Official Publication of the United Industrial, Service, Transportation, Professional & Government Workers of North America ■ SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION ■ AFL-CIO

UNION IS STRENGTH UIW UNITED INDUSTRIAL WORKERS SEAFARERS AFL-CIO

# The United Worker

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# Sanders Campaign Staffers Make Union History

## *Workers Ink Collective Bargaining Agreement*

*Editor's note: The following article was written by Alan Pyke of Think Progress, a news website.*

The people who power Sen. Bernie Sanders' (I-Vermont) White House bid will enjoy labor rights and quality of life protections unprecedented in the grueling, fast-paced world of presidential campaigns, thanks to a union contract ratified by campaign staff in early May.

Sanders' campaign will be the first in U.S. presidential election history with a unionized staff, though a handful of down-ballot races in 2018 featured successful union drives through the new Campaign Workers Guild.

The contract secures overtime pay for campaign team members paid by the hour and 20 paid vacation days per year for hourly and salaried staff alike – plus four monthly "blackout days" where staffers can't be called in to work on their day off. The pact establishes transparency about pay within the campaign and sets a process for appeals should anyone feel they're being underpaid for the work they're doing. But the detailed attention to pay equity doesn't stop with those sunlight provisions.

The contract also sets a cap on managers' pay. As United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400's Jonathan Williams explained to ThinkProgress, no executive on the team can be paid more than three times the compensation of the highest paid category of rank-and-file campaign staffers in the bargaining unit. If the campaign wants to bump an executive past that point, they'd have to make commensurate raises in pay for the unionized campaign workers.

"This is an effort for us to live up to the values of the campaign and address income equality," Williams said in an interview. "They can't grant lavish sala-

*See **Sanders**, Page 2*

# *May Job Numbers Disclose Noticeable Slowdown, Expert Labels Situation as 'Troubling'*

*Editor's note: The following article was written by Elise Gould, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute. It has been edited slightly to conform to local style.*

This morning's [June 6] jobs report showed the economy added 75,000 jobs in May. As the country marks its longest expansion in history, May's number is significantly less than April's growth of 224,000. Downward revisions to March and April, meanwhile, subtracted 75,000 jobs from the total gains.

This is a noticeable slowdown from the pace we've experienced this year so far, which has averaged 164,000 a month, and slower than the average monthly growth for the last 12 months (196,000). While we would expect job growth to level off as the economy approaches full employment—and 75,000 jobs are about what we need to keep up with today's population growth—the pace of the slowdown in recent months is troubling.

The unemployment rate held steady at 3.6 percent, while the overall labor force participation rate and the share of the population with a job were also unchanged from April. On the whole, the household survey suggests an economy basically treading water, while the payroll survey shows signs of weakness.

The share of the prime working-age population (25–54 years old) with a job held steady at 79.7 percent, while the prime-age unemployment rate and labor force participation rate ticked down slightly. The continued—though small—decline in participation among 25 to 54-year-olds is a trend to watch in upcoming reports.

Black unemployment remains significantly higher than the white unemployment rate (6.2 percent versus 3.3 percent), but it did tick down 0.5 percent from last month. While this is an extremely volatile series, it may be a sign that economic growth will eventually reach all corners of the labor market.

Wage growth came in at 3.1 percent over the year—slightly lower than in April but not terribly off trend. There has been a distinct leveling off in wage growth in recent months. While May's 3.1 percent growth rate is higher than the slow rate we saw earlier in the recovery, it is still below the rate we'd expect to see in a strong economy.

To be at genuine full employment, wage growth would have to be at least 3.5 percent, and for a consistent period of time to allow labor's share of corporate sector income to recover.

## *National Director Pays Visit to Virgin Islands*

UIW National Director Karen Horton-Gennette (above, center) in May visited a number of union shops in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Included were stops in St. Thomas and St. Croix. In the photo above, she poses with members of the administrative support staff in St. Thomas. Pictured (from left) are: Administrative Assistant Sharika Wesselhoft; UIW/SIU Asst. VP Jacqueline Dickenson; and UIW/SIU Field Representative Kevin Challenger.

# AFL-CIO Report Reveals 275 Daily U.S. Worker Deaths in 2017

More than 5,000 working people were killed on the job in 2017, according to an annual report by the AFL-CIO.

Released April 25, "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, 2019," stated that 5,147 working people were killed on the job and an estimated 95,000 died from occupational diseases in 2017. Each day, on average, 275 U.S. workers die from hazardous working conditions.

According to the report, workplace violence is the third-leading cause of workplace death, accounting for 807 fatalities, including 458 homicides. For the third year in a row, workplace violence injuries increased, with nearly 29,000 workers suffering serious violence-related injuries due to assault on the job.

The report found a small decrease in the overall rate of fatal job injuries in 2017 from the previous year – 3.5 per 100,000 from 3.6 per 100,000 workers. However, in recent years, there has been little overall change in the job fatality rate. Moreover, the most recent studies on the burden of occupational injuries and illnesses find that the toll of occupational disease deaths is much greater than previously estimated.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, the country's top organized labor officer, expressed support for H.R.1309 – the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act. The legislation, if passed, can be instrumental in preventing workplace violence, he said.

This marks the 28th year that the AFL-CIO has produced its report with findings on the state of safety and health protections for working people within the United States. The report shows the highest workplace fatality rates are in Alaska, North Dakota, Wyoming, West Virginia and South Dakota.

Other notable components of the report show that Latino workers continue to have an increased risk of dying on the job and that the number of Latino worker deaths increased in 2017 to 903 from 879. Deaths among older workers also increased; workers 65 or older have nearly three times the risk of dying on the job as workers overall. The construction, transportation and agriculture industries remain among the most dangerous. In 2017, 917 construction workers were killed—the highest total of any sector. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting was the most dangerous industry sector, with a fatality rate of 23 per 100,000 workers.

Despite these disturbing findings, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) meager resources are declining. Currently, federal OSHA has only 752 inspectors—the lowest number since the early 1970s. It would take the agency 165 years to visit workplaces under its jurisdiction just once.

# From the President

## Power of Solidarity

Recently, some 31,000 unionized grocery workers ratified a new contract on the heels of an 11-day strike in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The agreement between the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and Stop & Shop's parent company, Netherlands-based Ahold Delhaize, preserves health care and retirement benefits, provides wage increases, and maintains time-and-a-half pay on Sunday for current members, the union reported.


Michael Sacco

Strikes are always an absolute last resort, but in this case, workers had little choice. The company had proposed unreasonable cuts to workers' take-home pay, health care and pension benefits. That's despite management taking in more than $2 billion in 2018 and authorizing over $4 billion in stock buybacks from 2017 to 2019, the UFCW noted.

In fact, Ahold Delhaize (which also owns the viciously anti-union Food Lion chain) sought to cut pension benefits by more than 70 percent, raise health care premiums by nearly 90 percent and exclude spouses from health coverage.

But the real story here is the workers' solidarity and the outpouring of community support that buoyed members and their families from the five UFCW locals. Like the unionized teachers who've also stood up and stood together in recent years in numerous states, the grocery workers said enough is enough and proved grassroots action works. They demonstrated that unions very clearly still have power and relevance.

The SIU, the UIW's parent union, supported this job action at rallies and with other assistance, and we'll be there for our union brothers and sisters with money, marbles and chalk wherever and whenever needed.

**Big Wins in Nevada**

June 12 was a historic day for workers in Nevada, as Governor Steve Sisolak signed SB135, giving state workers collective bargaining rights. The governor was quoted as saying the decision was "about respect," and I couldn't agree more. The bill gives state employees more than the right to form a union, it gives them the respect they deserve in the workplace.

But the governor wasn't done yet. He also signed SB312, which required employers to offer paid leave, and AB456, which raised the minimum wage in his state to an eventual level of $12 an hour by 2024. I've long said that if it helps workers, we support it, and I have no reservations about voicing my support for the signing of these three bills.

**Pro-Worker Legislation**

Elsewhere on the legislative front, House and Senate Democrats in early May introduced the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act – comprehensive legislation to strengthen protections for workers' right to organize a union and bargain for higher wages, better benefits, and safer working conditions. As wage inequality continues to leave workers and middle-class families behind, this legislation would empower millions of Americans to stand together and ensure hard-working people are getting their fair share of economic growth.

A recent study published in the National Bureau of Economic Research found that unions have consistently provided workers with a 10- to 20-percent wage boost over their non-union counterparts over the past eight decades.

Specifically, the PRO Act would establish penalties on predatory corporations that violate workers' rights, and combat misclassification of workers as supervisors and independent contractors. It would strengthen workers' right to strike for basic workplace improvements, including higher wages and better working conditions. The bill also would create a mediation and arbitration process to ensure corporations and newly formed unions reach a first contract.

Further, the PRO Act would authorize unions and employers to negotiate agreements that allow unions to collect fair-share fees that cover the costs of representation; streamline the National Labor Relation Board's procedures to secure worker freedoms and effectively prevent violations; and protect the integrity of union elections against coercive captive audience meetings.

While it would be an understatement to say the bill faces an uphill climb in the Senate, it nevertheless serves as a potential starting point for long overdue labor-law reform. And, it hints at the possibilities of what could be achieved with pro-worker majorities in both Houses of Congress.

# Sanders Campaign Staffers Ratify Labor Agreement, Join Ranks of UFCW Union

*Continued from Page 1*

ries to their top executives, as it were, without first ensuring they've raised the compensation for all the unionized workers."

The pay transparency clause requires management to share outside consultants' compensation with the union in addition to compensation within management, but large consultant payouts would not necessarily trigger the automatic staff pay hikes built into the manager pay cap, Williams said.

Interns like Reg Ledesma, who served on the union's bargaining committee, will be paid no less than $20 an hour. In addition, full-time volunteers will get first crack at staff positions when the campaign hires to expand, and all staff will receive "broad coverage for mental health care services," a union press release characterizing the deal said.

"You feel more at ease knowing you're backed up by the strength of the union," Ledesma said in the release.

That holistic support goes far beyond pay. For instance, the blackout days policy epitomizes the way this contract uniquely confronts the notoriously endless scutwork of professional electoral politics. Days off are rare in the campaign world, and staffers are almost always "on call" even when not actively working. But under this policy, managers are required to accommodate the staffers' blackout days requests or provide an alternative blackout day within three calendar days of the request — provided the staffer gives 24 hours notice prior to the request.

Figuring out how to structure a policy to provide truly restorative time off on a flexible basis proved challenging, Williams said, but both sides wanted to balance campaign employees' enthusiasm for their work with the campaign's need to have someone on call at all hours – without succumbing to the sleep-when-it's-over burnout common to campaign staffers.

"You have highly motivated employees who want to see a campaign win and are willing to put in long hours, but we don't want them to be disincentivized to take time off when they need it," he said.

Campaign manager Faiz Shakir concurred: "These aren't machines, these are humans. On the management side it's important for us to respect that people are going to need time off, an opportunity to recharge, and disconnect for a moment if they can."

The contract is "an opportunity to find those moments," Shakir said in an interview. "They're hard to come by in a campaign. But I think we can find them."

The May 2 ratification vote among bargaining unit members was not unanimous, Williams said, but the proposed contract was approved with a majority of the 100 currently covered employees. The contract, like all steps of the unionization process, was accomplished in brisk fashion. Williams attributed the efficient bargaining process to the Sanders management team's own enthusiasm for seeing its workforce organize.

Williams described the Sanders managerial team more as allies than adversaries in the unit-defining process as well.

"Where a hostile employer might only meet with you once a week or once a month… so that negotiations drag on forever, we were meeting multiple days a week for long days, and we were given all the time we needed with the bargaining committee to formulate proposals and solicit feedback from staff and all that. It was productive, thorough, and quick."

"They were amicable to [our proposed unit structure]. It wasn't contentious," the union staffer said. "It was a model campaign."

Shakir says the management team was driven by a sense of higher purpose. "It's an opportunity not just for ourselves but to show and teach others that the process can be peaceful and productive."

The deal also reflects an ongoing shift within the broader community of progressive institutions, which have traditionally relied on young and ideologically motivated people to accept relatively light entry-level pay and intensive schedules, with the promise of moving to jobs with better pay and greater influence dangled as the payoff for paying one's dues. Unionization drives at major progressive nonprofits have altered the landscape – and Sanders' embrace of a unionized campaign staff may raise labor standards for everyone who plies their trade in political campaigns.

"We're hopeful that the Sanders campaign and so many other new entities that are unionizing will be educational to a new generation," said Shakir. "Hopefully they'll think, hey, that's something we can repeat over and over again."


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Brothers and sisters from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Nurses and Health Professionals Union posed for this photo at the conclusion of their May 13-17 visit to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. The contingent was on the island to conduct vision and hearing screenings for public school students. The effort was part of the AFT's comprehensive recovery assistance that the union has been providing since two Category 5 hurricanes struck the U.S. territory in September 2017. Joining the group (standing eleventh from the right) is UIW/SIU Asst. VP Jacqueline P. Dickenson.

# AFT Volunteers Return to U.S. Virgin Islands

## UIW Provides Free Lunches During Mission of Goodwill

*Editor's note: The following article was written by Adrienne Coles, communications specialist, American Federation of Teachers union. It has been edited slightly to include information that is of specific interest to our UIW members in the U.S. Virgin Islands.*

It's been a year since volunteers from the AFT Nurses and Health Professionals traveled to the U.S. Virgin Islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas to conduct needed hearing and vision screenings for all public school students there. Forty nurses and other health professionals—including respiratory therapists, radiology techs, and speech and language pathologists—in May returned to the islands and completed more than 8,000 student screenings.

The group visited St. Thomas during the week of May 13-17. Members of the United Industrial Workers (UIW) provided group members with cost-free daily lunches throughout their stay, according to UIW/SIU Asst. VP Jacqueline Dickenson.

"It was a real pleasure for us to show them our appreciation for their efforts by providing lunches during their visit to the islands," said Dickenson. "Initially I was a bit concerned because we were serving all local fare which was prepared in our traditional ways, so I asked if anyone had any concerns or issues.

"To my surprise though, they all seemed to really enjoy the food. One person said the only issue he had was that he wanted more food," she said. "I am so pleased that they enjoyed it."

Joining Dickenson in the free lunch undertaking were UIW/SIU Field Representative Kevin Challenger and UIW Administrative Assistant Sharika Wesselhoft.

The effort was part of the AFT's comprehensive recovery assistance that the union has been providing since two Category 5 hurricanes struck the U.S. territory in September 2017.

"Since the hurricanes, our school nurses have struggled with limited supplies and other support," said Carol Callwood, president of the St. Thomas-St. John Federation of Teachers. "Our members and the national AFT leadership view this situation as a national concern. When our students have difficulty hearing or seeing in the classroom, they can't learn."

AFT volunteers returned to the islands to find residents slowly rebuilding because the hurricanes damaged many structures, including schools. According to a report from the U.S. Virgin Islands Hurricane Recovery and Resilience Task Force, hurricanes Irma and Maria damaged or destroyed school buildings and knocked out essential services like power and telecommunications.

The storms also affected the lives of students and teachers, some of whom left the islands and did not return for months, if at all. Public school enrollment dropped by 17 percent—from 13,200 to 10,900. The island schools continue to face hurdles, including staff shortages as well as the loss of supplies, materials and equipment.

Laura Iacometta, a retired registered nurse from New Jersey, was a returning volunteer. She was in St. Thomas for her first visit; many of the schools were closed and students were crowded into the few buildings that were useable and attending class on shortened schedules. Now, more than a year later, Iacometta went to St. Croix, and she says the island is recovering.

"Some businesses are still closed, but students are back to full schedules in temporary modular school buildings," said Iacometta, who is a member of Health Professionals and Allied Employees.

For Shamia Moffett, a registered nurse from Connecticut and a member of the Danbury Nurses' Union, this mission was a first, but she said she would do it again. "There are areas still in need of repair, but there are also parts of the islands that did not look like they had been through storms," said Moffett, who worked on both St. Croix and St. Thomas. "Most of the schools were OK, although some were a little better off than others," says Moffett, who recalls working in one school with mold and one that had some problems with electricity.

Moffett estimates her team of healthcare workers saw an average of 600 to 800 students a day. "The screenings are simple and easy, and we were able to move through them pretty fast," she says. "I was so amazed by the students. They are resilient, well-mannered and respectful."

Now that the screenings are complete, the next step will be to get eyeglasses and hearing aids for the students in need. The project was supported by a number of partners, including Airlink, the Clinton Global Initiative, the Seafarers International Union, and the U.S. Virgin Islands departments of Education and Health.


AFT Nurse Erica Johnson (left) is joined by UIW/SIU Field Representative Kevin Challenger (center) and UIW/SIU Asst. VP Jacqueline Dickenson. The photo was taken following one of the daily lunches.

# UIW Turns Out in Force to Support Waterfront Classic

The UIW was well represented May 16 during the 7th Annual Seafarers Waterfront Classic.

Present and taking part in the activities were UIW/SIU President Michael Sacco, UIW Vice President Atlantic Region Joseph Soresi, UIW Fort Lauderdale Rep Kris Hopkins (who also serves as SIU Asst. VP), UIW Retiree Wayne Raley and several rank-and-file members. Conducted at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland and hosted by the UIW's parent organization (the Seafarers International Union), the annual excursion raises donations for the American Military Veterans Foundation.

Event sponsors dubbed the outing a huge success as 125 anglers took to the water aboard 18 vessels. Each was in search of the largest possible rockfish that they could land and bring back to shore.

Although no real "behemoths" were landed, anglers still had an enjoyable day as evidenced by the photos appearing on this page. The winning catch tipped the scales at 11.7 pounds.

UIW/SIU President Michael Sacco looks on from a golf cart as vessels make their way back to the docks. Joining him is AMA President Captain Bob Johnston.


UIW VP Atlantic Joseph Soresi, far right, joined the crew and several other anglers who fished from the *Three Sons*.


UIW Retiree Wayne Raley (left) tested his skills from aboard the *Captain Joe Bill*. To Raley's immediate right is SIU VP Contracts George Tricker, the Seafarers Waterfront Classic organizer.

UIW Fort Lauderdale Rep Kris Hopkins (right, who also serves as SIU Asst. VP) presents a trophy to veteran Ralph Camp (center) during the event's awards program. Joining in for the presentation is AMMILVETS President David Souders.

UIW Members David Aud (left) and David Hammett work diligently to prepare the day's catch for cooking.

# Annual Funding Notice - United Industrial Workers Pension Plan

**Introduction**

This notice includes important information about the funding status of your multiemployer pension plan (the "Plan"). It also includes general information about the benefit payments guaranteed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation ("PBGC"), a federal insurance agency. All traditional pension plans (called "defined benefit pension plans") must provide this notice every year regardless of their funding status. This notice does not mean that the Plan is terminating. It is provided for informational purposes and you are not required to respond in any way. This notice is required by federal law. This notice is for the plan year beginning January 1, 2018 and ending December 31, 2018 ("Plan Year").

**How Well Funded Is Your Plan**

The law requires the administrator of the Plan to tell you how well the Plan is funded, using a measure called the "funded percentage." The Plan divides its assets by its liabilities on the Valuation Date for the plan year to get this percentage. In general, the higher the percentage, the better funded the plan. The Plan's funded percentage for the Plan Year and each of the two preceding plan years is shown in the chart below. The chart also states the value of the Plan's assets and liabilities for the same period.

**Funded Percentage**

| | 2018 | 2017 | 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Valuation Date | January 1, 2018 | January 1, 2017 | January 1, 2016 |
| Funded Percentage | 111.8% | 107.2% | 110.4% |
| Value of Assets | $115,653,618 | $106,725,574 | $104,211,456 |
| Value of Liabilities | $103,413,784 | $99,548,624 | $94,414,553 |

**Year-End Fair Market Value of Assets**

The asset values in the chart above are measured as of the Valuation Date. They also are "actuarial values." Actuarial values differ from market values in that they do not fluctuate daily based on changes in the stock or other markets. Actuarial values smooth out those fluctuations and can allow for more predictable levels of future contributions. Despite the fluctuations, market values tend to show a clearer picture of a plan's funded status at a given point in time. The asset values in the chart below are market values and are measured on the last day of the Plan Year. The chart also includes the year-end market value of the Plan's assets for each of the two preceding plan years.

The December 31, 2018 fair value of assets disclosed below is reported on an unaudited basis since this notice is required to be distributed before the normal completion time of the audit which is currently in progress.

| | December 31, 2018 | December 31, 2017 | December 31, 2016 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fair Market Value of Assets | $109,430,000 | $115,653,618 | $106,725,574 |

**Endangered, Critical, or Critical and Declining Status**

Under federal pension law, a plan generally is in "endangered" status if its funded percentage is less than 80 percent. A plan is in "critical" status if the funded percentage is less than 65 percent (other factors may also apply). A plan is in "critical and declining" status if it is in critical status and is projected to become insolvent (run out of money to pay benefits) within 15 years (or within 20 years if a special rule applies). If a pension plan enters endangered status, the trustees of the plan are required to adopt a funding improvement plan. Similarly, if a pension plan enters critical status or critical and declining status, the trustees of the plan are required to adopt a rehabilitation plan. Funding improvement and rehabilitation plans establish steps and benchmarks for pension plans to improve their funding status over a specified period of time. The plan sponsor of a plan in critical and declining status may apply for approval to amend the plan to reduce current and future payment obligations to participants and beneficiaries. **The Plan was not in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status in the Plan Year.**

If the plan is in endangered, critical, or critical and declining status for the plan year ending December 31, 2019, separate notification of the status has or will be provided.

**Participant Information**

The total number of participants and beneficiaries covered by the plan on the valuation date was 3,665. Of this number, 1,213 were current employees, 984 were retired and receiving benefits, and 1,468 were retired or no longer working for the employer and have a right to future benefits.

**Funding & Investment Policies**

Every pension plan must have a procedure to establish a funding policy for plan objectives. A funding policy relates to how much money is needed to pay promised benefits. The funding policy of the Plan is to provide benefits from contributions by signatory employers under the terms of collective bargaining agreements between the United Industrial Service, Transportation, Professional and Government Workers of North America and the employers.

**Investment objectives:**

Assets of the Plan shall be invested with sufficient diversification so as to minimize the risk of large losses unless it is clearly prudent under the then current circumstances not to do so. Plan assets shall be invested in a manner consistent with the fiduciary standards of ERISA and supporting regulations, and all transactions will be undertaken on behalf of the Plan in the sole interest of Plan participants and beneficiaries. Assets of the Plan shall be invested to maintain sufficient liquidity to meet benefit payment obligations and other Plan expenses.

**Investment Guidelines:**

With respect to any Investment Manager who is appointed by the Trustees to manage as Plan Asset Manager, such Plan Asset Manager will discharge its responsibilities with respect to the Plan's assets in accordance with the fiduciary responsibilities under ERISA and all regulations thereunder and shall not violate any of ERISA's "prohibited transaction" rules. The Plan Asset Manager shall be a bank (trust company), insurance company, or a registered investment advisor under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. The Plan Asset Manager shall acknowledge in writing that it is a fiduciary of the Plan within the meaning of Section 3(21)(A) of ERISA and an "investment manager" within the meaning of Section 3(38) of ERISA.

**Asset Allocation:**

The Fund's assets are invested in the following asset classes and maintained within the corresponding ranges. The Trustees make appropriate adjustments if one or more of the limits are breeched.

| Asset Class | Target | Range |
|---|---|---|
| Domestic Equities | 50% | 35% - 60% |
| Fixed Income | 50% | 40% - 65% |

**Standards of Investment Performance:**

Each Investment Manager is reviewed regularly regarding performance, personnel, strategy, research capabilities, organizational and business matters and other qualitative factors that may affect its ability to achieve the desired investment results. Consideration will be given to the extent to which performance results are consistent with the goals and objectives set forth in the Investment Policy and/or individual guidelines provided to an Investment Manager. The Plan's investment policy outlines prohibited investments as well as limits regarding the percentage of the fund that may be invested in any one company and industry. Minimum credit quality guidelines are established and provided to investment managers. No investment may be made which violates the provisions of ERISA or the Internal Revenue Code.

The Trustees review the Plan's investment policy on a regular basis and make periodic changes when, based on all available information, it is prudent to do so.

Under the Plan's investment policy, the Plan's assets were allocated among the following categories of investments, as of the end of the Plan Year. These allocations are percentages of total assets:

| Asset Allocations | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1. Cash (Interest-bearing and non-interest bearing) | 3 |
| 2. U.S. Government securities | 9 |
| 3. Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities): | |
| a. Preferred | 0 |
| b. All other | 38 |
| 4. Corporate stocks (other than employer securities): | |
| a. Preferred | 0 |
| b. Common | 43 |
| 5. Partnership/joint venture interests | 0 |
| 6. Real estate (other than employer real property) | 0 |
| 7. Loans (other than to participants) | 0 |
| 8. Participant loans | 0 |
| 9. Value of interest in common/collective trusts | |
| 10. Value of interest in pooled separate accounts | |
| 11. Value of interest in master trust investment accounts | 0 |
| 12. Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities | 0 |
| 13. Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds) | 7 |
| 14. Value of funds held in insurance co. general account (unallocated contracts) | 0 |
| 15. Employer-related investments: | |
| a. Employer Securities | 0 |
| b. Employer real property | 0 |
| 16. Buildings and other property used in plan operation | 0 |
| 17. Other | 0 |

For information about the plan's investment in any of the following type of investments as described in the chart above – common/collective trusts, pooled separate accounts, master trust investment accounts, or 103-12 investment entities, contact: Margaret Bowen, Plan Administrator, at (301) 899-0675, or by writing to: Plan Administrator, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746

**Right to Request a Copy of the Annual Report**

Pension plans must file annual reports with the US Department of Labor. The report is called the "Form 5500." These reports contain financial and other information. You may obtain an electronic copy of your Plan's annual report by going to www.efast.dol.gov and using the search tool. Annual reports also are available from the US Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration's Public Disclosure Room at 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N-1513, Washington, DC 20210, or by calling 202.693.8673. Or you may obtain a copy of the Plan's annual report by making a written request to the plan administrator. Annual reports do not contain personal information, such as the amount of your accrued benefit. You may contact your plan administrator if you want information about your accrued benefits. Your plan administrator is identified below under "Where To Get More Information."

**Summary of Rules Governing Insolvent Plans**

Federal law has a number of special rules that apply to financially troubled multiemployer plans that become insolvent, either as ongoing plans or plans terminated by mass withdrawal. The plan administrator is required by law to include a summary of these rules in the annual funding notice. A plan is insolvent for a plan year if its available financial resources are not sufficient to pay benefits when due for that plan year. An insolvent plan must reduce benefit payments to the highest level that can be paid from the plan's available resources. If such resources are not enough to pay benefits at the level specified by law (see Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC, below), the plan must apply to the PBGC for financial assistance. The PBGC will loan the plan the amount necessary to pay benefits at the guaranteed level. Reduced benefits may be restored if the plan's financial condition improves.

A plan that becomes insolvent must provide prompt notice of its status to participants and beneficiaries, contributing employers, labor unions representing participants, and PBGC. In addition, participants and beneficiaries also must receive information regarding whether, and how, their benefits will be reduced or affected, including loss of a lump sum option.

**Benefit Payments Guaranteed by the PBGC**

The maximum benefit that the PBGC guarantees is set by law. Only benefits that you have earned a right to receive and that cannot be forfeited (called vested benefits) are guaranteed. There are separate insurance programs with different benefit guarantees and other provisions for single-employer plans and multiemployer plans. Your Plan is covered by PBGC's multiemployer program. Specifically, the PBGC guarantees a monthly benefit payment equal to 100 percent of the first $11 of the Plan's monthly benefit accrual rate, plus 75 percent of the next $33 of the accrual rate, times each year of credited service. The PBGC's maximum guarantee, therefore, is $35.75 per month times a participant's years of credited service.

*Example 1:* If a participant with 10 years of credited service has an accrued monthly benefit of $600, the accrual rate for purposes of determining the PBGC guarantee would be determined by dividing the monthly benefit by the participant's years of service ($600/10), which equals $60. The guaranteed amount for a $60 monthly accrual rate is equal to the sum of $11 plus $24.75 (.75 x $33), or $35.75. Thus, the participant's guaranteed monthly benefit is $357.50 ($35.75 x 10).

*Example 2:* If the participant in Example 1 has an accrued monthly benefit of $200, the accrual rate for purposes of determining the guarantee would be $20 (or $200/10). The guaranteed amount for a $20 monthly accrual rate is equal to the sum of $11 plus $6.75 (.75 x $9), or $17.75. Thus, the participant's guaranteed monthly benefit would be $177.50 ($17.75 x 10).

The PBGC guarantees pension benefits payable at normal retirement age and some early retirement benefits. In addition, the PBGC guarantees qualified preretirement survivor benefits (which are preretirement death benefits payable to the surviving spouse of a participant who dies before starting to receive benefit payments). In calculating a person's monthly payment, the PBGC will disregard any benefit increases that were made under a plan within 60 months before the earlier of the plan's termination or insolvency (or benefits that were in effect for less than 60 months at the time of termination or insolvency). Similarly, the PBGC does not guarantee benefits above the normal retirement benefit, disability benefits not in pay status, or non-pension benefits, such as health insurance, life insurance, death benefits, vacation pay, or severance pay.

For additional information about the PBGC and the pension insurance program guarantees, go to the Multiemployer Page on PBGC's website at www.pbgc.gov/multiemployer. Please contact your employer or plan administrator for specific information about your pension plan or pension benefit. PBGC does not have that information. See "Where to Get More Information About Your Plan," below.

**Where to Get More Information**

For more information about this notice, you may contact the Plan Administrator at: UIW Pension Plan, Attn: Margaret Bowen, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746; (301) 899-0675 For identification purposes, the official plan number is 002 and the plan sponsor's employer identification number or "EIN" is 11-6106805.

# UIW Loses Ardent Worker Advocate

## *Retired Great Lakes VP Bill Dobbins Passes Away*

Dobbins (left in photo above) was passionate about the UIW membership, and servicing shops was a task he always took to heart. In the photo above, which was taken in 1995, he visits with union members at Worthington Foods. At the far right is the late Retired UIW International Representative Homer Cordle, who passed away in July 2018.

Retired UIW Vice President Great Lakes Region William J. Dobbins (known in UIW circles as Bill), 84, of London, Ohio, passed away April 20, 2019 in his residence.

The Sprague, West Virginia, native was surrounded by members of his family at the time of his demise.

Born July 18, 1934, he was a son of Cecil J. and Myrtle B. (Rees) Dobbins.

Dobbins' career with the UIW started on Jan. 1, 1968 when he was hired as a union representative. By 1974, he had worked his way up to the post of regional director. Dobbins realized the pinnacle of his union career in 1981 when he became UIW Vice President Great Lakes Region. He held this position for the next 20 years, unexpectedly announcing his retirement in late 2000.

"It was a sudden decision," Dobbins told the *The United Worker* in announcing his retirement. "I can't really put my finger on it, but something inside me said, 'It's time.' I really have no plans.

"It has been a pleasure," the late UIW official continued. "I would hope that my heartfelt interest in our members and in the labor movement has been of benefit. I did it as a way of life, and I saw no other way to go."

Dobbins spent his entire UIW career in the Columbus, Ohio, area, and was never shy when it came to speaking out on behalf of his union brothers and sisters.

"Anyone who knows Bill Dobbins knows how passionate he always was about his job," UIW/SIU President Michael Sacco said when Dobbins retired. "Bill believed in in the UIW membership and he was 100 percent committed to them."

"Bill was a dedicated trade unionist who gave it his all," said UIW/SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel. "His prowess as a negotiator was amazing as was his sense of humor.

"He left a strong foundation for those that followed him in the Columbus area and should be remembered for that," Heindel concluded. "Bill will be missed."

Kristy Clements, manager, SIU Data Management Department, became acquainted with Dobbins many years ago during the dawn of her union career.

"I met Bill when I was very young and new to the labor movement. He was a source of wisdom that I leaned on several times," she recalled. "His perspective on issues was different than mine and taught me to look past what I knew and not to be afraid of the challenge. Bill was a major influence in the UIW in the Ohio area. We had many good times over the years."

Jordan Biscardo, communications director of the UIW's parent union and former editor of *The United Worker*, worked with Dobbins throughout the 1990s on shop coverage as well as some organizing drives.

"Bill was an old-school union man in the very best sense of the term," Biscardo recalled. "He made sure the shops in his region were serviced regularly and efficiently, and he took a personal interest in helping members however possible. Bill was also very involved in volunteer community services – he led by example."

Biscardo added, "I will never forget hanging out at the Columbus hall after the business day was finished. Members would stop by and it truly felt like a family gathering. Much of that camaraderie existed because of Bill, who was a very intelligent, no-nonsense leader but also very compassionate and down-to-earth."

In addition to being dedicated to the union and the labor movement, Dobbins was extensively involved in activities affecting his community.

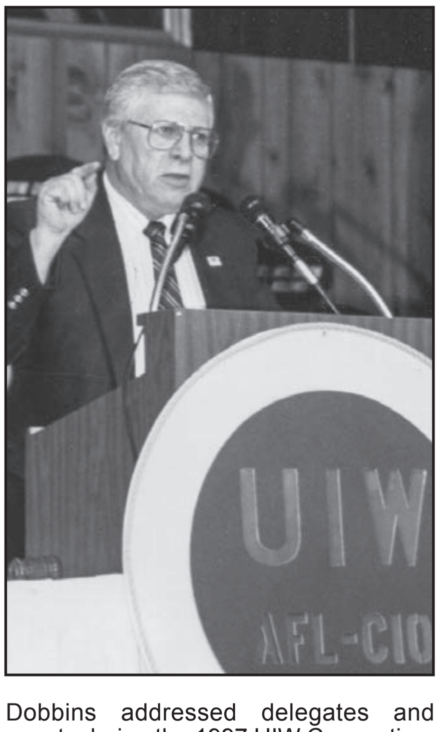
"Bill is very active in helping children, very active with the (annual) United Way campaign," said Bill Ellis (Dobbins' successor) on the occasion of Dobbins' retirement. "He is very community-minded."

Dobbins served as president of the Columbus-Franklin County AFL-CIO Central Labor Council and was a member of the AFL-CIO Community Services Committee.

Additionally, Dobbins served on the Franklin County Mental Health Board, Charity Newsies, the City of Columbus Employment Practices Board and Franklin County Convention Authority Board. Further, he held membership on the executive and screening committees for the Democratic Party of Franklin County; and volunteered with St. Stephens Community House, the United Way and the Salesian Inner City Boys Club.

Dobbins is survived by his wife of 43 years, Jody (Potts) Dobbins; daughter, Colleen Dobbins; son, Bill Dobbins; a host of brothers- and sisters-in-law and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, brother David Lee Dobbins, mother-in-law Marjorie Potts and father-in-law Weldon L. Potts.

Per Bill's wishes, there were no visitation or funeral services. Memorial contributions in Bill's name may be made to either the United Way (www.unitedway.org) or Charity Newsies (www.charitynewsies.org).




Dobbins addressed delegates and guests during the 1997 UIW Convention.

Over the years, UIW officials have routinely attended and participated in annual AFL-CIO Union Industries shows which showcased union-made products. In photo above, Dobbins (left) is pictured during the May 1999 iteration of the event in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He was joined by UIW/SIU President Michael Sacco (center) and the late UIW National Director Steve Edney. In the photo below, Dobbins (left) posed with union officials and rank-and-file members during the 1993 UIW Convention in Piney Point, Maryland.


## UIW Directory

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

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

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

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

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

**HOUSTON, TX**
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

**SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO**
659 Hillside St, Summit Hills
San Juan, PR 00920
(939) 204-0337

**ST. CROIX, USVI**
4031 Estate La Grande Princess Suite 37
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. 90444
(310) 549-3920

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# Report Points Finger at Johns Hopkins For Hounding Thousands of Patients

## Institution Harasses Low-Income Clients for Medical Debt

*Editor's note: The following piece came in the form of a May 14 news release by National Nurses United, AFL-CIO.*

Despite its reputation as one of the most prestigious medical institutions in the U.S., Johns Hopkins Hospital has a shocking record of hounding low-income patients for medical debt – filing thousands of lawsuits, garnishing wages and seizing bank accounts.

That's the finding of a new research report from the AFL-CIO, National Nurses United (NNU), and the Coalition for a Humane Hopkins.

Since 2009, Johns Hopkins Hospital has filed more than 2,400 lawsuits in Maryland courts seeking payment of alleged medical debt from former patients. Many would likely qualify for reduced, or charity care, but were apparently not informed of that option by the hospital despite the obligation of Maryland's charity care provisions.

In more than 400 cases, the hospital has won garnishments ordered on wages or bank accounts.

"It's tragic that Johns Hopkins has strayed so far from one of its core values to provide exceptional care to low-income people," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler. "It's a shame that a not-for-profit, prominent institution that claims to be a pillar of the community continues its questionable medical debt practices."

"For a wealthy hospital like Johns Hopkins to hound economically distressed patients for even minor medical debt is unconscionable and disgraceful," said NNU President Zenei Cortez, RN. "For Hopkins, the payoff is minor, but for the families they target the consequences can be devastating, creating additional hardship for thousands of the most vulnerable members of the community."

"This data makes us wonder what is the message that the institution is sending to its neighbors?" said Dr. Marisela Gomez, member of the Coalition for a Humane Hopkins. "Could it be 'We don't want to provide health care for you and your families'? If this is so, then Johns Hopkins continues to be an unfriendly and discriminating neighbor in its majority African American neighborhood of East Baltimore."

**Targeting Low-Income Patients African American Patients**

Hopkins' medical debt practices also have a disproportionate impact on African American Baltimore residents, noted the study. The 21213 Zip Code area, which contains the largest number of residents sued by Hopkins, for example, is 90 percent African American and has a poverty rate nearly triple the state average.

Overall, of the top 10 zip codes where Hopkins medical debt defendants reside, nine are located in Baltimore, including many in neighborhoods adjacent to the hospital with high levels of poverty.

**Not Fulfilling Its Tax-Exempt Non-Profit Obligations**

Hopkins is a not-for-profit institution that receives tens of millions annually in federal, state, and local tax breaks. In return for subsidies and tax breaks, Johns Hopkins is required to provide charity care or discounted care to low-income patients who lack insurance, or who lack enough insurance to cover their out-of-pocket expenses. Yet it falls fall short of that obligation.

Johns Hopkins hardly needed the help. In 2018, medical debt sought by Hopkins in court accounted for less than one-tenth of 1 percent of Hopkins' operating revenue.

In 2017 alone, Johns Hopkins received $164.4 million in tax exemptions and $25 million in rate support to provide charity care, $3.3 million of which was in excess of actual charity care provided. It ranks last or next to last among Maryland hospitals in charity care relative to the rate reimbursements it receives from the state.

Hopkins' excess charity care funds from 2017 alone could have forgiven nearly all of the $3.4 million sought in medical debt cases filed by Hopkins in Maryland courts from 2015 to 2018.

The AFL-CIO, nurses and community activists call on Johns Hopkins to immediately:

- Cancel all medical debt lawsuits it has filed against low -income patients.
- Cease the onerous practices of garnishing wages of low-income patients.
- Substantially increase the amount of charity care it provides for low-income patients who are unable to meet the high price of its hospital medical bills.
- Provide information about eligibility to all patients who may qualify for free or reduced medical care at Johns Hopkins facilities.

Nationally, some 43 million Americans face unpaid medical debt, a significant problem at a time that one in six Americans who have employer-paid insurance made "difficult sacrifices" last year, such as cutting back on food, using up all or most of their savings, getting extra jobs, or moving in with friends, to be able to pay un-payable medical bills, according to a recent *Los Angeles Times* report.

## UIW Pensioners

**Louise Adams**
Crown Cork & Seal
Merkel, Texas

**Rickie Barton**
Crown Cork & Seal
Georgetown, Texas

**Belinda Bennett**
Church & Dwight
Crescent City, Florida

**Richard Berger**
National Maritime Union
Clifton, Virginia

**Derrick Grose**
Partners, LLC
Bronx, New York

**James Hileman**
Franklin International
Obetz, Ohio

**Gene Jackson**
Franklin International
Columbus, Ohio

**Larry Jones**
Crown Cork & Seal
Abilene, Texas

**Randall Kline**
Paulsen Wire Rope
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

**J. Gregory Marsh**
Church & Dwight
Covington, Kentucky

**Michael McGovern**
Repco Products Co.
Quakertown, Pennsylvania

**Joseph Reeves**
Armaly Brands
London, Ohio

**Augustin Santiago**
Steelstran Ltd.
Coamo, Puerto Rico

**Barbara Smith**
Plymkraft
Newport News, Virginia

**Tommie Stackpole**
Franklin International
Columbus, Ohio

**Brian White**
Montgomery Gateway East One
New York, New York

# Gone But Not Forgotten

**CARLON BROWN**

Pensioner Carlon Brown, 86, died January 7. Born in Ohio, Brother Brown was a military veteran. He signed on with the UIW in 1984 while employed by Progressive Driver Services, Inc. Brother Brown retired and went on pension in 2001. He made his home in Newport News, Virginia.

**CLEVELAND GREEN SR.**

Pensioner Cleveland Green Sr., 87, passed away April 11. Brother Green joined the union in in 1958 while employed at Winsor Smith Metal Products. A veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, Brother Green started collecting stipends for his retirement in 1983. He was born in Dorchester, South Carolina and resided in New York, New York.

**DARRELL LITTLE**

Pensioner Darrell Little, 71, died January 29. Born in Ohio, Brother Little signed on with the UIW in 1970 while employed at Church & Dwight. He also worked at Armaly Brands during his union career. Brother Little began receiving his pension in 2013 and made his home in his native state in the city of London.

**BRUCE MERVINE**

Pensioner Bruce Mervine, 91, passed away April 14. A native of Gordon, Pennsylvania, Brother Mervine became a member of the UIW in 1971 while working at A&E Products. He went on pension in 1989. A military veteran, Brother Mervine resided in his native city and state.

**WILLIAM MULLINS**

Pensioner William Mullins, 85, died May 31, 2018. Brother Mullins became a member of the UIW in 1971, signing on while employed at Z.H. Klaff & Co., Inc. A Maryland native, he retired and went on pension in 1985. Brother Mullins resided in Baltimore.

**MANUEL ROSADO**

Pensioner Manuel Rosado, 76, passed away February 3. Born in Puerto Rico, Brother Rosado joined the union in 1967 while employed at Repco Products, Inc. He also worked at Victory Refrigeration during his UIW career and went on pension in 2003. Brother Rasado made his home in Philadelphia.

**ALBERT TERAN**

Pensioner Albert Teran, 64, died March 10. Brother Teran came under the union umbrella in 1987 while working at Crown Cork & Seal. Born in Pasadena, Texas, he started collecting stipends for his retirement in 2005. Brother Teran resided in his native state in the city of Normangee.

Official Publication of the United Industrial, Service, Transportation, Professional & Government Workers of North America ■ Seafarers International Union ■ AFL-CIO

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# The United Worker

Volume 45, Number 2 April-June 2019

**UIW Provides Meals During AFT Goodwill Mission**
*Page 3*

# PRO Act Would Provide More Bargaining Power

## *Workers Would Gain Greater Influence in the Workplace*

*Editor's note: The following article, provided by the Economic Policy Institute, was written by Celine McNicholas and Lynn Rhinehart.*

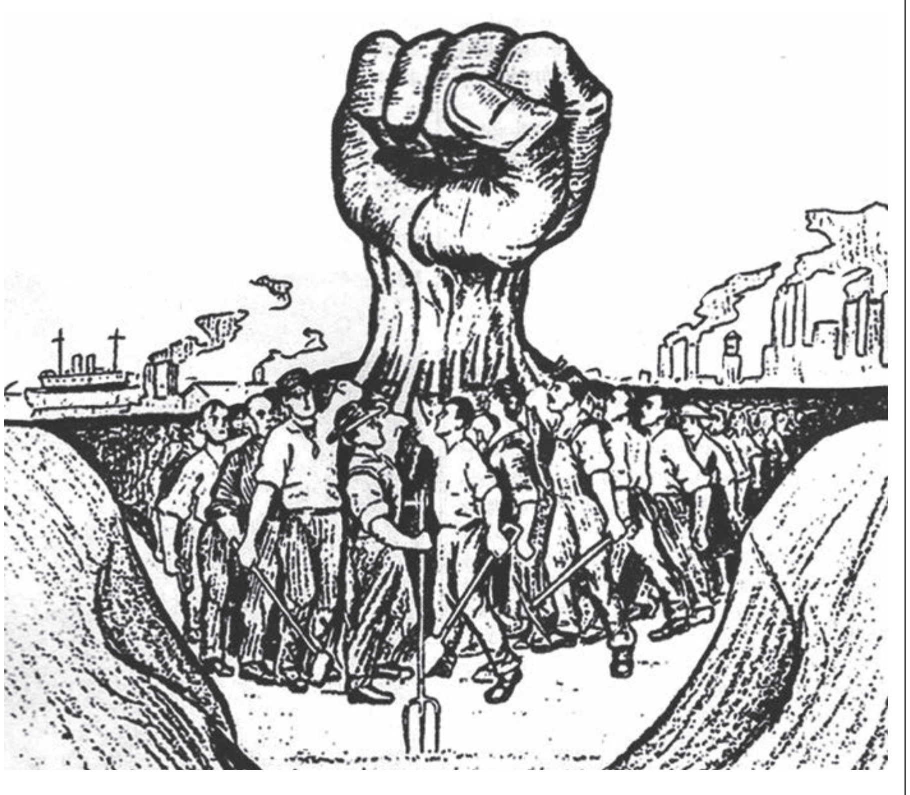
Our economy is out of balance. Corporations and CEOs hold too much power and wealth, and working people know it. Workers are mobilizing, organizing, protesting, and striking at a level not seen in decades, and they are winning pay raises and other real change by using their collective voices.

But, the fact is, it is still too difficult for working people to form a union at their workplace when they want to. The law gives employers too much power and puts too many roadblocks in the way of workers trying to organize with their co-workers. That's why the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act—introduced May 2 by U.S. Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington) and U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Virginia) —is such an important piece of legislation.

The PRO Act addresses several major problems with the current law and tries to give working people a fair shot when they try to join together with their coworkers to form a union and bargain for better wages, benefits, and conditions at their workplaces. Here's how:

**Stronger and swifter remedies when employers interfere with workers' rights**

Under current law, there are no penalties on employers or compensatory damages for workers when employers illegally fire or retaliate against workers who are trying to form a union. As a result, employers routinely fire pro-union workers, because they know it will undermine the organizing campaign and they will face no real consequences. The PRO Act addresses this issue, instituting civil penalties for violations of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Specifically, the legislation establishes compensatory damages for workers and penalties against employers (including penalties on officers and directors) when employers break the law and illegally fire or retaliate against workers. Importantly, these back pay and damages remedies apply to workers regardless of their immigration status. The PRO Act also requires the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to go to court and get an injunction to immediately reinstate workers if the NLRB believes the employer has illegally retaliated against workers for union activity. With this reform, workers won't be out of a job and a paycheck while their case works its way through the system. Finally, the PRO Act adds a right for workers to go to court to seek relief, bringing labor law in line with other workplace laws that already contain this right. And, the legislation prohibits employers from forcing workers to waive their right to class or collective litigation.



**More freedom to organize without employer interference**

The PRO Act streamlines the NLRB election process so workers can petition to form a union and get a timely vote without their employer interfering and delaying the vote. The act makes clear it is workers' decision to file for a union election and that employers have no standing in the NLRB's election process. It prohibits companies from forcing workers to attend mandatory anti-union meetings as a condition of continued employment. If the employer breaks the law or interferes with a fair election, the PRO Act empowers the NLRB to require the employer to bargain with the union if it had the support of a majority of workers prior to the election. And the PRO Act reinstates an Obama administration rule, which was repealed by the Trump administration, to require employers to disclose the names and payments they make to outside third-party union-busters that they hire to campaign against the union.

**Winning first contract agreements when workers organize and protecting fair share agreements**

The law requires employers to bargain in good faith with the union chosen by their employees to reach a collective bargaining agreement—a contract—addressing wages, benefits, protections from sexual harassment, and other issues. But employers often drag out the bargaining process to avoid reaching an agreement. More than half of all workers who vote to form a union don't have a collective bargaining agreement a year later. This creates a discouraging situation for workers and allows employers to foster a sense of futility in the process. The PRO Act establishes a process for reaching a first agreement when workers organize, utilizing mediation and then, if necessary, binding arbitration, to enable the parties to reach a first agreement. And the PRO Act overrides so-called "right-to-work" laws by establishing that employers and unions in all 50 states may agree upon a "fair share" clause requiring all workers who are covered by—and benefit from—the collective bargaining agreement to contribute a fair share fee towards the cost of bargaining and administering the agreement.

**Protecting strikes and other protest activity.**

When workers need economic leverage in bargaining, the law gives them the right to withhold their labor from their employer—to strike—as a means of putting economic pressure on the employer. But court decisions have dramatically undermined this right by allowing employers to "permanently replace" strikers—in other words, replace strikers with other workers so the strikers no longer have jobs. The law also prohibits boycotts of so-called "secondary" companies as a means of putting economic pressure on the workers' employer, even if these companies hold real sway over the employer and could help settle the dispute. The PRO Act helps level the playing field for workers by repealing the prohibition on secondary boycotts and prohibiting employers from permanently replacing strikers.

**Organizing and bargaining rights for more workers**

Too often, employers misclassify workers as independent contractors, who do not have the right to organize under the NLRA. Similarly, employers will misclassify workers as supervisors to deprive them of their NLRA rights.

The PRO Act tightens the definitions of independent contractor and supervisor to crack down on misclassification and extend NLRA protections to more workers. And, the PRO Act makes clear that workers can have more than one employer, and that both employers need to engage in collective bargaining over the terms and conditions of employment that they control or influence. This provision is particularly important given the prevalence of contracting out and temporary work arrangements—workers need the ability to sit at the bargaining table with all the entities that control or influence their work lives.

The PRO Act does not fix all the problems with our labor law, but it would address some fundamental problems and help make it more possible for workers to act on their federally-protected right to join together with their coworkers to bargain with their employer for improvements at their workplace. Research shows that workers want unions. There is a huge gap between the share of workers with union representation (11.9 percent) and the share of workers that would like to have a union and a voice on the job (48 percent). The PRO Act would take a major step forward in closing that gap.

## Connecticut Joins Neighboring States By Increasing Minimum Wage to $15

In a monumental leap of economic justice, the Connecticut Legislature on May 17 passed a law that increases the state minimum wage to $15 per hour by 2023. The increase brings Connecticut into parity with its neighboring states of New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey, which have passed similar increases. The victory comes as a result of unprecedented coordination among labor unions and allied advocates in the state that have been fighting for an increase for years.

"After years of grassroots organizing, Connecticut will finally catch up to our neighbors," said Connecticut AFL-CIO President Sal Luciano. "We applaud the legislature for doing the right thing and raising wages for over 330,000 workers in our state."

The victory was aided by a number of union members who have been elected to the state's General Assembly. Of critical importance to the bill's passage were the co-chairs of the assembly's Labor and Public Employees Committee, state Sen. Julie Kushner, former director of UAW Region 9A, and state Rep. Robyn Porter, who was once a single mother who worked three jobs to make ends meet.

The state legislature also has a paid family and medical leave bill that is tentatively scheduled for a vote the week of May 20. "All these combined are going to make a huge difference in people's lives," Kushner said.

The significance of the measure is not lost on those who will immediately benefit from the increase. "When fast-food workers walked off the job nearly seven years ago demanding $15 and a union, nobody thought we had a chance," said Joseph Franklin, a leader in the Fight for $15 coalition and a McDonald's worker in Hartford. "Our movement is gaining momentum."

The Connecticut AFL-CIO has been diligently working to elect union members and allies to office, and this victory shows that the path to power flows directly through the labor movement.