

The United Worker

The United Worker is also available online at www.seafarers.org/aboutsiu/affiliates.asp

Volume 43, Number 1

January-March

2017



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka (photo at immediate left) addresses the audience during the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) Winter Meeting March 10 in San Antonio, Texas shortly after being introduced by UIW President Michael Sacco. Sacco also serves as president of the UIW-affiliated MTD.

Labor Leaders Offer Steady Resolve During Texas Meeting of UIW Affiliate

Both the national and Texas State AFL-CIO presidents were on hand at the UIW-affiliated Maritime Trades Department's winter meeting in San Antonio, Texas, and they gave insightful presentations on the state of labor. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka spoke on March 10, while Texas AFL-CIO President John Patrick welcomed those in attendance to his home state with a speech the day before.

"These are pretty challenging times, for our labor movement and for our nation," Trumka said to begin his speech.

He continued, "Pay is low, inequality is too high, good jobs are too far and few in between. But over the last four or five years, something has started to change. Working people right now are starting to speak out. Working people are starting to shape the debate. You see, we want better: We want better for our country, we want better for ourselves, and we want better for our family that's going to follow us."

A longtime ally of the SIU, Trumka also spoke about the political motivations of the AFL-CIO: "We don't work for any politician, or any political party. We're not going to be an ATM for the Democrats, and we're not going to be a rubber stamp for the Republicans. We're going to lead with our issues, we're going to lead with our values, and we'll put our members and our families first. That political independence is really our best way forward, and it'll strengthen our credibility, and it'll strengthen our effectiveness. That's how we build an America that starts to work for working people again."

Such "political independence" was a key to defeating the job-killing Trans Pacific Partnership, he said. It also proved useful in helping defeat the initial nomination for Secretary of Labor. In both cases, he emphasized, working people won because they came together in solidarity.

Specifically focusing on the new administration, Trumka said, "Good jobs and raising wages is how we're going to measure the Trump admin-

istration. President Trump promised throughout his campaign to make life better for American workers. But talk's cheap. When the president does something that's good for working people, and good for the economy, we'll say so. And we'll work for it. Conversely, when he does things that are bad for working people, and bad for the economy, that lower our wages and make our workplaces less safe, that threaten our

pensions and threaten our healthcare ... we're going to step up and fight him every step of the way."

Trumka added, "And President Trump gets to choose the path. In us, he'll either have a constructive partner ... or an unrelenting, resourceful and damn tough opponent. He gets to choose."

See Labor Leaders, Page 3

BLS Issues Annual Report On U.S. Union Membership

The latest report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) concerning union membership in the United States showed a drop of 0.4 percent in 2016 compared to the previous year. That adds up to a loss of around 240,000 workers.

Overall, unions had more than 14.5 million members in 2016, and union contracts also covered another 1.7 million non-members, the Press Associates Union News Service reported. The BLS report showed that 10.7 percent of all U.S. workers were union members.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka readily acknowledged that the labor movement faces significant challenges, but he also urged people not to interpret the report as signaling insurmountable problems.

Trumka said the labor movement

"cannot be defined by government statistics. The truth is, collective action in America is stronger than ever. We've seen the source of our power in defeating the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), even when most people told us we couldn't. We've seen it in successfully raising wages at the state and local levels against great political odds. And we'll use it to begin to change the tide for all working people. Because a strong labor movement raises wages for all working families and improves our entire economy. For decades, study after study has proven that all wages in America have a direct tie to union density. And according to today's report, workers in a union made \$202 more per week. That's money in

See Union, Page 3



John Patrick
President, Texas AFL-CIO

From the President

Strength in Numbers

I recently met with labor leaders and key industry figures at the Maritime Trades Department's (MTD) winter gathering in San Antonio, Texas. In case you need a refresher, the MTD signifies just one of the ways UIW has strength beyond our numbers. When we stand with other labor organizations our voices are heard, and we can accomplish far more than we can alone.



Michael Sacco

The MTD in particular is a vital connection for us. It's a constitutionally mandated department of the AFL-CIO, and its 22 affiliated unions (including our parent organization, the SIU) represent more than five million workers. When you knock on a door as a representative voice for five million people, that door opens.

I am proud to serve as president of the MTD in addition to being your president.

During the meetings in Texas, we discussed a lot of important issues that face working families, and the whole event was a great success. While every executive board official statement we made was important, the resolution on our nation's infrastructure was a home run. The statement painted a clear picture which I'm sure most if not all union members and officials can attest is the truth.

For example, we noted that the problems with our infrastructure are obvious with every tire blow-out caused by a pothole, with each child coming home from school ill due to a heating or air conditioning breakdown, with every late arrival to work because a subway track is cracked, with every food item thrown away thanks to an electrical grid failure.

Our unions have the men and women ready to go to work, trained through joint labor-management apprenticeship programs so they know what is required and how to perform safely and efficiently. All we ask is that our work be rewarded at the scale that is required for quality craftsmanship, through prevailing wages with decent benefits like health care and retirement.

We could go on and on creating an infrastructure equivalent of the old bubble-gum card checklist. But stating the obvious hasn't gotten the job done. We need to continue making our case heard, on this and all other issues that we feel strongly about. Whether it's creating good-paying jobs or protecting the rights of workers, we stand with our union brothers and sisters in solidarity - past, present and future.

On a related note, one of the best avenues we in the labor industry have to explain our positions are meetings with congressmen and senators and their staffs, such as the maritime industry's annual Congressional "Sail-In." UIW executives, along with more than 100 other labor and industry leaders, recently met with several dozen members of Congress and their staffs to talk about issues that matter to American workers.

There are a lot of benefits to getting face-to-face meetings with legislators, even in the age of FaceTime. When we get the opportunity to press the flesh and discuss the threats that face America's working families, it makes all the difference. From incoming freshmen Representatives, up to the most senior leaders in the Senate, they will remember meeting with us when a bill needs votes.

The MTD meeting and the Sail-In set a good tone as we head into the next quarter. I'm excited to keep pushing ahead with a pro-worker agenda that promotes workers' rights and expands opportunities for people to experience the American Dream.

Americans Need Solidarity

Editor's note: The following article was written by Executive Vice President of the AFL-CIO Tefere Gebre. An Ethiopian-American labor activist, Gebre has held his post since September 10, 2013, and is the first immigrant elected as an officer in the federation's history.



Tefere Gebre
Executive Vice President
AFL-CIO

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of convenience and comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." —Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

We're coming off of an election that reminded us we still have considerable work ahead in the struggle for freedom and civil rights, and on Martin Luther King Jr. remembrance day, Dr. King's quote is deeply relevant.

I believe if Dr. King were alive today, he would say:

"Be there for people of color, for immigrants, be there for the Muslims because they are scared right now."

I came to America when I was 15 years old, escaping an authoritarian regime in Ethiopia as a political refugee. I walked for 93 days through the Sudanese desert to find freedom. There are many other immigrants and refugees like me who come to this country because it is a beacon of hope for those brave people who want to be free. But now, things are uncertain.

There's no doubt that for people who talk like me, who look like me, for people of color, for Muslims in this country, for immigrants across the country, this is a very, very frightening time. It's not a promising time, it's not a time where people are hopeful or joyful, it's a time where all of us are very worried about where our country is going.

This is exactly the time that will require all of us to stand up in solidarity.

I work at the AFL-CIO and come from the labor movement, so solidarity is a verb, it's an action.

The preamble of the AFL-CIO constitution states:

"We resolve to fulfill the yearning of the human spirit for liberty, justice and community; to advance individual and associational freedom; to vanquish oppression, privation and cruelty in all their forms; and to join with all persons, of whatever nationality or faith, who cherish the cause of democracy and the call of solidarity, to grace the planet with these achievements."

Even though times are uncertain, there actually is reason to be hopeful about the future. The progressive movement in this country doesn't need to run scared, we have muscle.

Just look at Arizona, where labor and the community came together to defeat the anti-immigrant Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Or Nevada, where members of the

Culinary Workers Union Local 226, many of them immigrant women, went to work on an impressive ground campaign to elect the country's first Latina U.S. senator, Catherine Cortez Masto.

Despite the losses of this election, the national results are hardly a mandate. They are not a message to us to change course. It's a message for us to organize harder,

more and concentrate more on our communities and rebuild this country that we all love.

The labor movement's job is to fight for ALL people who get up every day and go to work, not just those who have a union voice on the job. And there are forces right now trying to divide us by our differences by saying rural America versus urban America, white working class versus the rest of the working class. We can't fall for that.

Within our movement, we experience attacks on our economic freedom and bodies in different ways. And part of solidarity is acknowledging that some of our sisters and brothers face unique barriers and challenges to economic prosperity and safety. Solidarity can't exist if it is rooted in a single understanding of what it means to be a part of the working class. For black and brown folks, immigrants, women, members of the LGBTQ community and those who are all or some of the above, we experience these same issues in different ways. And instead of allowing outside forces to divide us in our differences, we need to link arms in solidarity and come together on the many things that unite us.

We're going to be tested. How the labor movement leads on uniting working people—no matter the color of our skin, the languages we speak, where we worship or who we love—is crucial for the future of our country.

I have a stern warning not only for the labor movement, but for the broader progressive movement: America did not reject the work we have been doing to strengthen labor and community relationships. America did not reject standing with our sisters and brothers of color in the fight for their lives in the Black Lives Matter movement. America did not reject the immigrant workers in this country.

The future of this country lies in workers of all colors, so we have to be careful in how we move forward from the election. If we retreat and lean into the false notion that this election was just about white working-class people, we could lose generations and generations of the emerging majority from actually ever considering the labor movement as a mechanism for them to achieve a better life.

The labor movement has a responsibility, not a choice, to bring all working people together and get them to join us in fighting for social and economic justice.



The United Worker

Vol. 43 No. 1

January-March

2017

The official publication of the United Industrial, Service, Transportation, Professional and Government Workers of North America, AFL-CIO, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746. Telephone (301) 899-0675. Direct inquiries to Jim Guthrie, editor.

Headquarters: Michael Sacco, president; David Heindel, secretary-treasurer; Kate Hunt, UIW National Director.

Atlantic Region: Kermett Mangram, vice president.

Caribbean Region: Eugene Irish, vice president.

Great Lakes Region: Monte Burgett, vice president

Gulf Coast Region: Dean Corgey, vice president.

Midwest Region: Thomas Orzechowski, vice president.

West Coast Region: Herb Perez, vice president.



UIW Officers, Business Reps Converge at MTD Meeting in San Antonio



UIW President Michael Sacco, (eighth from right), who also serves as president of the Maritime Trades Department, UIW National Director Kate Hunt (twelfth from left) and UIW Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel (fifth from right) were among a host of UIW officers and business representatives who converged on San Antonio, Texas March 9-10. Collectively, they were in the Lone Star State to attend the UIW-affiliated Maritime Trade Department's 2017 Winter Meeting. In addition to individuals associated with the UIW, the photo above features a number of officers and elected officials from the Seafarers International Union, the UIW's parent organization.

Labor Leaders Vow Continued Fight for Nation's Working Families

Continued from Page 1

He then turned his attention to the topic of union solidarity, saying, "Brothers and sisters, the unions of the maritime trades show us what solidarity looks like. And I want you to know that your priorities are my priorities. We're there for you. We always have been, and we always will be. Whether it's protecting the Jones Act, or getting the Export-Import Bank back up and running where it needs to be.... And to our Canadian brothers and sisters, we're going to stand with you each and every step of the way."

After talking about how unions are for fair trade deals, unlike the defeated Trans-Pacific Partnership, Trumka spoke about what unions can accomplish for workers: "We know firsthand how trade can produce good jobs and strong wages. Shipbuilders, Longshoremen, Seafarers, you name it – those are careers to be proud of. I'm a third-generation coal miner. When my grandfathers first went into the mines, mining jobs weren't good jobs. But because we stood together, because workers united and got a voice on the job, we made those good-paying jobs."

Trumka also described the qualities of a good union leader, saying, "We have to be willing to put something on the line for one another. Not just standing in solidarity when the sun's shining, and it's easy, and it might not cost me anything, but standing with my brothers and sisters when it may cost me something.... Because I know that when you get weak, I get weak. When you get stronger, I get stronger."

He then discussed activism in detail, describing past and present actions taken by union leaders and members alike, as well as the importance of standing together when outside influences try to divide unions.

"America wants more of that activism," Trumka said. "You can see that they're hungry for it. By a margin of two to one, registered voters want to increase Social Security benefits, not decrease them. By a margin of three to one, folks want to tax companies on overseas profits, and increase funding for public schools. People overwhelmingly support higher wages and more investment in infrastructure. And a growing number believe in unions: Over 60 percent of the American public says unions are important, needed and should be stronger."

"And the best news of all? That number is even higher among young people coming into the workforce right now," he continued. "That's our future, that's good news."

The day before, John Patrick detailed the state of the labor movement in Texas. "Most of what the Texas state AFL-CIO does at the state legislature goes well beyond the concerns of any one union. More often than not, it involves all working people in the state," he explained.

"We seek nothing more, and will accept nothing less, than a fair shot for all working Texans – whether they hold a union card or not," Patrick said. "The Texas AFL-CIO is strongly supporting bills to raise the state minimum wage, secure equal pay for women, to improve workplace safety, and otherwise help all Texas workers. You want to know where we stand on most any piece of legislation, the first question we ask is whether the bill will help all working families in the state."

He further outlined where the Texas AFL-CIO stands on multiple legislative issues, before stressing that the current political climate in Texas is difficult for the labor movement: "The job for those that believe in progress

for working people has never been tougher than it is right now in the state of Texas."

Patrick also mentioned a state senate bill, targeting union members, that is garnering attention all the way up to the governor's office. "Once again this session, we are a target," he said. "Senate Bill 13, authored by Senator Joan Huffman of Houston, takes direct aim at public sector workers, who now make up the majority of our membership at the Texas AFL-CIO. Senate Bill 13 would take away the freedom of public employees who voluntarily sign union membership cards to deduct union dues from their own paychecks through payroll reduction. Let me put that in plainer terms: Teachers, nurses, correctional officers and a host of other public servants should be free to do as they please with their own paychecks."

He then spoke about other bills introduced in the state legislature that threaten to reduce worker protections and worker freedoms that stem the union way of life. While some have a greater chance of passing than others, he vowed to fight those bills, and all other bills with similar intents that follow.

Union Membership Numbers Register Slight Decline

Continued from Page 1

people's pocket. That's a government statistic we can get behind."

Trumka added, "Even though collective action remains strong, we recognize that the labor movement has challenges. The biggest challenges have been put in place by corporations and their hired politicians who have been at the throats of workers for years. The ugly truth is, because of these attacks, we live in a country where working people are constantly denied our right – our constitutional right – to join a union in the first place. With the way the deck is currently stacked, it's a miracle that brave workers continue to find new ways to organize and

that today's numbers aren't even worse. But we also recognize our own challenges. We must be a better movement for a changing workforce. We must adapt our structures to fit the needs of today's workers. We must not be afraid to challenge ourselves to better serve working families. And we know we will succeed because we are committed to doing just that, inspired by the spirit we see in working people every day from coast to coast, in industries far and wide."

As in years past, the BLS determined that unionists were concentrated in the Northeast, the Great Lakes and the Pacific Coast states, with more than half of all union members living in just seven states: California, 2.551 million (15.9 percent union), up 65,000; New York, 1.942 million (23.6 percent), down 96,000; Illinois, 812,000 (14.5 percent), down 35,000; Pennsylvania, 685,000 (12.1 percent), down 62,000; Michigan 606,000 (14.4

percent), down 15,000; New Jersey 644,000 (16.1 percent), up 68,000; and Ohio, 617,000 (12.4 percent), up 11,000.

New Jersey and Ohio passed Michigan, which now has a so-called right-to-work law. New York was the only state where more than one-fifth of workers were unionized. Its union share dropped from 26 percent in 2015. The other state more than one-fifth union then, Hawaii, slid to 19.9 percent. Union numbers stayed the same, but Hawaii's workforce grew.

South Carolina was the least unionized state for the second year in a row, at 1.6 percent. In general, Southern states had low union densities "thanks to histories of rabid official anti-unionism, employers' efforts to pit the races against each other, and right-to-work laws," Press Associated noted.

Despite the declines, unions still represented more private-sector workers (7.4 million) than public-sector workers (7.1 million), the

BLS reported. But the public sector had higher percentages of unionization, with education and library services leading the way (34.6 percent) followed by protective services, such as fire fighters and emergency medical technicians (34.5 percent).

As usual, union members had huge weekly earnings edges over their non-union colleagues. The median weekly wage for all unionists was \$1,004, compared to \$802 for unrepresented workers. Union women and minority groups fared particularly well: The male-female wage gap shrank to nine cents per dollar between union men and women, with union women garnering median weekly pay of \$955.

Unionized Latinos, Latinas and African-American men all had higher median weekly wages than the entire non-unionist median. Even workers in the lowest-paid sector, bars and restaurants, showed the edge, with a \$567 weekly median, to \$490 for non-unionists.



A host of union members in St. Croix, U.S. VI participated in shop steward training seminars January 20 in the union hall. Those taking part in the training (above, in alphabetical order) were: Beverly Andrews, Andrea Castillo, Steve Chiverton, Shelly Deweese, Doris Fontenelle, Joel Giff, Gale Lewis, Ronald Maynard, Gwendolyn Murray, Keema Penn, Delia Peter, Helina Prince, Caiphus Samuel, Clifferna Simmonds, Shirell Smith, Raul Tornes Jr., Elvis Wattley, Corbin Webster, Cecil Williams and Ruby Ava Wilson. Also pictured are UIW National Director Kate Hunt (front row in light colored dress), UIW Legal Counsel John Merchant (eighth from right in back row) and UIW Rep Michelle Martinez (second from right) who conducted the training.

Members Tackle Shop Steward Training in Virgin Islands

UIW members in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) recently expanded their knowledge and honed their abilities to represent fellow members as shop stewards by participating in one-day instructional workshops in a pair of locations.

The classes, which took the form of fast-paced, hands-on seminars, were conducted at the UIW offices in St. Croix and St. Thomas, USVI Jan. 20 and Jan. 23, respectively. The instructional sessions were conducted by UIW National Director Kate Hunt and UIW Counsel John Merchant, with the assistance of UIW staff at each location. Michelle Martinez and

Gina Benjamin supported the training endeavor on St. Croix while Jackie Dickenson, Kevin Challenger, and Sharika Wesslhof aided in the effort on St. Thomas.

Numerous topics were covered during the workshops' extensive agenda, including matters such as the steward's position as a problem solver, being a spokesperson for the union and being an effective communicator. Participants discussed the wide-ranging duties of stewards including signing up new members and the absolute necessity of keeping accurate documentation.

A significant amount of time was

spent discussing Weingarten Rights and the role of the steward in representing members during disciplinary hearings. Various printed teaching aids and other materials were provided by the union for this portion of the training.

Instruction was also given in the steps for good listening, self-evaluation of communication skills, and how to write grievances and other important communications documents. Using mock scenarios, the stewards explored and examined methods of differentiating between complaints and grievances, investigating grievances and avoiding common problems asso-

ciated with handling them. They also analyzed various wording and word patterns commonly used in specific sections of contracts.

"It was a wonderful experience meeting the various shop stewards from all of our UIW locations in St. Croix and St. Thomas," said Hunt in reflecting on the training. "Our stewards were thoughtful, attentive and displayed real commitment to learning the most effective methods of being good union stewards."

"We look forward to providing more of these types of learning experiences to all of our members in the USVI," she concluded.



Members who participated January 23 in shop steward training in St. Thomas (above, in alphabetical order) were: Kenville Allen, Jamal Armstrong, Neta Christopher, Jeffery Clarke, Nedege Clarke, Patricia Donovan, Lisle Evelyn, Laverne Francis, George Lake, Lewis Nicholls, Chief Shop Steward Karim Robles, Selden Sameul and Rochelle Trant. Also pictured are UIW National Director Hunt, UIW Legal Counsel John Merchant, and UIW Representatives Kevin Challenger and Jacqueline Dickenson.



MORTGAGE

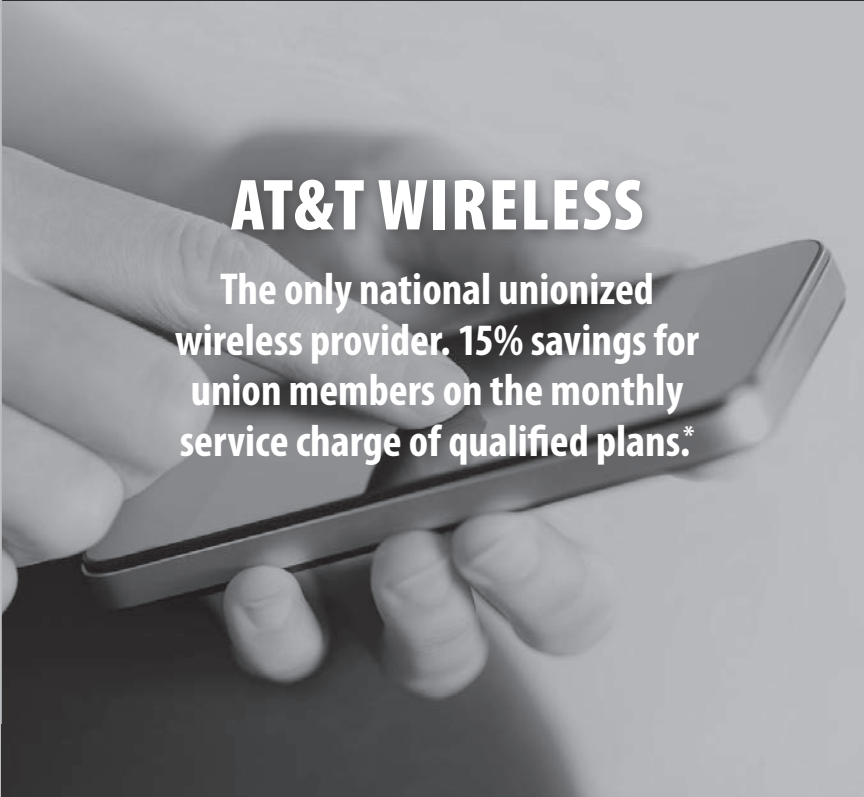
The Union Plus mortgage program makes buying or refinancing a home easy for you and your children.



CAR RENTAL

Up to 25% discount on car rental deals with Avis, Budget, Hertz, Dollar, Thrifty & Payless.

Four Ways to Save



AT&T WIRELESS

The only national unionized wireless provider. 15% savings for union members on the monthly service charge of qualified plans.*



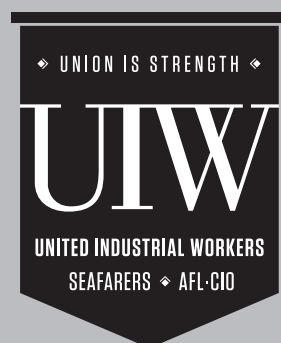
CREDIT CARD

Several credit card choices,** all with competitive rates and U.S.-based customer service, designed to meet the needs of union members.

*Available only to current members of qualified AFL-CIO member unions, other authorized individuals associated with eligible unions and other sponsoring organizations with a qualifying agreement. Must provide acceptable proof of union membership such as a membership card from your local union, a pay stub showing dues deduction or the Union Plus Member Discount Card and subscribe to service under an individual account for which the member is personally liable. Offer contingent upon in-store verification of union member status. Discount subject to agreement between Union Privilege and AT&T and may be interrupted, changed or discontinued without notice. Discount applies only to recurring monthly service charge of qualified voice and data plans, not overages. Not available with unlimited voice plans. For Family Talk, applies only to primary line. For all Mobile Share plans, applies only to monthly plan charge of plans with 1GB or more, not to additional monthly device access charges. Additional restrictions apply. May take up to 2 bill cycles after eligibility confirmed and will not apply to prior charges. Applied after application of any available credit. May not be combined with other service discounts. Visit UnionPlus.org/ATT or contact AT&T at 866-499-8008 for details

**Certain restrictions, limitations, and qualifications apply to these grants. Additional information and eligibility criteria can be obtained at UnionPlus.org/Assistance. Credit approval required. Terms and conditions apply. The Union Plus Credit Cards are issued by Capital One, N.A., pursuant to a license from MasterCard International Incorporated. Capital One N.A. is not responsible for the contents of this message and/or any of the other third party products/services mentioned. The MasterCard Brand Mark is a registered trademark of MasterCard International Incorporated.

Visit unionplus.org/benefits



3/17

UIW Directory

HEADQUARTERS
5201 Auth Way
Camp Springs, MD 20746
(301) 899-0675

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
721 Sesame St.
Suite 1C 99503
(907) 561-4988

BALTIMORE, MD
2315 Essex St. 21224
(410) 327-4900

COLUMBUS, OHIO
2800 South High St.
P.O. Box 07770, 43207
(614) 497-2446

HONOLULU, HI
606 Kalihi Street 96819
(808) 845-5222

HOUSTON, TEXAS
625 N. York Street 77003
(713) 659-5152

JACKSONVILLE, FL
5100 Belfort Rd. 32256
(904) 281-2622

JERSEY CITY, NJ
104 Broadway
Jersey City 07306
(201) 434-6000

JOLIET, IL
10 East Clinton St. 60432
(815) 723-8002

NEW ORLEANS, LA
3911 Lapalco Blvd.
Harvey LA 70058
(504) 328-7545

NORFOLK, VA
115 3rd St. 23510
(757) 622-1892

OAKLAND, CA
1121 7th St. 94607
(510) 444-2360

PHILADELPHIA, PA
2604 S. 4th St. 19148
(215) 336-3818

PINEY POINT, MD
P.O. Box 75, 20674
(301) 994-0010

ST. CROIX, USVI
4200 United Shopping Plaza, Suite 24
Christiansted, USVI 00820
(340) 773-6055

ST. LOUIS, MO
4581 Gravois Ave. 63116
(314) 752-6500

ST. THOMAS, USVI
201-3A Altona & Welgunst
Suite 101
St. Thomas, USVI 00802
(340) 774-3895

TACOMA, WA
3411 S. Union Ave. 98409
(253) 272-7774

WILMINGTON, CA
510 N. Broad Ave. 90744
(310) 549-3920



Members of the union's negotiating committee included (front row, from left) UIW VP West Coast Herb Perez, SIU/UIW Legal Counsel Stan Dubin, UIW Rep Laura Lopez, (back row) Rank-and-file members Tim Fitzgerald, Tim Morris, Jose Rosales, Robert Fuller and Chief Shop Steward Ray Atkisson.

UIW Members at Cott Beverages Ink Three-Year Labor Agreement

Union members at San Bernardino, California-based Cott Beverages recently ratified a new three-year labor contract. The accord, which impacts 113 UIW members, went into effect Feb. 19 and will remain in force through Feb. 18, 2020.

"We consider this one of the best contracts we've negotiated in many years," said UIW Vice President West Coast Region Herb Perez. "In our last two agreements, our membership agreed to terms and conditions that were designed to help the company through times of financial challenges. This time around, the company demonstrated its appreciation for our membership's sacrifices and it manifested itself during the negotiations."

Among other gains, the new pact features considerable improvements in working conditions, according to Perez. "Overtime and double-time opportunities have come to the fore as have advances in wages, night shift differentials and medical coverage," he said.

"During the course of negotiations,

several challenging issues were raised," Perez continued. "Thanks to the dedication of members of our negotiating committee and the willingness of the company's negotiators to bargain in good faith, we were able to resolve them successfully. We all are very pleased with the new agreement and its features," Perez said.

The UIW negotiating team was comprised of Perez, UIW Representative **Laura Lopez**, Chief Shop Steward **Ray Atkisson**, **Tim Morrison**, **Tim Fitzgerald**, **Robert Fuller** and **Jose Rosales**. They were assisted by UIW National Director Kate Hunt and UIW Legal Counsel Stan Dubin.

The UIW has a long and productive history with Cott Beverages, having represented union members at the company for more than 30 years. Many current union brothers and sisters have worked at the company just as long, according to Perez.

"The turnover at Cott is very low, which speaks volumes about the working conditions our members enjoy at the

company's plant," he said. "I attribute it all to the success of labor-management committee meetings and the great labor relations that exist between our members and the company."

"Simply put, management normally addresses issues before they become problems," Perez concluded.

Cott is one of the world's largest producers of beverages on behalf of retailers, brand owners and distributors. The company has one of the broadest home and office bottled water and office coffee service distribution networks in the United States, with the ability to service approximately 90 percent of U.S. households, as well as national, regional and local offices.

With approximately 9,500 employees, Cott operates about 60 manufacturing facilities and 180 distribution facilities in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Mexico. Cott also develops and manufactures beverage concentrates, which it exports to approximately 50 countries around the world.

National Director Looks in on American Casting

UIW National Director Kate Hunt (right) recently looked in on members during a how goes it visit at union-contracted American Casting & Manufacturing Corporation. Posing with her in the photo at right which was taken during the visit was Shop Steward Juanita Lopez. Sixty UIW members are employed at the Plainview, New York-based business which specializes in the design and manufacturing of high security and tamper-evident metal, plastic and adhesive seals.



AFL-CIO Will Sue If DOL Waters Down Overtime Regulations

Editor's note: The following article was written by Josh Eidelson of Bloomberg News. The piece, posted at www.bloomberg.com March 27, was trimmed because of space limitations.

The AFL-CIO will sue if the Department of Labor tries to water down a boost in overtime eligibility put in place by the Obama administration, the chief of the labor federation said in an interview.

"Anything that dilutes it is bad," AFL-CIO president Richard Trumka said in his Washington office. Taking Obama's overtime expansion away from even one worker could have dev-

astating consequences," he said. "Think about the effect that it'd have on that person's family, their lives."

Millions of additional white-collar workers were poised to gain overtime eligibility last December under Obama's change until it was blocked by a federal judge in Texas. If allowed to take effect, the change would double, to \$913 per week, the threshold beneath which employees must be paid time-and-a-half even if designated as managers.

At his confirmation hearing Wednesday (March 22), Trump's nominee to be Labor secretary, Alexander Acosta, deflected repeated attempts by

senators to ascertain whether the government would continue to defend that rule in court.

Acosta did tell senators that it was unfortunate the threshold had languished at the same rate for over a decade, though doubling it creates "a stress on the system," and might exceed the department's legal authority. Those comments seemed to signal an interest in moving the threshold to some level in between the one currently in effect, which was set by George W. Bush in 2004, and the one chosen by Obama.

Trumka said the AFL-CIO was prepared to bring legal challenges to any such attempt to set a new rule lower

than Obama's, along with its current efforts to defend Obama's standard in court, where the federation's Texas branch has petitioned to join the litigation. Overtime was one of several issues on which the labor chief criticized the new president, who drew a larger share of the union vote than any Republican since Ronald Reagan, and has made a point of courting union leaders since taking office.

UIW Rep Visits AMG Resources



UIW Rep. Elizabeth Brown (above, left) paid a February visit to the union-contracted AMG Resources facility in Sparrows Point, Maryland. While at the operation, Brown met with company officials as well as union members to ascertain how things were going. Among the rank-and-filers Brown visited with was Shop Steward William Wright (right). Twenty-seven union members currently work at the company that's lauded as a trailblazer in the metal recycling business. AMG has been a union-contracted company since 1962.

New UIW Pensioners

Roseann Bird
A&E Products Group
Ashland, Pennsylvania

Rick Black
Progressive Driver Services
Livermore, Colorado

Cindy Daily
Church & Dwight
London, Ohio

Danny Decarlo
Bron-Shoe Company
Canal Winchester, Ohio

Bettie Fleeks
Crown Cork & Seal
Crockett, Texas

Kathleen Hanlon
A&E Products Group
Gilberton, Pennsylvania

Deborah Keck
Bron-Shoe Co.
Laurelville, Ohio

Ray Mitchell
Crown Cork & Seal
Cleveland, Texas

Gary Morningstar
Progressive Driver Services
Newport News, Virginia

Kiyoe Thompson
Severson Group
29 Palms, California

Stanley Volinski
Paulsen Sunbury
Northumberland, Pennsylvania

Gone But Not Forgotten

JEFFREY COLOTON

Brother Jeffrey Coloton, 61, died Jan. 1, 2015. He joined the union in 1984. Brother Coloton spent his entire UIW career working at Crown Cork & Seal. He was a resident of Conroe, Texas.

EVELINA HAMBLETT

Sister Evelina Hamblett, 66, passed away September 10. She joined the UIW in 1997 while working at Severson, Group. Sister Hamblett was born in the Republic of the Philippines, but called Twentynine Palms, California home.

BARBARA MASON

Pensioner Barbara Mason, 78, passed away December 13. An Ohio native,

Sister Mason signed on with the UIW in 1983 and spent her entire union career working at Church & Dwight. She retired in 2004 and resided in her native state in the city of London.

BETTY NULL

Pensioner Betty Null, 69, died December 16. Sister Null donned the UIW colors in 1983. Her entire union career was spent working at Church & Dwight. Sister Null went on pension in 2004 and made her home in London, Ohio.

HERMINIO ROSADO

Pensioner Herminio Rosado, 56, passed away December 11. Born in Puerto Rico, Brother Rosado signed on with the union in 1980. He spent his entire union career working at American

Casting. Brother Rosado retired in 2015 and lived in Bronx, New York.

CARMEN POPOCA

Pensioner Carmen Popoca, 72, died June 27. Sister Popoca joined the union in 2007 while working at Save the Queen, LLC (The Queen Mary). She started receiving compensation for her retirement in 2013. Sister Popoca was a resident of Long Beach, California.

CLARA SMITH

Pensioner Clara Smith, 96, passed away September 3. A native of Baltimore, Sister Smith donned the UIW colors in 1966. She spent her entire union career working at National Fiberstock. Sister Smith went on pension in 1989. She

made her home in Philadelphia.

CHARLES SUTOKO

Pensioner Charles Sutoko, 80, died December 16. Born in Pennsylvania, Brother Sutoko became a UIW member in 1958. He worked at Paulsen Wire Rope and following a long career retired in 1993. Brother Sutoko resided in Coal Township, Pennsylvania.

DOROTHY TARANGIOLI

Pensioner Dorothy Tarangioli, 100, passed away December 14. A native of New Jersey, Sister Tarangioli signed on with the UIW in 1963. She worked at Trenton Textiles (Tara Textiles) and went on pension in 1980. Hamilton, New Jersey, was her home.



National Right-to-Work For Less Bill Introduced

Separate Anti-Worker Measure Would Repeal Davis-Bacon Act

At least two noteworthy anti-worker bills already have been introduced in the current session of Congress – one calling for a national so-called right-to-work (RTW) law, and the other aimed at repealing the Davis-Bacon Act.

While the introduction of those bills has become a yearly event on Capitol Hill, the threat of enactment is much higher now. The Republican Party platform endorsed both measures, and President Trump is on record (as recently as early February) as a backer of RTW.

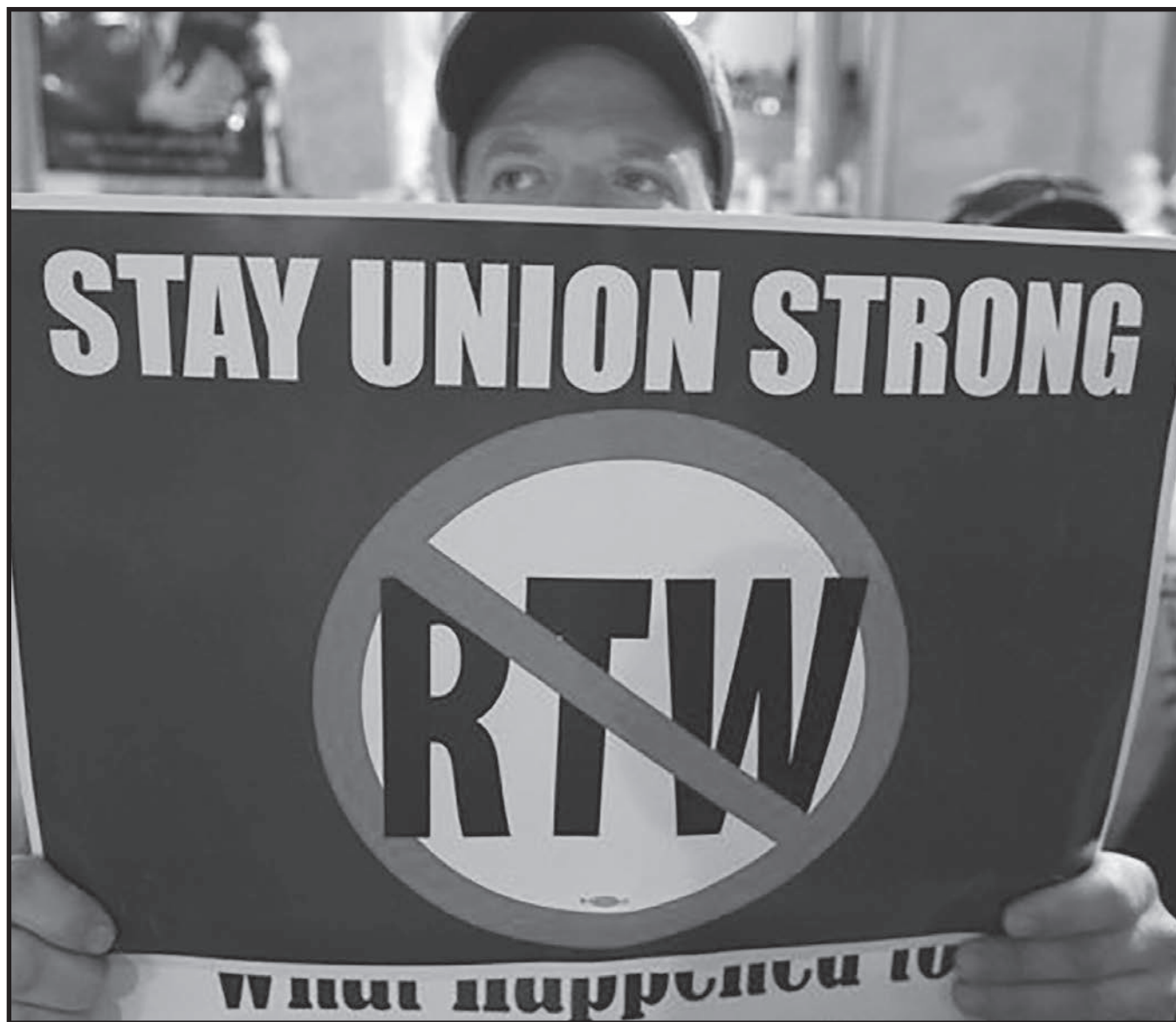
As one pro-worker journalist put it, “The practical impact of RTW is to make every worker a free rider, able to use the union’s services without paying for them – and to smash unions by financially crippling them so much that they can’t defend workers in the first place.... The 66-year-old Davis-Bacon Act prevents cut-rate contractors from low-balling workers’ wages on federally funded projects.”

AFL-CIO Building Trades Department President Sean McGarvey labeled Davis-Bacon repeal (introduced in the Senate) “the Pay Cut for America’s Workers Act.”

Reacting to the so-called RTW bill (introduced in the House), AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, “Right to work is a lie dressed up in a feel-good slogan. It doesn’t give workers freedom – instead, it weakens our right to join together and bargain for better wages and working conditions. Its end goal is to destroy unions. Numbers don’t lie. Workers in states with right-to-work laws have wages that are 12 percent lower. That’s because unions raise wages for all workers, not just our members.”

Trumka also pointed to a recent Pew survey showing that 60 percent of Americans support unions.

“Americans clearly see the value of coming together with their co-workers to tackle inequality,” Trumka observed. “Right to work isn’t the will of the people; it’s legislation pushed on working people by out-of-touch corporations that want to ship jobs overseas, cut health and safety protections, and



pay lower wages. This is an attempt by corporate CEOs to further tip the scale even more in their favor, at working people’s expense.”

He concluded, “Working people were loud and clear in this past election. We want an economy that works for all, not just corporations. We know we need to rewrite the rules of the economy so that policies like bad trade deals and right to work aren’t the new norm. President Trump has said he supports unions and the people who are

our members. He has stood up to corporate Republicans on trade. We call on him to do the same on right to work, and to stand up for every worker’s right to join a union.”

The national RTW bill is co-sponsored by Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) and Rep. Joe Wilson (R-South Carolina). The Davis-Bacon legislation was introduced by Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Arizona).

McGarvey said Flake “is completely oblivious to the political undercurrents relating to blue-collar economic

anxiety that propelled Donald Trump into the White House ... and possesses a warped sense of empathy when he believes wages of \$17.37 and \$15.49 an hour – current Davis-Bacon prevailing highway construction wages for a backhoe operator and a laborer in Arizona – are simply too high for taxpayer-funded construction projects. At those wage rates, these workers would earn, respectively, roughly \$35,000 and \$31,000 annually. Not exactly a king’s ransom.”

Deceptive Right-to-Work Laws Hurt All Americans

Editor’s note: This information was provided by the AFL-CIO.

By many measures, quality of life is worse in states with right-to-work laws. Wages are lower, people are less likely to have health insurance and the necessary resources for a quality education, poverty levels are higher as are workplace fatality rates.

States with Right-to-Work Laws Have Lower Wages and Incomes

On average, workers in states with right-to-work laws make \$6,109 a year (12.1%) less annually than workers in other states (\$44,401, compared with \$50,511).

Median household income in states with these laws is \$8,174 (13.9%) less than in other states (\$50,712 vs. \$58,886).

29.6 percent of jobs in right-to-work states were in low-wage occupations, compared with 22.8% of jobs in other states.

States with Right-to-Work Laws Have Lower Rates of Health Insurance Coverage

People under the age of 65 in states with right-to-work laws are more likely to be uninsured (13.0%, compared with 9.4% in free-bargaining states).

Only 47% of private-sector employers in states with these laws offer insurance coverage to their employees, compared with 52.2% in other states. That difference is even more pronounced among employers with fewer than 50 workers: only 30.1% offer health insurance compared with 38.1% of small employers in other states.

Workers in right-to-work states also pay a larger share of their health insurance premiums, on aver-

age, than those in free-bargaining states (28.5% of the premium compared with 25.4% in free-bargaining states).

States with Right-to-Work Laws Have Higher Poverty and Infant Mortality Rates

Poverty rates are higher in states with right-to-work laws (15.3% overall and 21.4% for children), compared with poverty rates of 12.8% overall and 18.0% for children in states without these laws.

The infant mortality rate is 12.4% higher in states with right to work laws.

States with Right-to-Work Laws Invest Less in Education

States with right-to-work laws spend 32.5% less per pupil on elementary and secondary education than other states.

States with Right-to-Work Laws Have Higher Workplace Fatality Rates

The rate of workplace deaths is 49% higher in states with right-to-work laws, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.