

"The loss of humanity and lack of personal connection are the top and most important failures of the workers' compensation system," D'Angelo testified. She was joined by attorneys, labor partners, and other workers in seeking reform.

"I wanted people to see that there is a real face to this issue," she said. "The system banks on the fear of the injured worker speaking out. If I could help other injured workers, there's no way I was going to hide anymore."

Her efforts gained the recognition of the Western New York Labor Federation, which named her their Flo Tripi Activist of the Year.

D'Angelo was honored at the group's awards dinner in May, alongside her USW siblings from Local 135L, who were recognized for their leadership and advocacy in the face of the sudden closure of the Sumitomo tire plant in Tonawanda, N.Y.

"It's inspiring to see workers lifting each other up, especially in the face of such difficult circumstances," said District 4 Director David Wasiura. "It's good to know that we always have each other's backs."

While D'Angelo said she couldn't wait for her case to be settled, she also vowed that she wouldn't stop fighting for reform.

"I had no idea that my efforts for change would be recognized or that I had touched so many people," she said. "My story is horrible, but it's not the worst one. By bringing it to light, we can help others in the future."



UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
PAPER WORKERS

Ahlstrom Paper Workers Join USW

In his 20 years of work as a union roofer, Hamlet Hernandez learned the difference that a union makes, not only through improved wages and benefits, but also in scheduling, health and safety, and other issues.

That's why, after a career change landed him at the Ahlstrom paper facility in Windsor Locks, Conn., Hernandez started talking to his co-workers about joining a union. He knew that his factory was one of the few Ahlstrom locations in the United States where workers did not have a voice on the job.

When management began altering workers' regular schedules with little warning, forcing them to alternate between daylight, night shifts and weekends, many decided they had seen enough.

"That was the start of it, right there," said Bernie Petrone, a 25-year employee. "We had to stand up for ourselves."

The unpredictable schedules took their toll on the work force, Hernandez said.

"I was always tired, and I was missing out on a lot of family events. It took me away from my family,"



From left,
Hamlet Hernandez,
Bernie Petrone,
Joe Mobiglia

he said. “Somewhere along the way, we had to draw a line in the sand and fight for what we deserved.”

It wasn’t long before Hernandez, Petrone and other workers drew that line, with an all-out effort to become USW members. Over the winter, workers began collecting union cards and, this past May, held a vote in which they decided to join USW-represented employees at four Ahlstrom mills in Wisconsin and one in Pennsylvania.

“They like to say, ‘This is what’s best for the company,’” Hernandez said. “But the employees are the company. The people on the floor doing the work – that is the company.”

Now, the workers are in the early stages of bargaining their first contract, hoping to address some of the lingering issues that led them down the path to USW membership.

“It’s exciting to see how these workers were able to unite in solidarity to fight for what they feel they need and deserve,” said International Vice President Luis Mendoza, who oversees the union’s paper sector. “Not only did they vote to join the USW family, but they will also be part of a strong and united council that shows incredible solidarity.”

Petrone, who admits he was initially skeptical of the idea of unionization when discussions first began, is now all-in on the idea.

“Now I get it,” he said. “Now I know why we have unions.”

Obituary: Carl Frankel, Former USW General Counsel

Carl B. Frankel, the union’s former general counsel who defended and supported USW members for 32 years, died on May 5, 2025, in Pittsburgh at the age of 90.

Born in Chicago in 1934, Frankel was the son of Russian immigrants. His father, Max, worked in a laundry and operated a newsstand, where Frankel worked as a boy. His mother, Minnie, was a garment worker and shop steward for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

Frankel earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Chicago in 1954 and graduated from the university’s law school in 1957.

After a few years of private practice, Frankel worked in the Chicago and Milwaukee offices of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), where a colleague described him as “the best agent they ever had. He burned with a white heat in doing everything he could to help working people.”

Frankel joined the USW’s legal department in 1968 and served Steelworkers under four international presidents – I.W. Abel, Lloyd McBride, Lynn R. Williams and George Becker. He was associate general counsel until 1997, when he was named general counsel, a position he held until he retired in 2000.

A close adviser to Williams, he helped the union navigate the tumultuous steel industry collapse of the 1980s. He served as lead counsel in massive trade litigation involving anti-dumping and subsidy cases, and in trade negotiations with foreign nations.

In his memoir, “One Day Longer,” Williams described Frankel as a “brilliant lawyer, writer and draughtsman, a detail person of enormous patience.”

Frankel was supervising counsel in a groundbreaking lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which led to massive job losses in American industry.

He helped to train members of the USW legal department and acted as an adviser to USW officers, directors and staff.

“One of my most satisfying efforts was helping to train and lead the finest set of young lawyers in the land,” Frankel said in 2019.

As associate general counsel, Frankel defended a 1974 consent decree with the government that reformed seniority systems in basic steel plants to resolve problems of equal employment opportunity for women and people of color.

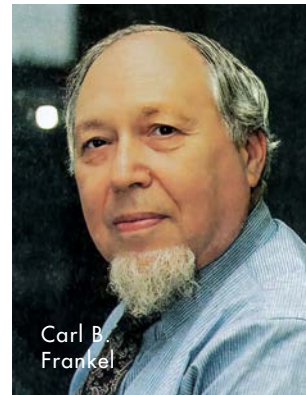
Frankel was proud of his role in a hard-fought campaign to unseat an entrenched company union at Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia, and establish USW Local 8888, the union’s

largest U.S. local.

Frankel was an active participant in numerous contract negotiations, including efforts to save steel companies in bankruptcy.

During the steel crisis of the late 1980s, Steelworkers faced corporate demands for concessions. The union believed that concessions should be recognized as investments to be returned when corporate profitability resumed. As a result, members made improvements in union rights and non-monetary issues during this period.

Frankel also developed new language to curb the use of outside contractors and protect union jobs in steel plants. Williams said it was the basis for “the best contracting out language in any agreements in industrial America.”





MICHIGAN CHEMICAL WORKER COMBATS UNFAIR IMPORTS

John Nichols, president of Local 2-987 at Sun Chemical Corp. in Muskegon, Mich., visited Washington, D.C., this May, along with a member of company management, to lobby for relief from unfair trade.

Unfair imports from China has put the future of his facility in doubt, and stronger Buy America regulations would help level the playing field for workers, Nichols asserted in his meetings with officials from nine congressional offices on Capitol Hill.

The Sun Chemical plant where Nichols and his USW siblings work produces yellow paint pigment used in road construction projects.



BILL COULD

USW WELCOMES NEW OWNER AT EVRAZ

USW leaders said they looked forward to building a strong relationship with Atlas Holdings after the company acquired EVRAZ North America this June.

Members of Local 2102 and Local 3267 work at the company's Pueblo Rocky Mountain Steel facility in Colorado, while workers at Regina Steel operations are represented by Local 5890, and workers at the company's Calgary site are represented by Local 6673.

District 12 Director Gaylan Prescott said the acquisition provides a new path forward for thousands of workers and brings new opportunities for investment and growth in the domestic steel industry.

"Our members have always worked hard to produce the best steel in the world, and that is not going to change," Prescott said. "We look forward to building a long and positive relationship with Atlas, as we had with EVRAZ."

The USW is committed to working with the new ownership to ensure that the facilities continue to provide good-paying union jobs for Steelworkers, said District 3 Director Scott Lunny.

"We look forward to continuing our relationship with Atlas," Lunny said, promising that the USW would work with Atlas and all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition, prioritize job security and ensure continued growth.

This spring, members of Locals 8888, 1165, and 9462 joined U.S. Sen. Mark Kelly, U.S. Sen. Todd Young, U.S. Rep. Trent Kelly and U.S. Rep. John Garamendi in introducing the SHIPS for America Act.

The bipartisan legislation aims to establish national oversight and consistent funding for U.S. maritime policy, to make U.S. vessels more commercially competitive, to rebuild the U.S. shipyard industrial base, and to expand and strengthen the maritime labor force.

"Thousands of USW members currently contribute to the shipbuilding industry, providing countless products across the supply chain ranging from steel to valves to coatings," said International President David McCall, who commended the lawmakers for their work on the bipartisan bill, "and their commitment to reinvesting in American shipbuilding."

The legislation comes a little over a year after the USW led a coalition of unions in filing a Section 301 trade petition seeking an investigation of Chinese shipbuilding dominance by the U.S. Trade Representative.

Over the past two decades, the Chinese government has used predatory, non-market practices to massively expand



BOOST SHIPBUILDING

its shipbuilding capacity and dominate transportation and logistics networks.

In the process, those efforts decimated China's competitors around the world and destroyed thousands of good U.S. jobs. Many of those jobs are in industries where USW members work. One commercial ship can require approximately 13,000 tons of structural steel, 60,000 gallons of paint, 130 miles of electrical cable, as well as aluminum, glass and numerous other union-made products.

"Revitalizing our nation's capacity to build commercial ships will create thousands more good, community-sustaining jobs," McCall said. "And it will help make us safer and more resilient as we break our dangerous dependence on foreign-made vessels."

The legislation also sets a goal of establishing a fleet of 250 U.S.-flagged vessels in international commerce.

International Vice President Roxanne Brown, who oversees the union's legislative and policy agenda, pointed out that the United States, at one time, had nearly 30 major shipyards, and now only a handful remain.

The loss of those shipyards, she said, has cost the nation more than 70,000 shipbuilding jobs, in addition to

thousands more secondary and downstream jobs that the industry supports.

In addition to the USW and other labor unions, more than 75 organizations have endorsed the SHIPS for America Act, including steelmaking companies, maritime academies and national security experts.

"This legislation represents a significant step forward in strengthening the nation's shipyard industrial base," said Matthew Paxton, president of the Shipbuilders Council of

America, a national trade association for the industry. "We are encouraged by its focus on bolstering American shipbuilding and ensuring a robust maritime sector capable of supporting our nation's economic and national security."

USW members stand ready to contribute their skills to the effort McCall said.

"U.S. economic and national security is inexorably tied to our nation's shipbuilding capacity," he said.

USW
LOCAL 8888

USW
LOCAL 1165

USW
LOCAL 9462



**“
Revitalizing our
nation's capacity
to build commercial
ships will create
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good, community-
sustaining jobs.**

International President
David McCall



FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT FOR DELFIELD WORKERS

Steadfast solidarity paid off this May for 450 members of Local 2-585 who work at Delfield, a commercial kitchen appliance factory in Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

When negotiations on a new contract began in March, company management was intent on forcing members to accept a new contract with substandard overtime and wage provisions.

After members initially rejected the company's contract offer, management made modest improvements to its proposal, but included a threat to lock union members out if they

did not accept it. Members rejected the offer, and Delfield locked them out of their jobs on May 7.

With strong community support and steadfast solidarity on their picket lines, members were able to fight for the agreement they deserved.

As picketing continued, the local bargaining committee presented the company with an updated settlement offer that included much-improved wage and work-life balance proposals, and the company ended the lockout just days after it began. Local 2-585 members returned to work on May 12 with a new five-year agreement.



KIMBERLY-CLARK LOCALS RATIFY NEW CONTRACT

Locals 1421 and 1575 at the Kimberly-Clark facility in Mobile, Ala., ratified a new contract this spring with gains in almost all areas of the agreement.

The new contract

includes wage adjustments for maintenance and operations jobs, an improved wage pattern, and retention bonuses for skilled trades positions.

The contract also improves vacation time for new hires and flexibility in vacation scheduling. The agreement also improves



Former District 5 Director
Dominic Lemieux



District 5 Director
Nicolas Lapierre

NEW DIRECTOR TAKES OFFICE IN DISTRICT 5

Nicolas Lapierre is the new director of the union's District 5, which encompasses the Canadian province of Quebec, following his appointment in May by the USW International Executive Board.

Lapierre, who took office after former Director Dominic Lemieux stepped down, served as Lemieux's assistant from April 2023 to May 2025. He also serves as a vice president of the Quebec Federation of Labour, a member of the Board of Directors

USW MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE TO TEXAS RELIEF EFFORTS

USW members rallied around their neighbors in July after devastating floods swept through Texas Hill Country in central Texas, killing more than 130 people and causing more than \$18 billion in damage.

Across District 13, through the Veterans of Steel network and the District 13 Council, USW members and staff gathered supplies and raised money for those affected by the disaster, including

delivering some much-needed coffee to the Comfort Fire Department.

Firefighters and search and rescue teams from across the region responded to the disaster, helping more than 850 people escape the floodwaters.

As relief efforts continued, USW members collected clothes, cleaning supplies, bottled water, coffee, food, feminine hygiene products, toiletries, first aid products, small appliances and other much-needed goods to deliver to people in the affected areas.

District 13 Director Larry Burchfield praised USW members for their response.

"Steelworkers know that solidarity goes beyond our workplaces and our union contracts," he said. "It means being there for each other and having each other's backs at the worst of times."

As *USW@Work* went to press, relief efforts were ongoing, and members were preparing to deliver additional supplies. Members who want to help can contact USW staff representative Jose Loya at jloya@usw.org.



health care cost-sharing, dental coverage and 401(k) contributions, while adding language to address green-on-green training, women's health and safety, and AI implementation.

In conjunction with the new agreement, Kimberly-Clark also announced in June that it would invest

\$130 million to add an additional production line for hygiene products at its Mobile facility. The new line is expected to begin operation in 2027 and is expected to add 27 new jobs at the site. The facility is one of the largest industrial employers in the area, with more than 600 employees.

UNION SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE OPEN TO USW MEMBERS

As part of one of the organization's charter unions, USW members are eligible to apply for free membership in the Union Sportsmen's Alliance.

The alliance, founded in 2007, is an organization of union members and retirees who enjoy hunting, fishing, shooting and volunteering for conservation efforts. The alliance includes more than 100,000 members



from across the United States and Canada.

The alliance's mission is to expand and improve access to the outdoors, conserve and maintain critical wildlife habitats, and offer mentoring programs that introduce

young people to outdoor activities.

The Steelworkers, along with 18 other labor organizations and the AFL-CIO, are charter members of the alliance.

That status entitles USW members to free membership.

USW members can learn more and become members by visiting unionsportsmen.org.

of the FTQ Solidarity Fund, and a board member of the Quebec Mining Institute.

Lemieux said he hoped to further his education and pursue new career ambitions, and that he wanted to leave office before nominations were open for the USW's International Executive Board elections, which will be held this fall.

Lemieux served as director for the Quebec province since April 2020, representing more than 60,000 workers across the province.

"It's been an honor to be a leader of this great union," Lemieux said. "I have every confidence in Nicolas Lapierre to take over and pursue our union agenda with the same vigor."

MEMBERS RATIFY NEW CONTRACT WITH HUHTAMAKI

Members of Local 819 voted this spring to ratify a new three-year contract with Huhtamaki after several months of bargaining.

The agreement, which covers 90 members who work at the company's Sacramento, Calif., factory, includes annual wage increases as well as improvements to overtime, holidays, call-ins, jury duty and bereavement policies. The contract also improves safety policies, vacation eligibility for new hires, and life insurance and accident coverage.

Members at the factory produce paper plates and school lunch trays for Huhtamaki, a global food packaging company that employs members of three other USW local unions in Indiana, Maine and New York.

The Local 819 agreement also increases members' pension multiplier – the first increase in fifteen years, a change made possible with the 2021 passage of the Butch Lewis Act, legislation that provided relief for underfunded multiemployer pension funds.

"I can't put into words what the Butch Lewis Act has meant to us and the incredible impact it has had on our members," said International Vice President Luis Mendoza, who oversees the union's paper sector. "Still, it takes solidarity and strength to stay focused on your goals and objectives. These members, local leaders and staff made incredible gains that will serve as a platform as we continue to bargain in the sector."



ITEMS MOST NEEDED:

Cleaning supplies, non-perishable food (canned goods, peanut butter, crackers, etc.), toiletries like toothbrushes, soap and diapers, and clothing. Please contact Jose Loya at jloya@usw.org.

Have You Moved?

Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

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

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

You may also email the information to membership@usw.org

UNITED STEELWORKERS
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VETERANS OF STEEL

USW members
join thousands
of veterans
in D.C. march.
10



Jose
Loya