

THE COMMUNICATOR



Volume 1 Number 1 | Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America | July-Aug-Sept 2023

PPPWU Logo
Designed to
Show Strength
And Solidarity



PAGE 4

72-C Poster
Traces Long
Trajectory of
Union History



PAGE 9

Labor Leaders
Demand
Release of
Journalist
Jailed by Russia



PAGE 13

TOP STORY

PPPWU Heads To Las Vegas for 1st Convention As New Union

By Fred Bruning
The Communicator

With renewed confidence and a high sense of purpose, officials and delegates of the new Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America will meet Aug. 29-31 in Las Vegas for the organization's first convention since its predecessor union, the GCC/IBT, was ousted from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters earlier this year.

PPPWU leaders said the convention demonstrates the union's resiliency after the IBT's abrupt decision to rescind terms of a 2004 merger agreement that brought together the Teamsters and Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU) into a partnership that formed the Graphic Communications Conference of the IBT.

continues on PAGE 8



FEATURES

Where I Stand / Kurt Freeman	2
Outlook / Harold Meyerson	2
Managing Editor's Note / Fred Bruning	3
Commentary / Jim Hightower	3
Point of View / Sam Pizzigati	6
Bottom Line / Jerry Morgan	7
Guest Spot / Jennifer Sherer and Nina Mast	7
In Memoriam	13

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Biden 'Delivers' for Organized Labor



PAGE 5

A NOTICE REGARDING THE GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS BENEVOLENT TRUST FUND CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 13.

WHERE I STAND

KURT FREEMAN PPPWU PRESIDENT

Let's Celebrate Our Union as We Head Into Exciting Future

HELLO, MEMBERS OF THE PRINTING PACKAGING & Production Workers Union of North America!

We're about to begin a new chapter in the long and proud history of our union.

By now, you probably know how we've reached this point.

Last year, the Teamsters served notice that they would no longer honor the 2004 merger agreement that brought the GCIU into the Teamster orbit.



We tried our best to reach an accommodation with the new Teamster leadership team of General President Sean M. O'Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman but they were determined to scuttle the relationship.

Reasons remain vague. Without offering evidence, Teamster officials complained that an autonomous GCC was not to the IBT's advantage. We were offered only two choices – surrender our precious autonomy or depart the IBT by Dec. 31, 2022.

We brought the matter to court and are in the process of reaching a final resolution through arbitration.

But let's leave the past behind.

At every level of the PPPWU, we are looking toward the future with excitement and committing ourselves to the same high quality of service members have come to expect.

Our bright and appealing new logo, designed by Katie Schneider of Appletree MediaWorks, Kalamazoo, Michigan, a shop covered by District Council 3, represents the union's three main sectors and



symbolizes a labor organization already in high gear and ready to roll. While we are at the threshold of a new era, some things will remain the same.

Dues remain the same. Pensions are secure. Union professionals with decades of experience – and who know our industry inside and out – are standing ready to assist at the bargaining table and beyond.

Our mission remains the same: To provide the best contracts so members and their families can enjoy the secure, middle-class lives they deserve.

But let's be clear: There is hard work ahead.

Alejandro Guzman, our full-time organizer, is busy on many fronts but no single individual can be expected to build and sustain union ranks. That has to happen at the local level. We all must be alert to organizing possibilities – seek out opportunities and seize the moment.

Union membership has been slipping for decades. At the PPPWU, we must be dedicated to reversing that trend. Public support for organized labor is on the rise and young people are showing particular interest. We must not let this moment pass.

That will be a central part of my message at our Las Vegas convention in late August – organize, organize, organize.

The convention represents a historic moment for the union – the first national gathering of the PPPWU.

Delegates will plot a course for our independent union, vote on an amended constitution and by-laws, nominate and elect an international leadership team – president, secretary-treasurer, and regional general board members – and address a variety of other important matters.

Leaders will sharpen their skills and discuss issues most pertinent to the print, packaging and production industries. Outside regular sessions, hallway conversations allow old allies to renew friendships and catch up on news at the local level.

These are exciting days for our union. With a new name comes a new sense of purpose and dedication. So let's celebrate the PPPWU and its thousands of dedicated, hard-working members. Our labor union has a distinguished history of more than 100 years but the best is yet to come. ■

OUTLOOK

HAROLD MEYERSON

Biden has Tilted the Field in Favor of Workers

TWO RECENT UNION VICTORIES SUGGEST THAT, AGAINST all odds, the American labor movement may have a future.

The first confirmed a new trend in worker organizing. The second could mean that the government has finally found a way to help workers to join a union.

As a *New York Times* report noted, the landmark legislation and pro-union policies of President Joe Biden have tilted the playing field in favor of workers – at least a little.

In the first win, residents and fellows at the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Med hospital voted to join SEIU's Committee of Interns and Residents. The election was further validation that workers who can't easily be replaced – in this case, doctors – are flocking to unions these days.

The second union victory is even more astonishing. It came when largely African-American workers at the Blue Bird bus factory in southwest Georgia voted decisively to join the United Steelworkers.

"When we started, we'd meet in the local library," said Alex Perkins, a Steelworkers organizer. "Then the meetings got too big for the library."

The pandemic curtailed much of the organizing, but it started up again in 2021, and grew to the point that the union sent in more organizers to join Perkins. "By 2022," he says, "we had an organizing committee in every department."



THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

Whether the victory at Blue Bird portends union successes in the historically anti-union South remains to be seen. While the pro-labor policies of the administration will not in themselves suffice to rebuild unions among blue-collar workers, these governmental laws and policies can contribute to labor success. ■

Harold Meyerson is editor at large at The American Prospect magazine. This piece first appeared on the American Prospect website, prospect.org, and is reprinted with permission of the author.



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Much has Changed but Tradition of Independence Remains

JOHN F. KENNEDY KNEW HISTORY DOES NOT FOLLOW a straight line, “Change is the law of life,” JFK said. “And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”

In unexpected fashion, much has changed at the union once known as the GCC/IBT. Last year, the IBT’s new leaders – General President Sean M. O’Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman – said they no longer would honor the 2004 agreement that brought the GCIU and Teamsters together.



The IBT terms were non-negotiable. GCC/IBT leaders could surrender the union’s autonomy or leave the Teamster fold.

Our leaders held firm.

They honored the union’s long history of self-determination, identity and independence. They preserved our autonomy and, with skill and confidence, quickly reorganized as the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America – the PPPWU.

Under that banner, delegates and union leaders will gather next month in Las Vegas for the first PPPWU convention (Stories pages 8-10). They’ll bear a heavy responsibility – nothing less than constructing a sturdy framework for the future of our union.

“There will be hefty revisions of the constitution – changes to ensure that, structurally, the PPPWU is best set up to thrive as an independent union,” general counsel Peter Leff told this newspaper, which, by the way, is changing a bit, too.

The publication, renamed, “The Communicator,” features a new Page 1 masthead incorporating a PPPWU logo designed by Katie Schneider, principal web executive at Appletree MediaWorks, a four-person shop in Kalamazoo, Michigan, covered by DC-3. “I am a fourth-generation union member and a lot of union pride went into this,” said Schneider (Page 4).

Despite a different look atop Page 1, the newspaper – in its 41st year – remains committed to high journalistic standards. Our mission to provide news at the local level,



INTERNATIONALWOMENSDAY.COM VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

report on the overall labor movement and keep an eye on political issues that affect working people remains the same.

Along those lines, this edition includes a close look at the long-expected announcement by President Joe Biden that he will seek re-election (Page 5).

Since Inauguration Day, Biden has lived up to his reputation as a friend of organized labor and – two-and-a-half years later – is viewed widely as perhaps the most pro-union president in the nation’s history.

At this point, it is likely that Biden will face former President Donald Trump, who seeks a return to power after Biden defeated him by 7 million votes in 2020.

Trump, divisive and headstrong as ever, is contending with a variety of legal problems – including federal charges that he put the nation at risk by carelessly handling classified material once out of office – but his most ardent supporters are sticking with him.

Union leaders urge members to look past the provocative cultural issues Trump likes to exploit and focus on his abysmal record as an anti-union employer who favors a national right-to-work law and, as president, undercut workplace safety and installed pro-business members to the National Labor Relations Board.

Despite the challenges facing our new union – the PPPWU – and our nation, it is important to keep the words of John Kennedy in mind. “...those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.” As the first PPPWU convention approaches, President Kurt Freeman vowed union leadership was looking ahead with confidence and determination. “The future is now,” Freeman said. ■

COMMENTARY JIM HIGHTOWER

How to Solve Labor Shortage? GOP: Put More Kids to Work



Big News! Republicans Do Have an Idea: Bring Back Child Labor!

I have to concede one point: Today’s far-right Republican party does not discriminate against women. In fact, the GOP is giving its female political buffoons a higher profile than its male bozos.

Consider Sarah Huckabee Sanders, governor of Arkansas, who became a star in the new Republican Crusade to bring back child labor abuse.

Pushed by their corporate backers, GOP governors and lawmakers exclaim that the answer to America’s so-called “labor shortage” is not to make jobs more attractive, but to fill them with cheap, compliant children.

Huckabee Sanders rushed to the aid of these corporate powers, eliminating a bothersome Arkansas law that required Tyson, Walmart, and other big employers to get a special state permit to put any child under 16 to work.

“The meddling hand of big government creeping down from Washington, D.C.,” she bellowed, “will be stopped cold... We will get the overregulating, micromanaging, bureaucratic tyrants off your backs.”



U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

So she is using the meddling hand of big state government to creep into the lives of vulnerable children.

She is not alone.

Ohio’s Republican controlled state government is moving to extend the number of hours bosses can make children work; Iowa wants to let 14-year-olds work in industrial freezers and laundries; and Republicans in Congress have

shrunk the number of investigators and lawyers policing child labor abuse, so abusive corporate managers know there is little chance they’ll be caught.

Most damning, these corporate politicians value children so little that they’ve set the maximum fine for violating the workplace safety of minors at \$15,138 per child. For multimillion-dollar conglomerates, that devaluation makes it much cheaper to endanger children than protect them.

America should not even be talking about child safety rules in dangerous workplaces – it’s shameful to have any children working there. ■

Populist author, public speaker, and radio commentator Jim Hightower writes the Hightower Lowdown, a monthly newsletter chronicling the ongoing fight by America’s ordinary people against rule by plutocratic elites. Annual subscription rates for the Hightower Lowdown: \$10, digital; \$15, print. Information at Hightowerlowdown.org

Revised Logo Aimed at Capturing ‘Energy and Spirit’ of the PPPWU

By Dawn Hobbs

The former GCC/IBT is poised for success with a new name – Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America – and vibrant logo that symbolizes strength and solidarity.

Our thought behind the logo was to capture the energy and spirit of the new PPPWU and represent the strength and determination of our newly named labor organization,” said Kurt Freeman, union president. “The design incorporates elements that convey drive and solidarity.”

The new union name – focusing on the primary sectors represented by the union – is artistically highlighted on the logo with three inter-working gears – to illustrate how PPPWU members work together in solidarity for a common goal of achieving dignity and respect in the workplace, union leaders said.

“We have the unifying element of the gears, which ties us all together,” said Israel Castro, secretary-treasurer of District Council 3. “And it still has blue, yellow and red, the traditional GCIU colors.”

When the executive board asked Castro to assist in finding a firm to design the new emblem, he recommended Appletree MediaWorks, a four-person shop in Kalamazoo, Michigan, covered by DC-3.

‘It symbolizes us moving forward with a focus on the core of who we represent. It’s a new start for a union that’s been in existence more than 100 years. We are going to maintain our autonomy and continue to move forward together.’

–Israel Castro,
secretary-treasurer, District Council 3

“We are humbled, absolutely honored that they reached out to us, and appreciate that they chose our company,” said Katie Schneider, principal web executive at MediaWorks who designed the logo and is also working on the union’s new website. “I am a fourth-generation union member and a lot of union pride went into this.”

Schneider said elements of strength and solidarity were essential to her design.



Katie Schneider

“The three cogs in the middle are the three main areas of the union working together,” she said. “And then we integrated five stars in there because the work of our brothers and sisters is five-star work and that’s what you can expect from a union worker. Then we integrated the colors and came up with a brand-new look.”

Castro and other leaders said they are delighted with the results.

“It symbolizes us moving forward with a focus on the core of who we represent,” Castro said. “It’s a new start for a union that’s been in existence more than 100 years. We are going to maintain our autonomy and continue to move forward together.”

PHOTO COURTESY APPLTREE MEDIWORKS

Caruso Retires After 19 ‘Outstanding’ Years

Deeply informed, well-prepared, dignified and undaunted – Nick Caruso had all the attributes essential to a successful union career but friends and colleagues say none was more important than his steadfast belief that members come first.

Every member, all the time.

“Workers have a fundamental need to be acknowledged,” Caruso says. “That is the service that unions provide. I wanted to do a good job making sure people were represented.”

After 19 years as a GCC conference representative, Caruso retired in May with a record that underscored his commitment to the highest ideals of organized labor and determination that members received the support and encouragement they deserved.

“Whatever it took to get justice and a fair deal for our members was what he gave,” said Phil Roberts, also a union representative. “Nick’s position wasn’t just a job to him. His work was his calling and his guiding principle.”

‘Whatever it took to get justice and a fair deal for our members was what he gave. Nick’s position wasn’t just a job to him. His work was his calling and his guiding principle.’

– Phil Roberts, PPPWU representative

Caruso, a union member since 1973, served as a shop steward for Local 29-C, St. Paul, while at the Webb Publishing Co. in the same city. He took labor courses at the University of Minnesota and Metropolitan State University and, in 1991, was elected president of 29-C, which later merged with Local 1-M.

Protecting the rights of every worker was his aim, Caruso said. “I always focused on wanting to represent the underdog.”

Known for his engaging manner and mastery of detail, Caruso was named conference representative in 2004 by George Tedeschi, then GCC/IBT president and now president emeritus of the union.

“I was always impressed with Nick when he was an officer of Local 29-C,” Tedeschi said. “He was perfectly prepared, articulate and able to handle tough assignments.”

Two of the most daunting involved a contentious 2006 drive to organize editorial employees at the Santa Barbara News-Press in California and working with local officials to guide District Council 2 out of trusteeship.

In Santa Barbara, workers voted overwhelmingly in favor of union affiliation but billionaire owner Wendy McCaw fired six pro-union reporters and took other extreme steps leading to numerous unfair labor charges and millions of dollars in fines.

Caruso spent years in Santa Barbara fighting for editorial workers, commuting between California and his home in St. Paul and gaining the admiration of newsroom union activists.



Nick Caruso and Dawn, his wife of 46 years, plan more travel and family time.

“Nick started our campaign in 2006 and continued working diligently on it until the day he retired,” said Dawn Hobbs, a former News-Press reporter and union organizer whose work now appears regularly in these news columns. “He relentlessly plugged away and stayed the course despite McCaw’s union busting lawyers, a scofflaw employer, and stacks of NLRB charges, including bad faith bargaining.”

Tedeschi said he turned to Caruso again in 2011 to help DC-2 emerge from trusteeship – another assignment that demanded Caruso spend long periods on the West Coast.

“I felt Nick could handle the pressure of dealing with the problems of our largest district council,” Tedeschi said. “He did outstanding work and the experience made Nick an even more effective union representative.”

DC-2 Secretary-Treasurer Clark Ritchey also hailed Caruso’s effort.

“Nick was a major part of the reason DC-2 got through trusteeship,” Ritchey said. “I, and district council president Dan Cabada consider Nick a great labor leader.”

Ritchey said Caruso was known as a union representative who “could get the job done” and was widely revered for his knowledge and professional demeanor.

“He always showed up with a suit and tie,” Ritchey said. “He was very professional, took no shortcuts and paid attention to detail. Nick is highly respected by anyone he’s ever worked with.”

Caruso’s career was laudable and in the highest tradition of union service, said Kurt Freeman, president of the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America, formerly the GCC/IBT. “Nick compiled an outstanding record and we are grateful for his years of diligent work on behalf of our union and the labor movement,” Freeman said.

In retirement, Caruso said he and his wife of 46 years, Dawn, a retired bookkeeper and union member, would travel, spend time with family – the Carusos have four children and 13 grandchildren – and relax after long and demanding careers.

Caruso said his work as a union representative was often challenging but always gratifying – personally and professionally. “It was the best job I ever had,” Caruso said. ■

PHOTO BY NICHOLL CARUSO TAYLOR

Biden Seeks Labor Vote in Re-election Bid

Hours after announcing he was running for re-election, President Joe Biden offered a “blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America” in a rousing speech not to big-money backers but a cheering crowd of union leaders and workers.

“So good to see you guys,” Biden said at a legislative conference of North America’s Building Trades Union (NABTU). “It feels like coming home.”

Because the NABTU speech in late April at the Washington Hilton hotel was not an official campaign event, Biden made no mention of his candidacy nor did he ask for votes.

But the union setting was a reminder that support from organized labor will be crucial next year when a re-match with former president Donald Trump seems increasingly likely and Biden made the most of the opportunity.

The President hailed the crucial role union workers played in the nation’s recovery from three years of economic struggle caused by the covid pandemic and said organized labor had a crucial role in continued success.

“Our economic plan is working,” Biden said. “Now we have to finish the job. And you’re leading the way...”

A record 12 million jobs had been created in the two years since he took office, Biden said, allowing progress that would have been impossible without the contributions of union members and a dedicated American workforce. “...I’ve said many times – Wall Street didn’t build America. The middle-class built America and unions built the middle class.”

The President’s connection with union supporters was evident.

“Let’s go Joe. Let’s go Joe, Let’s go Joe,” NABTU members shouted. At another point, delegates burst into a chant of, “Four more years!”

Union president Sean McGarvey praised Biden as a long-time friend.

“We know him,” said McGarvey when introducing Biden. “We’ve known him for a long time. When he said he was going to be a proud union president, we knew he would be and he delivered.”

McGarvey said Biden had “prioritized working people” by emphasizing jobs, wages and workplace safety and, in what appeared a clear reference to the Trump administration, chosen to “invest in America not divide it.”

Biden said he cherished his reputation as a labor ally.

“And I make no apologies — I make no apologies for being labeled the most pro-union President in American history. I’m proud of it. I’m proud of it.”

Since the beginning of Biden’s administration, labor leaders have lauded him as a dependable partner who takes every opportunity to salute the labor movement and underline the importance of workers’ rights.

“Joe Biden is the greatest friend of labor to occupy the White House in my lifetime,” said Kurt Freeman, president of the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America, formerly the GCC/IBT. “His initiatives on job creation, union protections and workplace safety are outstanding. He has strengthened the Department of Labor and National Labor Relations Board. I look forward to supporting him again in 2024 and urge members to examine the record and do the same.”

Biden invoked Trump’s name sparingly at the union event but reminded the group that his predecessor and GOP allies had increased the national debt by 40 percent and that “MAGA” Republicans in the House of Representative continue “pushing some tax giveaways for the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations.”

Republican economic policies – favoring top earners in the belief everyone benefits sooner or later – have failed consistently and caused the national debt to explode, Biden said.

“The same old trickle-down dressed up in MAGA clothing,” he said. “They believe the

continues on PAGE 16



After announcing his reelection hopes, Biden visited a North America’s Building Trades Union legislative conference and told delegates, ‘It feels like coming home.’

COURTESY NABTU

MORE OF SAME FROM DONALD TRUMP

It didn’t take long.

Joe Biden had barely announced his intention to run for re-election when Donald Trump released a video loaded with unsupported claims about the man who ousted him from the White House three years earlier.

Trump made “...one misleading attack after another,” said Washington Post reporter Glenn Kessler after fact-checking the former president.

From claiming that Biden had caused a “socialist spending calamity” to a charge that the President has “led us to the very brink of World War III,” Trump engaged in “rhetorical overkill” that departed significantly from the truth, Kessler said.

While dismissing Biden as the “worst” American president, Trump cast his own performance in the White House as one of “greatness” and suggested – contrary to his reputation for deceptive statements and roguish behavior – that he was above reproach. “They say Trump was right about everything,” he said in the video.

After one particularly outrageous string of claims by Trump that “drug addicts” ruled American cities, “violent criminals” were being released to roam the streets, the U.S. military is “suffering greatly” and Republicans had become targets of “weaponized” law enforcement, Kessler concluded: “This is a mishmash of grievances.”

In other words, more of the same from the former president.



THE TRUMP WHITE HOUSE ARCHIVED VIA FLICKR



OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY ADAM SCHULTZ VIA FLICKR

During debt ceiling negotiations, President Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy showed mutual respect – and struck a deal that saved the nation from economic chaos.

COMPROMISE BRINGS FAIR OUTCOME

A debt limit crisis that threatened to sink the U.S. economy was averted in late spring because President Joe Biden, a Democrat, and Kevin McCarthy, the Republican speaker of the House, negotiated a settlement fair to both sides.

In a time of fierce partisanship, it was a remarkable achievement.

“We were able to get along and get things done,” Biden said in an Oval Office address.

McCarthy also struck a respectful tone.

“I think we did pretty dang good for the American public,” he said at a press conference.

But it didn’t take long for radio and TV commentators, online bloggers and political analysts to start telling us who “won.”

That’s a foolish way of framing a conversation about a matter of such important public interest.

It should not always be about who “won” – Democrats or Republicans. If we make everything into a winner-take-all contest, productive negotiations will become even more difficult. No one wants to be on a “losing” side.

The job of elected officials is to legislate for the good of our country. The only winners should be the American people.

During my 60-year union career, I negotiated hundreds of contracts and can tell you no one gets all they want. No one “wins.”

I was once told a fair outcome is when both sides are a little unhappy. That’s what compromise means.

It’s a matter of priorities – having a sure grip on what you absolutely must deliver for your people and recognizing that the other side has a “must” list, too.

Acting like grownups, Biden and McCarthy proved they knew when to **hold ‘em** and **when to fold ‘em**, as Kenny Rogers once sang.

“I was proud of both of them,” remarked Joe Manchin, Democratic senator from West Virginia, after the debt ceiling bill won final passage.

I was, too.

– George Tedeschi, PPPWU president emeritus

Showing True Grit, PPPWU and Biden Ready for New Start

These are eventful days – for our union and the nation, too.

The GCC/IBT is now the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America (PPPWU), a change prompted by the Teamsters’ baffling decision to revoke the 2004 merger agreement bringing together the GCIU and IBT.

On the national front, President Joe Biden announced his intention to run for re-election and at this point polls suggest his opponent will be Donald Trump, who lost to Biden in 2020 by approximately 7 million votes.

Both developments – a fresh start for a venerable labor organization whose origins go back more than a century and Biden’s resolute decision to again confront a provocative and unscrupulous adversary – are testaments to true grit.

Let’s begin with the union.

A year ago, IBT General President Sean M. O’Brien and General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman served notice that the Teamsters no longer would uphold the nearly 20-year-old merger agreement struck by George Tedeschi, then president of the GCIU and now president emeritus, and James P. Hoffa, former IBT General President.

O’Brien and Zuckerman offered only two choices: The GCC/IBT could surrender its autonomy and be absorbed fully into the Teamster universe -- or get out.

Attempts by GCC/IBT leaders to find some accommodation went nowhere. The challenge was clear. Nothing less than the survival of our union as an autonomous labor organization was at stake.

Unwilling to accept the IBT’s ultimatum, GCC/IBT lawyers and leaders took the matter to federal court and quickly won a judgment demanding arbitration. That process continues at press time.

Like our union, the nation is at a turning point.

Despite the outrages of Trump’s first term, including a provocative speech leading to the Jan. 6 Capitol riot – which Trump did not try to halt for more than three hours -- and false claims that the 2020 election was “stolen,” polls suggest Trump could beat Biden next year.

The stakes would be particularly high for organized labor.

Trump pretended to be a friend of ordinary American workers and their unions but rolled back wage protections, weakened collective bargaining rights, installed a pro-business NLRB and even backed GOP calls for a national right-to-work law.

Then came Joe Biden, widely regarded the most pro-union president since Franklin Roosevelt.

Biden’s initiatives on behalf of working Americans – from a rescue plan that sustained families during the depths of the covid debacle to a transformative, job-producing bill that will restore the nation’s critical infrastructure and boost the American manufacturing base – have been remarkable.

When it comes to organized labor, Biden is in a class by himself.

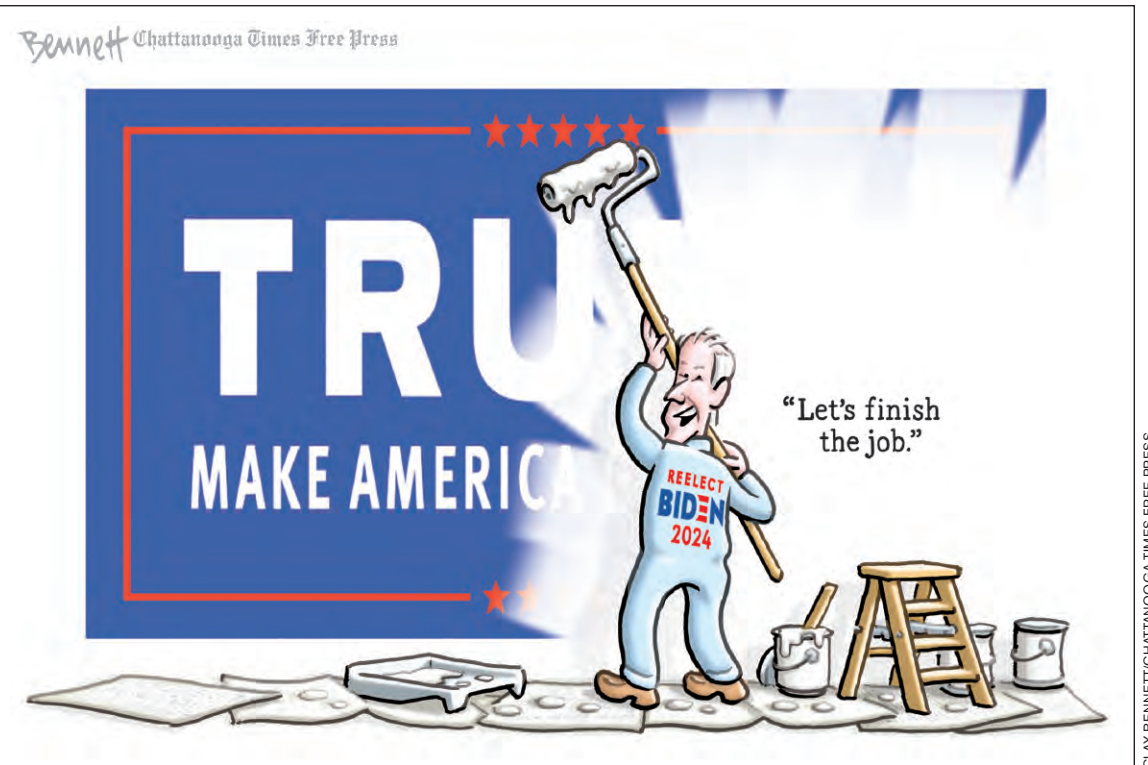
He strengthened the NLRB (and installed a dynamic general counsel, Jennifer Abruzzo), created a task force aimed at empowering unions, backed the Protect the Right to Organize Act (PRO), signed an executive order requiring contractors on big federal jobs to reach a labor agreement before work began.

That is a short list of Biden achievements on behalf of unions. And let’s not forget that Biden saved GCC and IBT pensions with billions of dollars of relief through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

So here we stand.

Our union has come through a critical period with great hope for a stronger future. Our nation likely will face a stark choice in 2024 – between an inept and self-serving candidate who has done little for working people and Joe Biden, whose record on our behalf is unmatched.

Let’s celebrate the new PPPWU and do all we can – starting now – to assure our friend, Joe Biden, a second term. ■



CLAY BENNETT/CHATTANOOGA TIMES FREE PRESS

Point of View BY SAM PIZZIGATI

Greater Wealth Equity a Must

Amazing things can happen when societies realize they needn’t be outrageously affluent.

Take what happened in the United States between 1940 and 1960

Over a mere 20-year span, the United States essentially launched a “new middle class.”

The share of U.S. households owning their own homes, according to economists William Collins and Gregory Niemesh jumped an “unprecedented” 20 percentage points.

By 1960, most American families resided in housing they owned “for the first time since at least 1870” — for the first time, in effect, since before the Industrial Revolution, the analysts note.

This home ownership surge rested in large part on an equally unprecedented surge in worker earnings. Median annual incomes in the mid-20th century nearly doubled as Americans realized significant wage gains.

This “widespread and sustained increase in the level of income,” Collins and Niemesh detail, “allowed more people to afford and select into owner-occupied housing than in previous generations.”

What brought about that “widespread and sustained” income increase?

It’s not much of a mystery.

The years of the mid-20th century saw a vast expansion of America’s trade union movement. The impact of new unions — in major basic industries ranging from auto to steel — essentially forced the rich to begin sharing the wealth workers were creating.

This massive mid-century labor surge also changed the face of the American political landscape.

Union-backed lawmakers put in place programs that helped average families on a wide variety of fronts – everything from making mortgages affordable to expanding access to higher education – and paid for progressive reforms by raising taxes on America’s wealthiest.

Between 1940 and 1960, the federal tax rate on income in the nation’s top tax bracket consistently hovered around 90 percent.

That worker-friendly world of the mid-20th century has, of course, long since disappeared. Over the past half-century, we’ve witnessed an



WICKEDZORG VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

enormous redistribution — upwards — of the nation’s income and wealth.

In 1982, Forbes magazine began publishing an annual list of the nation’s 400 biggest private fortunes. The initial group included 13 billionaires with combined wealth of \$92 billion.

Over the next four decades, Forbes has reported, the combined net worth of America’s richest 400 reached “a staggering \$4.5 trillion — making them nearly 50 times better off than their 1982 counterparts...”

Overall wealth in the United States, the Federal Reserve relates, now totals \$140 trillion. The bottom half of Americans hold just \$4 trillion of that.

Meanwhile, tens of millions of American workers aging into their seventies can’t afford to retire. “All but the most wealthy” appear to be — to some degree — financially unprepared for retirement, Fiona Greig, a Vanguard Group analyst told the New York Times.

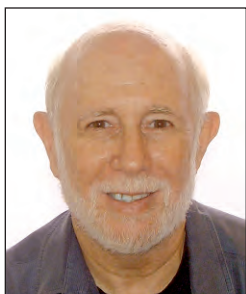
The vast 1940-to-1960 expansion of America’s middle class didn’t just happen. Advocates for greater equality made it happen.

Before the Great Depression, those reformers saw a maldistribution of income and wealth as severe as we confront today. They battled for greater equity and their success in that battle held up for a generation.

We need to create a much more equitable distribution of income and wealth – one that can last. ■

Sam Pizzigati is an associate fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. This piece originally appeared on the Inequality.org website and was made available by Press Associates Union News Service.

End the Debt Limit Dramas



There was a cartoon in the New York Daily News when the tentative agreement on the debt ceiling was reached that made President Joe Biden's point about bipartisanship.

A man and woman see a newspaper headline declaring, "Debt Ceiling Deal," and the man says, "I forget – what's it called when no one gets everything but everyone gets something?" The woman replies, "Governing."

The President was able to extend the debt ceiling limit until 2025, a critical move that prevents the GOP from holding the issue hostage during the 2024 election cycle.

Republicans came away with cuts in several programs – though not as deep as they had hoped – and kept a 4 percent increase in the defense budget, another GOP priority.

Biden managed to deny the GOP far-right wing the worst of its agenda – including heartless reductions in the food stamp program. Republicans were successful in boosting the age of eligibility for able-bodied single men from 49 to 54. But Biden gained exemptions for veterans, homeless people and children just out of foster care.

GOP efforts to block an \$80 billion IRS increase aimed at allowing more scrutiny of big-money tax chiselers – many of them Republican contributors – also managed only partial success.

The debt ceiling drama put on full display a central flaw in Republican reasoning.

Though they often preach about fiscal responsibility, Republicans were somehow willing to jeopardize the U.S. and global economies by

threatening default – a foolish stunt the GOP never pulled when Donald Trump was president.

With so much at stake, many have asked why have a debt ceiling at all?

The first debt limit bill was passed in 1917 along with the nation's first income tax law.

It was renewed before World War 2 in anticipation of the enormous financial commitment necessary to defeat Adolf Hitler. At that time, lawmakers put the Treasury Department in charge of handling national debt.

Back then, of course, the nation was united. Now, with the Republican right wing ascendant, the debt limit gives cynical politicians a chance to punish opponents and seek spending objectives that should be accomplished through the normal, Congressional bill-passing process.

Denmark is the only country with a debt limit similar to ours and the Danes set the ceiling so high a crisis is all but impossible. The European Union pegs its limit to 60 percent of Gross National Product – another prudent approach intended to avoid disaster.

Economists may differ but it certainly seems time to reconsider our debt limit system and escape the drama it invites. Political brinkmanship risks plunging the nation into financial chaos – dangerous and disgraceful. ■

Jerry Morgan is a former Newsday business writer and member of Local 406-C.

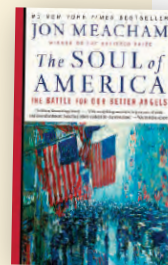
All the Best

Print

The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels

Jon Meacham

The Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Jon Meacham is understandably aghast at the ascendancy of Donald Trump and the politics of division and grievance that launched Trump into the White House and – incredibly – makes him the likely GOP candidate in next year's presidential race. In this readable and relevant book, Meacham examines other periods when there was discord and unrest and promises we will survive these difficult days, and Donald Trump, too. **Paperback, \$20, Random House.**

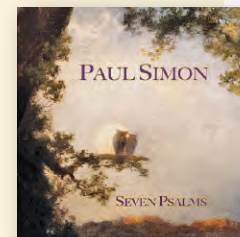


Music

Seven Psalms/Paul Simon

Tina (What's Love Got to Do With It) / Tina Turner

Paul Simon acknowledged in a recent interview that he lost hearing in one ear when recording his latest album, "Seven Psalms." Speaking to the Times of London, Simon, 81, said it happened "quite suddenly" and that he has not recovered. If Simon was working at a disadvantage during the "Seven Psalms" studio sessions, who would know? The album, a seven-part meditation on age and what Simon calls "the great migration" – the trip from life to death and, perhaps, the hereafter – is solemn, but sweet and shows Simon at his contemplative and creative best. Thoughts of great music and immortality necessarily demand mention of another artist – the incomparable Tina Turner, who died in May at 83. Overcoming an abusive relationship with Ike Turner, her former husband, Tina Turner became an American icon widely considered the nation's "Queen of Rock 'n' Roll." Everything Turner sang was memorable, but perhaps nothing signifies her glamour and grit as much as the rousing tune, "Proud Annie," one of many standouts on the 1993 album, "Tina (What's Love Got to Do With It)." At one point in the Times interview, Paul Simon said "time is up" for artists of his generation. No way. His brilliant work is sure to endure, and nobody will likely soon forget that sexy, unmatched powerhouse of song, Tina Turner. *Seven Psalms/Owl Records; Tina (What's Love Got to do With It)/Virgin. Prices vary.*



Video/Streaming

Working: What We Do All Day

Barack Obama

Barack Obama came from working class roots and hasn't forgotten. In this insightful, four-part series, the former President focuses on American workers who get too little attention but whose daily, diligent efforts are essential to the nation's economic welfare. The production is a visual translation of a 1974 book by Studs Terkel, a Chicago author and broadcaster who Obama admired for his focus on working class realities. "What if people we might never ordinarily meet invited us into their lives and told us about their ambitions?" Obama asked on National Public Radio. Welcomed into those lives, Obama, who serves as series narrator, makes the most of the opportunity. We learn about the courageous daily strivings of American workers – and get a close-up look at the former president as film producer. Obama proves as impressive in one as the other. **Streaming on Netflix.**



Internet

Politico.com

Readers know we often cite Politico in stories on politics and the labor movement. This remarkably well-nourished news operation – it claims a U.S. editorial staff of more than 300 – promises "accurate, nonpartisan impactful information" and unfailingly delivers. No subscriptions necessary. A great resource for our newspaper – and you.

Guest Spot

BY JENNIFER SHERER AND NINA MAST

Must Protect Child Labor Laws

At a time when serious child labor violations are on the rise in hazardous meatpacking and manufacturing jobs, several state legislatures are weakening—or threatening to weaken—child labor protections.

The trend reflects a multi-industry push to expand low-wage labor and weaken state child labor laws that contradict federal protections in pursuit of longer-term goals to rewrite federal child labor laws and other worker protections.

Children of families in poverty, and especially Black, brown, and immigrant youth, stand to suffer the most harm from such changes.

The facts:

- The number of minors employed in violation of child labor laws increased 37 percent in the last year and at least 10 states introduced or passed laws rolling back child labor protections in the past two years.
- Attempts to weaken state-level child labor standards are part of a coordinated campaign backed by industry groups intent on eventually diluting federal standards that cover the whole country.
- Youth labor force participation declines over the past 20 years reflect that a steadily growing share of young people are choosing to complete high school and obtain additional education in order to increase their long-term employability and earnings.



Jennifer Sherer



Nina Mast

At the federal level, Congress should heed calls to increase penalties for child labor violations and address chronic underfunding of agencies that enforce labor standards, eliminate occupational carve-outs that allow for weaker standards in agricultural employment, pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, and implement immigration reforms that curb the exploitation of unauthorized immigrants and unaccompanied migrant youth.

At the state level, lawmakers should eliminate subminimum wages for youth and raise the minimum wage, eliminate the two-tiered system that fails to protect children from hazardous or excessive work in agriculture, strengthen labor standards enforcement, and empower young people to build and strengthen unions. ■

Jennifer Sherer is senior state policy coordinator at the Worker Power Project of the Economic Policy Institute. Nina Mast is an EPI state economic analyst.

PRINTING PACKAGING & PRODUCTION WORKERS UNION



Vegas Convention Signifies 'Historic' Moment for Union

continued from PAGE 1

"We're here to stay," said PPPWU President Kurt Freeman. "We are strong, united and determined to remain the top union in the printing, packaging and production fields. Our members expect good contracts and superior service and we are going to keep delivering."

The meeting at the Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino is the first on-site convention of the former GCC/IBT since June, 2016, and comes after a three-year covid health crisis made in-person events risky.

Delegates will vote on an amended constitution and by-laws, nominate and elect an international leadership team – president, secretary-treasurer and regional general board members – and address a variety of matters essential to the transition of the union from GCC/IBT to PPPWU.

"There will be hefty revisions of the constitution – changes to ensure that, structurally, the PPPWU is best set up to thrive as an independent union while we investigate the possibility of whether another merger is in our interests or not," said general counsel Peter Leff.

Not since delegates gathered for the first time under the GCC/IBT banner has there been a national meeting of such significance. "The convention represents a historic moment for our union," Freeman said.

It also underlines the remarkable developments of the last few months and the extent to which the trajectory of a labor organization – now the PPPWU – with a history that can be traced back more than 100 years has been altered.

A headline in the Graphic Communicator's 2016 convention coverage noted that delegates were warned to "Get Ready to Fight for Union Survival" – words that at the time pertained to right-wing efforts to undercut organized labor but now can be read as an ironic forecast of turmoil prompted this year by the IBT's move to unilaterally terminate the GCC-IBT agreement.

In 2021, the GCC/IBT held a convention – the fourth in its history – via video conferencing as a precaution against spreading the covid virus.

The theme was "Organizing for a Better Tomorrow," and featured remarks by then-Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and the top Teamster leadership at the time, General President James P. Hoffa and General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall.

As President Joe Biden began putting together the most union-friendly administration in decades, Hoffa spoke optimistically about the "kind of change we can achieve when we have politicians who support our values" and Walsh said organized labor would be at the "center" of economic recovery



PPPWU delegates will meet Aug. 29-31 at the Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino to address a variety of matters ensuring the former GCC/IBT 'is best set up to thrive' as an independent union after Teamster leaders said they no longer would observe a 2004 merger agreement, said General Counsel Peter Leff.



‘We made it clear to the IBT that in order to have successful negotiations, we needed to maintain our graphic communications, printing and packaging identity.’

– PPPWU President Kurt Freeman

as the nation began emerging from covid setbacks.

Despite its limitations, the GCC/IBT “virtual” convention was hailed a success.

“Delegates told me they were very impressed,” Freeman said, and Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President Steve Nobles added that “while we wish we could have met in person, I couldn’t be happier with the outcome.”

Hoffa and Hall did not seek re-election and, in late 2021, Sean M. O’Brien and Fred Zuckerman were elected to fill the top IBT posts.

GCC/IBT officials congratulated the new Teamster leadership team and particularly cheered O’Brien’s emphasis on organizing. “O’Brien and Zuckerman will bring enthusiasm and an exciting agenda to North America’s strongest union,” Freeman said after the election.

O’Brien wrote a Page 2 “Outlook” column for the Spring, 2022, edition of the Communicator in which he looked toward a future of mutual cooperation. “...I look forward to working with GCC members and leaders so we best can serve your interests,” O’Brien said. A headline at the top of Page 1 said, “Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien Greets GCC/IBT.”

The new IBT general president contributed columns twice more.

For the summer issue, he wrote a piece under the headline, “About Time We Stood Up to Corporate Bullies,” that denounced Washington for granting contracts to anti-labor companies like Amazon “that repeatedly, knowingly and purposefully violate federal labor laws.”

In the fall edition, O’Brien hailed the Butch Lewis Act – a provision guaranteeing the survival of underfunded multi-employer pension plans – included in the Biden administration’s landmark American Rescue Plan. He told members Republicans would not have allowed such progress. “If that isn’t an example of elections having consequences, I don’t know what is.”

PPPWU leaders said there was no sign O’Brien and Zuckerman intended to end the GCC-IBT alliance negotiated years before by Hoffa and George Tedeschi, then leader of the GCIU and now PPPWU president emeritus.

But in June, 2022, the IBT served notice it planned to

continues on PAGE 10

HOW WE GOT HERE: A CENTURY OF STEPS TOWARD THE PPPWU

In 2023, the GCC/IBT became an independent union, the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America (PPPWU).



PPPWU
2023

The GCIU and International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) signed a merger agreement in 2004 leading to the launch of the GCC/IBT in 2005.



GCC/IBT
2005

In 1983, the IPGCU and GAIU merged to form the Graphic Communications International Union (GCIU).



GCIU
1983

The International Printing and Graphic Communications Union (IPGCU) was formed by a merger of the IPPAU and ISEU in 1973.

In 1972, the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders merged with the LPIU and become the Graphic Arts International Union (GAIU).



IPGCU
1973

GAIU
1972



LPIU
1964

The International Printing Pressmen’s Union was formed in 1889 and eight years later became the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants’ Union. With more than 100,000 members at one point, the IPPAU was the largest printers’ union in the world.

Stereotypers and electrotypers demanded a separate organization in 1902 and the International Stereotypers and Electrotypers Union (ISEU) was formed.

As bookbinding shifted to a machine craft, bookbinders broke away and formed the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders (IBB) in 1892.

The National Association of Lithographers, first formed in 1886 from various smaller, preparatory unions, merged with other preparatory locals to form the Amalgamated Lithographers of America in 1915.

The International Photo Engravers’ Union of North America was formed in 1900 and chartered by the American Federation of Labor four years later. It merged with the Amalgamated Lithographers of America on Labor Day, 1964, to become the Lithographers and Photoengravers International Union.



IPPAU
1889



ISEU
1901



IBB
1892



ALA
1915



IPEU
1900

The first great union of printing, the National Typographical Union, was formed in 1852. The name was changed in 1869 to the International Typographical Union.

Union Encounters World of Dazzling Workplace Change

continued from PAGE 9

scrap the agreement, claiming it was costly and of little advantage to the Teamsters – claims rejected by PPPWU officials.

The IBT dictated terms GCC/IBT leaders found unacceptable – specifically, that the GCC surrender its autonomy and be absorbed entirely into the Teamsters sphere or leave the IBT fold by December.

“We made it clear to the IBT that in order to have successful negotiations, we needed to maintain our graphic communications, printing and packaging identity,” Freeman said at the time.

Autonomy is at the heart of the issue, union leaders say, just as it was when Tedeschi and Hoffa negotiated the 2004 merger agreement.

“Jim Hoffa knew that autonomy was a fundamental requirement and had no trouble accepting those terms,” Tedeschi recalled. “Our union gave the Teamsters a valuable presence in the industries covered by the GCIU. For nearly 20 years, it was a deal that worked well for both parties.”

But O’Brien – often a critic of Hoffa – and Zuckerman made clear the GCC/IBT must submit to Teamster rule. “Bottom line is they wanted us under IBT control,” said general counsel Leff.

When the new IBT administration proved unwilling to compromise, GCC/IBT leadership brought the dispute to federal court and began preparing for a future independent of the Teamsters.

Freeman, Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President Steve



Nobles and general board members took steps to establish a new union – the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America.

They moved the union office from IBT headquarters in Washington, D.C. to Silver Spring, Maryland. A new logo representing the component sectors of the PPPWU soon appeared on union envelopes and letterheads. Staff went to work. Service to members was never interrupted.

“Our staff personnel met the challenge in highly professional fashion,” Freeman said. “I am grateful for their outstanding service and dedication. It was another sign of our determination to stay focused, move on and get the job done.”

Now a labor organization that traces its history back more than 100 years enters a world of dazzling technology

that has revolutionized the American workplace and brought enormous change to the printing, packaging and production industries.

Machines turn out products that once kept dozens of workers busy. Newspapers that employed thousands of press operators and production workers have abandoned the printed product for paperless computer-generated digital editions that require far smaller work forces. Material once printed in union shops and delivered by mail moves instantaneously via computer and smartphone.

As the first PPPWU convention approaches, Freeman says the union will meet the daunting challenges of today – and tomorrow.

“Our union has a proud history and is going forward with strength and solidarity,” he said. “The future is now.”

Tedeschi: ‘We’re Still Proud, Strong, United’

By George Tedeschi
PPPWU President Emeritus

There was plenty of big news in 2004.

The United States landed space rovers on Mars. Ronald Reagan died at 93. Boston Red Sox fans celebrated the team’s first World Series victory since 1918. In the November presidential election, George W. Bush won a second term by defeating Democratic contender John Kerry.

And in the world of organized labor, the GCIU and Teamsters earned headlines, too.

As GCIU international president, I was convinced the time had come for our union to join forces with a larger labor organization.

On our own, we were a strong and widely respected union representing workers in the print, packaging and production fields. Our members were confident, motivated and independent. We had years of experience and a long record of success.

But I knew we could do even more.

Before taking the top GCIU office in 2000, I was president of Local 406-C on Long Island – the union covering Newsday – for 28 years.

I had a good relationship with Newsday management. I dealt with the company honestly and Newsday officials were straight with me. As a result, Local 406-C gained some of the best contracts for production and editorial workers in the industry.

One lesson was clear: No matter how cordial the relationship between labor and management, ownership respects power.

If the company senses weakness or lack of unity it has no reason to bargain in good faith or make the compromises necessary to a contract agreement.

Throughout 2004, I had conversations with leaders of several unions – including Teamster General President James P. Hoffa.

We were a good match.

Hoffa immediately saw the benefit of bringing aboard tens of thousands of new members in the essential sectors covered by the GCIU and had no trouble allowing us to keep the autonomy cherished by our members.

I knew the GCIU would gain clout by merging with the IBT. At the bargaining table, employers knew there were more than a million Teamster workers behind the GCIU and its representatives.

We negotiated a merger agreement and, in 2005, shook hands on it. The GCIU became the GCC/IBT.

Last year, the IBT’s new leaders decided to end that agreement and our union now moves



The 2004 merger agreement that brought together the GCIU and Teamsters into a partnership that formed the GCC/IBT was negotiated by George Tedeschi, then GCIU president and now PPPWU president emeritus, and James P. Hoffa, former general president of the Teamsters. Tedeschi (above) said the merger gave the GCIU ‘clout’ and allowed Hoffa to bring aboard thousands of new members in essential sectors.

ahead as the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America – and toward our first convention next month in Las Vegas.

In the future, there may again be opportunity to join with another labor organization as an autonomous unit. If the terms are right, that might be a good idea. For now, we’re on our own – still proud, strong and united. Our union has more than 100 years of history. Here’s to our continued success. ■

DC-2 WINS 'SIGNIFICANT' GAINS IN GEORGIA PACIFIC, PCA PACTS

Despite an economy still recovering from the effects of a three-year covid epidemic, leaders at PPPWU District Council 2 extended their streak of "trend-setting" contract settlements.



Most recently, DC-2 won contracts for a total of 375 members at three Georgia Pacific plants, two in northern California and one in Washington state.

"We got a four-year agreement with significant wage increases year one with market rate adjustments and significant wage increases the following three years along with numerous wage adjustments, lump sum bonuses and no added cost to the DC-2 welfare plan," said Clark Ritchey, DC-2 secretary-treasurer.

A six-year contract agreement with Packaging Corporation of America in Denver assured similar gains for 125 PPPWU members at the shop.

"Both of these contracts follow the economic pattern we set at 13 International Paper plants in the summer of 2022, which was an industry-setting standard," Ritchey said. "No one is getting contracts like these. I feel that we set the trend at one plant and then everyone follows."

Ritchey is looking forward to continuing his marathon winning streak this summer with negotiations lined up for WestRock packaging plants in California and Oregon covering 450 members.

1-L KEEPS PACE AS NEW TECHNOLOGY PROMPTS SPREAD OF SMALLER SHOPS

Since Local 1-L won an impressive victory earlier this year at Coral Graphics, a 70-member shop on Long Island, local union leaders have been organizing smaller outlets in the region – gains they consider as vital as success at larger companies.



"In many cases, it's the smaller shops that are feeding off of the larger ones and taking their overflow," said Pat LoPresti, president of Local 1-L.

LoPresti said advanced technology has prompted the growth of smaller shops and 1-L was making a "coordinated effort" to bring union representation to the "highly skilled" workers at those sites.

Many smaller shops welcome representation, LoPresti said, because the "union bug" – the informal term for the union label – on printed material invites work from labor-friendly companies and political organizations, particularly those with connections to the pro-union Democratic Party.

Wolf Arthur Graphics Design, a four-person shop in the Bronx, and Executive Office Services, a three-man shop in Bridgeport, Connecticut, have brought the newest members to the New York local.

"Both were inquiring about the union label," said John Zoccali, 1-L vice president who formerly served as the local's full-time organizer and business agent, a post recently filled by Chris Sciafani, a member of the 1-L referendum board.

Employers place high value on the union label and the business it represents. "Political work is very important and they all want the allied label," Zoccali said. "There's a lot of money to be made for these Mom and Pop shops that have the allied bug and are part of the PPPWU."

Local 1-L leaders say they are meeting success at shops of small and intermediate size.

The most recent win was a one-year contract at the Oneonta (New York) Daily Star, where workers received a 5 percent wage increase, a signing bonus, and an increase in clothing allowance and severance pay, said Zoccali who negotiated the contract with the aid of business agent Dave Bartlett.

Bartlett also negotiated a three-year contract with the Albany Times Union, where production workers enjoyed a 4 percent wage increase the first year and 3 percent the second and third year, as well as a signing bonus, Zoccali said.

Still in the works is the first-time contract for Coral Graphics. After more than three months of negotiations, union leaders said they were hopeful of a settlement by late summer.

"We have made significant progress on many of the language clauses which is a positive indication that the union and the company are working together," LoPresti said.

RC GRAPHIC DESIGNS BECOMES FIRST EL PASO UNION PRINT SHOP IN 20 YEARS

When Rudy Campoya opened his graphic design and print shop on a part-time basis in 2002, he had no idea that a union existed for printers – not surprising since there hadn't been a union print shop in El Paso, Texas, for many years.



PHOTO BY ISAAC VALLES

Campoya, who retired this year as chief human resources officer for the Socorro Independent School District after more than 30 years on the staff, developed a talent for graphic design during teenage years and, as an adult, pursued the field in leisure hours.

He opened his part-time shop with a couple of old presses at the encouragement of a friend and, upon retirement, took the operation full time as RC Graphic Designs and Printing with his daughter Jasmin, 21, serving as RC's graphic designer and production specialist.



Rudy Campoya, owner of RC Graphics Design and Printing in El Paso, and his daughter, Jasmin, a graphic designer and production specialist at the shop.

Next step – signing a union contract.

"A representative of the teacher's union at the school district told me to become a union shop because I'd be the only one in El Paso and could pick up union business," said Campoya.

In May, RC Graphics became the first print shop in El Paso to operate with a union contract for more than 20 years, according to Oscar Lopez, president of PPPWU Local 4535-M, Houston.

"The local allied trades group told me they lost their last union printer there in the late 90s," said Lopez. "When this lead for RC Graphics came in it was from the president of the Texas AFL-CIO. Union leaders encouraged Campoya to be unionized so they could send him work."

Lopez negotiated a contract and, in early June, Campoya and Jasmin began placing the prized union label on printed material.

Campoya hopes his status as a union shop will bring new business – likely, Lopez said, since there are dozens of unions and a number of Democratic political organizations in El Paso constantly seeking unionized printing services.

"This is a benefit to the community to have a union print shop where they can get anything printed at better pricing and with a great quality," Campoya said. "And as for us, we will get busier and I will be able to expand my services to all of the different unions here."

DC-3 JOINS UNION EFFORT TO AID MICHIGAN FOOD PANTRY NETWORK

The Macomb Food Program in Clinton Township, Michigan, serves needy families – with union help.

In an effort to keep shelves well-stocked, the South Macomb Letter Carriers Branch #4374, a postal workers union, holds an annual "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive and seeks support from nearby labor organizations.

PPPWU District Council 3 stepped forward.

DC-3 joined Sheet Metal Workers' Local 80 and United Auto Workers Local 228 in donating more than 650 pounds of non-perishable food. DC-3 also contributed a check for \$250.

PPPWU leaders say it's important that unions have a civic presence in their communities.

"Every year our members, leadership, and staff exhibit through action what it means to stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other unions throughout DC-3," said Israel Castro, district secretary-treasurer. "We couldn't be more proud of our members for this tremendous outpouring of support."

The Macomb Food Program provides relief to those in need through a network of more than 70 pantries and hunger relief organizations, according to the organization's website. "We supply food at no cost to ensure pantry shelves are stocked."



Local Stops wants to hear from you. If your PPPWU local has been involved in organizing efforts, community outreach or volunteer work, e-mail a brief summary to reporter Dawn Hobbs at dawnhobbs@cox.net or call 805-284-5351.

Biden dit aux travailleurs syndiqués « nous devons finir le travail »

Par Fred Bruning
The Communicator

Quelques heures après avoir annoncé être candidat à sa réélection, le président Joe Biden a présenté un « plan des cols bleus pour rebâtir l'Amérique » dans un discours enlevé destiné non pas aux grands bailleurs de fonds, mais à une foule enthousiaste de dirigeants syndicaux et de travailleurs syndiqués.

« C'est vraiment bon de vous voir tous ici, a déclaré J. Biden à une conférence législative du North America's Building Trades Union (NABTU). On a l'impression de rentrer à la maison. »

Comme le discours prononcé devant le NABTU fin avril à l'hôtel Washington Hilton n'était pas une activité de campagne officielle, J. Biden n'a fait aucune allusion à sa campagne ni sollicité des votes.

Mais le cadre syndical a rappelé que le soutien des travailleurs syndiqués sera crucial l'an prochain alors qu'un nouveau duel avec l'ancien président Donald Trump semble de plus en plus probable et J. Biden a profité au maximum de l'occasion.

Le président a salué le rôle crucial que les travailleurs syndiqués ont joué dans la relance de la nation après trois années de difficultés économiques causées par la pandémie de COVID et il a dit que leur contribution a été fondamentale pour la réussite continue du pays.

« Notre plan économique fonctionne, a indiqué J. Biden. Nous devons maintenant

finir le travail. Et vous montrez la voie... »

Un nombre record de 12 millions d'emplois ont été créés au cours des deux années qui ont suivi sa prise de fonction, a souligné J. Biden, ce qui a permis de faire des progrès qui auraient été impossibles sans les contributions des membres syndiqués et une main-d'œuvre américaine dévouée. « ... Comme je l'ai dit à maintes reprises, ce n'est pas Wall Street qui a bâti l'Amérique. La classe moyenne a bâti l'Amérique et les syndicats ont bâti la classe moyenne. »

La chimie entre le président et les travailleurs syndiqués était manifeste.

« Vas-y Joe. Vas-y Joe, vas-y Joe », ont clamé les membres du NABTU qui ont chanté en chœur « quatre années de plus » à un moment donné! »

Le président du syndicat Sean McGarvey a loué son ami de longue date J. Biden.

« Nous le connaissons, a dit S. McGarvey en présentant J. Biden. Cela fait longtemps que nous le connaissons. Quand il a dit qu'il serait un président fier des syndicats, nous savions que ce serait le cas et c'est ce qui s'est passé. »

J. Biden a dit qu'il chérissait sa réputation d'allié des travailleurs.

« Et je ne m'en excuse pas — je ne m'excuse pas d'être étiqueté comme le président le plus pro-travailleurs de l'histoire des États-Unis. J'en suis fier. Vraiment fier. »

Depuis le début de l'administration Biden, les dirigeants syndicaux l'ont félicité d'être un partenaire fiable qui saisit chaque occasion pour saluer le mouvement

syndical et souligner l'importance des droits des travailleurs.

« Joe Biden aura été le meilleur ami des travailleurs à occuper la Maison-Blanche de mon vivant, a affirmé Kurt Freeman, président du Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America, anciennement la CCG-FIT. Ses initiatives axées sur la création d'emplois, la protection des syndicats et la sécurité au travail sont remarquables. Il a renforcé le Département du travail et le Conseil national des relations du travail. Je compte bien le soutenir de nouveau en 2024, et j'exhorte les membres à examiner son bilan et à faire comme moi. »

J. Biden a peu évoqué le nom de Trump lors de l'événement syndical, mais il a rappelé à l'assistance que son prédécesseur et ses alliés du parti républicain avaient augmenté la dette nationale de 40 pour cent, et que les « MAGA » républicains de la Chambre des représentants continuent de « défendre des cadeaux fiscaux destinés aux Américains les plus riches et aux plus grandes entreprises. »

Les politiques économiques républicaines, qui favorisent ceux qui gagnent le plus en pensant que tout le monde y gagnera tôt ou tard, ont échoué systématiquement et fait exploser la dette nationale, a souligné J. Biden.

« C'est le même vieux ruisselement à la mode MAGA. Ils sont convaincus que la meilleure façon de faire croître l'économie est de partir d'en haut et de regarder ensuite

les avantages ruisseler vers les gens d'en bas. »

Son administration, a-t-il précisé, a réduit la dette de 1,7 billion de dollars et fait en sorte que les sociétés « commencent à payer leur juste part » d'impôts. Selon le président, sa loi sur la réduction de l'inflation, qui va très loin, contribuera à diminuer la dette de « centaines de milliards de dollars supplémentaires dans les décennies à venir » et favorisera une stabilité économique.

J. Biden a aussi tancé Trump pour avoir échoué à répondre aux besoins de la nation en infrastructures essentielles.

« Du temps de mon prédécesseur, la Semaine des infrastructures était une phrase choc, a fait remarquer J. Biden. Sous ma supervision, nous faisons de la Décennie des infrastructures un grand titre. »

Le président a dit que son administration avait lancé plus de « 25 000 projets d'infrastructures dans 4 500 villes du pays », ce qui a eu pour effet de créer des tonnes d'emplois syndiqués. La fabrication a « repris vie » en Amérique et les communautés oubliées renaissent grâce surtout aux efforts des membres des syndicats.

« Les travailleurs vont construire des routes et des ponts, poser des câbles Internet et installer des bornes de recharge pour véhicules électriques, a-t-il ajouté. Les travailleurs syndiqués vont transformer l'Amérique. »

Biden dice a los sindicalistas: «Tenemos que acabar el trabajo»

Fred Bruning
The Communicator

Horas después de anunciar que se presentaba para un segundo mandato, el presidente Joe Biden ofreció un «proyecto obrero para reconstruir EE. UU.» en un discurso conmovedor, no ante patrocinadores adinerados, sino ante una multitud de líderes y trabajadores sindicales.

«Me alegro mucho de verlos», dijo Biden en una conferencia legislativa del Sindicato de Oficios de Construcción de Norteamérica (North America's Building Trades Union o NABTU). «Es como volver a casa.»

Dado que el discurso pronunciado ante la conferencia NABTU a finales de abril en el hotel Hilton de Washington no era un acto oficial de campaña, Biden no hizo mención alguna de su candidatura ni pidió votos.

Pero la ambientación sindical fue un recordatorio de que el apoyo de los obreros sindicados será crucial el próximo año, cuando parece cada vez más probable una revancha con el expresidente Donald Trump, y Biden aprovechó al máximo la oportunidad.

El presidente elogió el papel crucial desempeñado por los sindicalistas en la recuperación de la nación tras tres años de lucha económica causada por la pandemia de COVID y afirmó que los obreros sindicados tuvieron un papel decisivo en el éxito continuado.

«Nuestro plan económico está

funcionando», dijo Biden. «Ahora tenemos que terminar el trabajo. Y ustedes dirigen...».

En los dos años transcurridos desde que asumió el cargo se ha creado la cifra récord de 12 millones de puestos de trabajo, dijo Biden, lo que ha permitido un progreso que habría sido imposible sin la contribución de los miembros de los sindicatos y de la mano de obra estadounidense, totalmente entregada al afán. «...Lo he dicho muchas veces: Wall Street no levantó EE. UU. La clase media levantó EE. UU. y los sindicatos levantaron la clase media.»

El vínculo del presidente con los partidarios sindicales era evidente.

«Vamos Joe. Vamos Joe, vamos Joe», gritaban los miembros del NABTU. En otro momento, los delegados rompieron a vitorear la consigna «¡Cuatro años más!».

El presidente del sindicato, Sean McGarvey, alabó a Biden como amigo de muchos años.

«Lo conocemos», dijo McGarvey al presentar a Biden. «Lo conocemos desde hace mucho tiempo. Cuando dijo que iba a ser un presidente sindical orgulloso, sabíamos que lo sería y cumplió.»

Biden dijo que apreciaba su reputación como aliado laboral.

«Y no me disculpo: no me disculpo por haber sido calificado del presidente más pro-sindicalista de la historia de Estados Unidos. Estoy orgulloso de ello. Estoy orgulloso de ello.»

Desde el inicio de la administración de Biden, los líderes sindicales lo han alabado como un socio fiable que

aprovecha cualquier oportunidad para aclamar al movimiento obrero y subrayar la importancia de los derechos de los trabajadores.

«Joe Biden es el mejor amigo de los obreros que ha ocupado la Casa Blanca en toda mi vida», afirmó Kurt Freeman, presidente del Sindicato de Trabajadores de Impresión, Embalaje y Producción de Norteamérica [Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America], anteriormente la GCC. «Sus iniciativas en materia de creación de empleo, protección sindical y seguridad en el lugar de trabajo son extraordinarias. Ha reforzado el Departamento de Trabajo y el Consejo Nacional de Relaciones Laborales. Espero apoyarle de nuevo en 2024 e insto a los miembros a que examinen el historial y hagan lo mismo.»

Biden invocó el nombre de Trump con moderación en el evento sindical, pero recordó al grupo que su predecesor y sus aliados del Partido Republicano aumentaron la deuda nacional en un 40 por ciento y que los republicanos «MAGA» [«Make America Great Again» = «Haz que EE. UU. vuelva a ser un gran país»] en la Cámara de Representantes siguen «impulsando algunos regalos fiscales para los estadounidenses más ricos y las corporaciones más grandes».

Las políticas económicas republicanas —que favorecen a los que más ganan en la creencia de que todos se benefician tarde o temprano— han fracasado sistemáticamente y han provocado la explosión de la deuda nacional, dijo Biden.

«La misma vieja teoría del derrame vestida con ropa MAGA», dijo. «Creen ellos que la mejor manera de hacer crecer la economía es de arriba abajo y luego ver cómo los beneficios se filtran a nosotros, los demás.»

En comparación, dijo Biden, su administración ha recortado \$1.7 billones de la deuda y se ha asegurado de que las empresas «empiecen a pagar lo que de verdad les correspondería» de impuestos. El presidente afirmó que su trascendental Ley de Reducción de la Inflación disminuirá la deuda en «cientos de miles de millones más en las próximas décadas» y permitirá la estabilidad económica.

Biden también reprendió a Trump por no atender las necesidades críticas de infraestructura del país.

«Con mi predecesor, la Semana de la Infraestructura era una broma», dijo Biden. «Bajo mi mandato, estamos convirtiendo la Década de la Infraestructura en un titular.»

El presidente afirmó que su administración ha puesto en marcha más de «25,000 proyectos de infraestructura en 4,500 ciudades por todo el país», creando puestos de trabajo sindicales a diestra y siniestra. La industria manufacturera «ha reverdecido» en Estados Unidos y las comunidades olvidadas están reviviendo gracias en gran parte a los esfuerzos de los sindicalistas, afirmó Biden.

«Los sindicalistas construirán carreteras y puentes, tenderán cables de internet, instalarán cargadores de vehículos eléctricos», dijo. «Los sindicalistas van a transformar los Estados Unidos.»

In Memoriam

Listed here are members for whom death benefits were paid, according to the Graphic Communications Benevolent Trust Fund. Locals wishing to list members who died but did not participate in the death benefits program should contact The Communicator.

Local	Date of Death	Local	Date of Death	Local	Date of Death	Local	Date of Death
Death Benefit Claims Paid October 2020				Death Benefit Claims Paid December 2020			
853T Russell S Wilson	08-02-20	16N James Jackson	08-26-20	1B Delaine A Friedrichs	11-02-20	77P Michael J Bombinski	10-10-20
999ML William A Fisher	08-23-20	16N Edward M Korsch	08-20-20	1B Lena P Seviola	09-23-20	77P Alan P Hilker	09-18-20
999ML Stephen L French	07-21-20	16N Joseph T Panichelle, II	09-27-20	1L William J Candito	07-13-20	77P Calvin R Krooks	11-03-20
999ML James F Leaman	08-14-20	24M Robert F Cunningham, Sr	08-22-20	1L Leonard A Carriero	09-27-20	77P Gilbert H Meyer	11-06-20
999ML Leo L Scodellaro	08-14-20	24M Ralph Perry Jr	10-01-20	1L Thomas E Demilio	09-13-20	77P Harvey W Mulder	08-02-19
6505M Charles J Deters	07-09-20	25M Clifford E Alvey	07-25-20	1L Wilbur Hasenbein	10-10-20	77P Lawrence L Nikolai	10-09-20
Death Benefit Claims Paid November 2020				Death Benefit Claims Paid December 2020			
1B Ronald J Clarke	01-02-19	25M Larry J Boots, Sr	08-18-20	1L George Kazanjian	05-03-20	100M Arthur M Hawes	09-14-20
1B Richard H Judge	02-20-16	25M James R Casey	02-08-15	1L Richard Pardo	10-11-20	100M Daniel A Smith	10-20-20
1B Edith M Mueller	07-11-03	25M John J Karalunas	09-26-20	1M James A Fisher	10-12-20	117T William B Macdonald	08-31-20
1B Delores L Pauling	11-27-19	25M Joseph V Marmon	08-24-20	1M Donald F Neuenfeldt	11-09-20	119B Aurea M Affe	10-06-20
1B Myrlen H Peterson	06-14-06	25M James R McGinty Jr	09-15-20	2N Michael Murphy	07-29-20	119B Jonathan Bennett	10-23-20
1B Delvin D Struss	09-14-18	25M Alberta J Nulton	08-04-14	3N Roger L Gibson	10-22-20	119B Louis F Mercadante Jr	09-16-20
1L Arthur Cavanagh	10-24-19	25M Gerold L Petterson	08-25-20	3N David T McDonnell, Sr	10-18-20	197M Mark A Nedoff	09-26-20
1L Edith E Frisbee	07-21-20	25M Esther L Smith	09-12-20	3N Walter S Nicolas Jr	09-07-20	197M William L Wilburn	10-22-20
1L Johann G Gschliesser	06-14-20	77P Jeffrey A Dietzler	08-28-20	3N Hagop J Sarkissian	09-14-20	242C Gary R Urquhart	10-17-20
1L Munag M Hachikian	04-04-20	77P William E Kowalkowski	09-23-20	3N Joseph F Zyra	09-23-19	355T Robert I Noppenberger	09-22-20
1L Joseph P Husnay, Sr	08-14-20	77P Ronald A Tummett	10-05-20	4B Frank C Miller	08-12-20	406C Leonard J Mongiello	11-05-20
1L Joseph Lucania	04-18-20	77P Russell H Wendt Jr	08-19-20	4C Harvey J Hammond	08-01-19	458M Pedro Aguilar	11-07-20
1L Robert W Mcnamee	07-29-20	117T Joann Marie Wells	09-03-20	14M James R Evans	10-15-20	458M Gisele Cole	10-29-19
1L Jack J Mucci	09-13-20	119B John A Hellman, Jr	10-11-20	14M Raymond J Tyszkiewicz	10-07-20	458M James Dilenardo	10-04-20
1L Timothy M Pierce	09-21-20	137C Walter D George	01-30-17	24M Vernon E Mccamic	10-06-20	458M Randall N Doll	10-24-19
1L Walter H Pogodzienski	06-25-20	197M Thomas E Floyd	05-08-14	25M Frederick N Hall	11-03-20	458M Gladys Jones	07-15-20
1L Martin Sarkisian	04-13-20	197M Timothy E Layne	09-18-20	25M Reginald Harrell, Jr	09-11-20	458M John C Maerz	06-18-20
1M Robert F Demarco	08-22-20	197M Mike A Rollan	12-09-17	25M Larry D Johnson	09-18-20	458M Miguel A Rodriguez	09-16-20
2N Frederick K Andrews	09-19-20	206T George Mautz	05-30-20	25M Kenneth R Laforest, Sr	07-20-20	458M Richard H Stein	10-15-20
3N Michael Desrosiers	08-30-20	235M George S Cox	08-06-20	25M John B Lindenberger	09-17-20	458M George H Walter	01-02-20
3N Madeline J Politano	09-30-20	235M Datha M Ogg	03-28-20	25M Dano A Mckay	10-08-20	508M Shelley Beaty	10-05-20
3N Garey L Schumacher, Sr	07-25-19	241M Alfred L Thomas, III	08-13-20	25M Myra M Rusnak	03-21-15	508M Richard E Christ	10-28-20
		285M Morris E Johnson	08-21-20	25M Alvin M Sandfort	10-03-20	508M Cindy A Durham	09-17-20
		285M James W Mcclure	07-13-20	72C James L Desasso	07-09-20	508M Larry R Harp	10-20-20
		388M Lewis O Whisenhunt	08-17-20	72C Cecil R Yancey Jr	08-31-20	508M James L Stover, Sr	10-28-20
		455T Richard L Keagle	04-23-20			514M Viora L Johnson	10-15-20
						518M Angelo A Pascuzzi	07-19-20
						527S Robert K Bettis	06-08-20
						555M Roland Clouatre	10-02-20
						555M Jeannine Girard-Poulin	10-27-20
						555M Gilles Imbeault	11-10-20
						555M Gisele Lanthier	10-07-20
						555M Walter B Loye	10-10-20
						555M Jean-Guy Pariseau	11-05-20
						572T Don R Bowers	07-26-19
						575M Poul K Jensen	08-28-20
						577M Allan S Sprasky	03-30-20
						612M Alois C Neuhaus	10-24-20

NOTICE REGARDING THE GRAPHIC COMMUNICATIONS BENEVOLENT TRUST FUND

As previously advised, the Board of Trustees of the Benevolent Trust Fund (BTF) amended the Plan document to make securing a signature witness on the Beneficiary of Designation form easier. The Plan now allows a participant's signature on a Designation of Beneficiary form to be witnessed by anyone (other than a Beneficiary named on the Designation of Beneficiary form). As also advised, the requirement that BTF Designation of Beneficiary forms be witnessed was temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency as declared by the US Department of Health and Human Services effective as of January 1, 2020. Effective May 11, 2023, the Department of Health and

Human Services declared an end to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Therefore, for any Beneficiary Designation forms dated on or after June 1, 2023, the signature witness requirements of the BTF are reinstated. Your signature on the Designation of Beneficiary form must be witnessed as of **June 1, 2023**, and it may be witnessed by any union official or union member, a family member, bank personnel, your physician, or your neighbors, etc., **provided the witness is not a named Beneficiary**. No notarization is required.

Additional information about the BTF is available in your BTF Summary Plan Description or by contacting the BTF Office.

PPPWU Joins Call for Russia to Free WSJ Reporter

The union representing editorial workers at The Wall Street Journal has called on President Joe Biden to take "swift and decisive action" to secure the release of reporter Evan Gershkovich who was detained in March by Russian authorities on charges of espionage widely dismissed as Kremlin propaganda aimed at embarrassing the United States.

"Journalists play a vital role in preserving and promoting democratic values and it is our collective responsibility to stand up for their rights and safety," said Jon Schless, president of the NewsGuild/CWA in a two-page plea to the White House.

Also urging strong diplomatic action on behalf of Gershkovich was Kurt Freeman, president of the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America, the former GCC/IBT, which represents hundreds of newspaper workers in a variety of production and editorial jobs.

"We ask the White House to spare no effort in freeing this courageous reporter arrested by Russia in a transparent attempt to suppress the truth," Freeman said. "It is essential that we defend a free press at home and abroad."

Administration officials said they are working hard to bring Gershkovich home though there have been no apparent breakthroughs and, in June, a Russian court denied the reporter's petition to end detention pending a trial.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said at a press freedom event in Washington, D.C. that the Biden administration is "intensely engaged" in efforts to free Gershkovich, 31, who was arrested while reporting in the city of Yekaterinburg, 1,000 miles east of Moscow.



Blinken would not speculate on developments but said Russia's policy of "wrongfully detaining people, using them as political pawns, using them as leverage" is "absolutely unacceptable."

In diplomatic terms, the designation "wrongfully detained" emphasizes the Biden administration's view that Gershkovich is a "political hostage" and charges against him are "fabricated," according to a story in the New York Times.

The Times noted that U.S. authorities also considered professional basketball player Brittney Griner and former Marine Trevor Reed wrongfully detained by Russia. Griner and Reed were released last year in prisoner exchanges.

Based in Russia, Gershkovich earned a reputation as a courageous reporter who routinely tackled sensitive and potentially dangerous stories related to Russia's unprovoked invasion last year of neighboring Ukraine.

Schless noted in his letter to Biden that Gershkovich had written about President Vladimir Putin's attempt to smother dissent; Putin's preference for advisors who assure him the war is going well contrary to evidence; and, in a

profile, the impact of the conflict on a paratrooper who had seen combat action.

The Independent Association of Publishers Employees TNG/CWA Local 1096, represents Wall Street Journal workers based only in North America but Schless said the CWA, which has contracts at 200 media organizations, is concerned broadly about threats to journalists and press freedom.

"Journalism is not a crime," the NewsGuild/CWA president said. "No journalist should be arrested for doing their job."

Red State Republicans Hit Child Labor Laws

Twelve-year-olds work as roofers in Florida and Tennessee. Slaughterhouses in Delaware, Mississippi and North Carolina have kids on the payroll. Children saw planks of wood overnight in South Carolina.

"This shadow work force extends across industries in every state, flouting child labor laws that have been in place for nearly a century," wrote New York Times reporter Hannah Dreier in a wide-ranging investigation that exposed abuses that seem more from another century.

Dreier found children packaging Cheerios and baking dinner rolls sold at Walmart. Others made socks for Fruit of the Loom and parts for Ford and General Motors. Some stitch tags into J. Crew shirts and others process chicken sold at Whole Foods.

All are migrant children in the United States without parents and working jobs that often are exhausting and dangerous, according to the Times investigation.

The youngsters, mostly from Central America, are "driven by economic desperation" in their home countries that worsened during the pandemic, according to the Times. With false identification papers, the migrant children find easy acceptance at staffing agencies or contract manufacturers despite their obvious youthfulness.

Federal authorities have been lax in addressing the problem because of competing priorities, the Times said. On the one hand, the government wants to move underage children out of shelters and into the care of sponsors.

But once on their own, the kids look for employment that allows them to take care of basic needs and send money home. Many attend school after long shifts at clothing factories and dairy farms.

"They should not be working 12-hour days but it's happening here," a teacher near Miami told the Times.

While migrant children are increasingly at risk, Republicans in a number of red states from Arkansas to Iowa are pushing to weaken child labor laws, according to the Washington Post. (See Jim Hightower commentary, Page 3.)

Behind the campaign, says the Post, is a conservative think tank called the Foundation for Government Accountability and its lobbying arm, the Opportunity Solutions Project.

FGA has had "remarkable success among Republicans to relax regulations that prevent children from working long hours in dangerous conditions," said Post reporters Jacob Bogage and Maria Luisa Paul. And, says the Post, the drive to undercut child workplace protections comes as the Biden administration is increasing efforts to enforce existing laws.

"Federal and state entities should be working together to increase accountability and ramp up enforcement — not make it easier to illegally hire children to do what are often dangerous jobs," Seema Nanda, the administration's top labor lawyer told the Post. "No child should be working in dangerous workplaces in this country, full stop."



BURRUEZOLAW.COM VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

A 'Second Chance' to Defeat Pro-Union Vote

Organizing drives can be tough. But bringing workers aboard is just the start.

An analysis by the non-profit Economic Policy Institute says reaching agreement on a first contract in timely fashion often is an ordeal.

Winning a union election "is only the first step," EPI says. Settling on "a first contract generally takes a long time—often a year or more after union recognition."

EPI said four studies over the last several years "show a consistent pattern of long delays, resulting in an increased likelihood that unions will fail to reach a first contract."

One study showed that more than 40 percent of unions do not settle with management within a year of a successful union drive. Another analysis put the number at 50 percent.

There is not enough data to conclude how many unions ultimately prevail after facing difficulties with first year contracts. But it is clear, EPI says, that employers in many cases, "drag their feet" in hope of undercutting union authority and solidarity within the new unit.

"Anti-union employers who have lost a union recognition election may see contract negotiations as a second chance to defeat the union—by never reaching a collective bargaining agreement," the EPI analysis says.

What can be done?

EPI noted that while the National Labor Relations Board requires labor and management to bargain in good faith, the board does not demand a settlement or impose binding arbitration in case of a stalemate.

"A much more effective way to reach a fair contract would be to require labor and management to begin contract negotiations shortly after union recognition, use professional mediation in the event of slow progress or an impasse, and submit to binding arbitration if mediation fails to produce a first contract," EPI says.

And how to do that? Pass the Protect the Right to Organize Act (PRO).

The measure, passed twice by House Democrats in recent years but stifled by Republicans in the Senate, would require management to begin negotiations within 10 days of a union request; allow federal mediation if an agreement is not reached within 90 days; and binding arbitration if mediation fails.

"Democrats have re-introduced the PRO Act in the House and Senate," said Kurt Freeman, president of the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America. "We must keep up the political pressure and get this vital piece of legislation moving. Passage is way overdue."



QUOTESGRAM.COM VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

Minor Leaguers Make Major Gains

Baseball's big leaguers make millions. Those in the minors? Peanuts.

Not anymore.

With a 99 percent vote, minor league athletes ratified a five-year collective bargaining agreement that will substantially increase pay and improve working conditions -- an "historic achievement," according to the players' union.

Salaries will more than double and players will be paid for off-season training, the New York Times reported. In addition, said the Times, players will get better housing and transportation and there even will be a committee overseeing food quality.

According to the Associated Press, salaries at the lowest level will go from \$4,800 a year to nearly \$20,000 and from \$17,500 to \$35,800 in Triple A -- one step from the majors where minimum pay is \$700,000 and average salary nearly \$5 million.

Tony Clark, director of the Major League Baseball Players Association, which negotiated the contract, said minor leaguers had been "singularly determined and unified" in their campaign to improve pay and working conditions.

This historic achievement required the right group of players at the right moment to succeed, Clark said, adding: "Their legacy will live on for decades."



ESPN.COM VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

Let's See Congress Survive on \$7.25

The federal minimum wage is a "national disgrace," says Bernie Sanders -- and challenged his colleagues on Capitol Hill to try surviving on that kind of money.

"In the year 2023, in the richest country in the history of the world, nobody should be forced to work for starvation wages," said Sanders, according to the cable channel CNBC.

As an independent senator from Vermont, Sanders is calling for a minimum wage of \$17 an hour -- a hike of \$2 more than Democrats had demanded in the past.

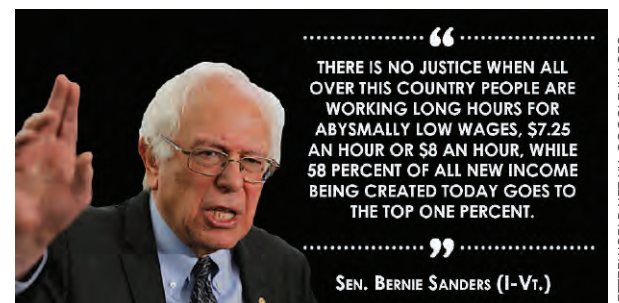
Nearly 35 million Americans are paid at less than that rate, Sanders said.

Republican opponents of a minimum wage increase argue that a hike would put unreasonable pressure on businesses and lead to layoffs.

But, CNBC noted, advocates like Heidi Shierholz, president of the Economic Policy Institute, say an increased minimum wage would fight poverty and increase spending.

"Having a weak minimum wage is bad for the overall economy," Shierholz said.

Sanders said members of Congress should put themselves in the position of low wage earners when deciding where to set the minimum wage. "Nobody in this country can survive on \$7.25," Sanders said. "And maybe some of my colleagues in Congress might want to live for a month on seven-and-a-quarter and see what that's like."



BETTERWORLD.NET VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

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Union Plus Attractions and Tours discounts for Union Plus members. Family fun has arrived! Save big bucks on attractions & tours plus admission to Disney, Six Flags, Universal Studios and many more parks.



Save on attractions, tours, water & theme parks



See more at
unionplus.org



‘Our Freedom is Sacred’

continued from PAGE 5

best way to grow the economy is from the top down and then to watch the benefits trickle down to the rest of us.”

By comparison, Biden said, his administration had chopped \$1.7 trillion off the debt and made sure corporations “start paying their fair share” in taxes. The President said that his far-reaching Inflation Reduction Act will diminish the debt by “hundreds of billions more in the decades ahead” and allow economic stability.

Biden also chided Trump for failing to meet the nation’s critical infrastructure needs.

“Under my predecessor, Infrastructure Week was a punchline,” Biden said. “On my watch, we’re making Infrastructure Decade a headline.”

The President said his administration had launched more than “25,000 infrastructure projects in 4,500 towns across the country” creating scores of union jobs. Manufacturing had “come alive again” in America and forgotten communities are reviving thanks largely to the efforts of union members, Biden said.

“Union workers will build roads and bridges, lay internet cable, install electric vehicle chargers,” he said. “Union workers are going to transform America.”

Biden’s NABTU speech followed a video announcement of his re-election plans that emphasized the need to protect American democracy while warning of the threat posed by Trump’s most extreme supporters.

“Freedom. Personal freedom is fundamental to who we are as Americans,” Biden said. “There’s nothing more important. Nothing more sacred.”

Left unchecked, GOP extremists would impose a harsh agenda that would slice Social Security, ban books denounced by conservatives, compromise personal health choices and limit voting rights, the President said. “Around the country, MAGA extremists are lining up to take those bedrock freedoms away.”

But at the union meeting, Biden focused mainly on the can-do spirit of American workers and the vital role unions have played in rebuilding the nation and securing its economic future.

Biden celebrated his administration’s job-creating programs and pro-labor initiatives – and again saluted union workers as partners in progress.

“We — you and I — together we’re turning things around and we’re doing it in a big way,” Biden told NABTU activists. “It’s time to finish the job. Finish the job.”



THE WHITE HOUSE VIA FLICKR

‘Union workers will build roads and bridges, lay internet cable, install electric vehicle chargers. Union workers are going to transform America.’

– President Joe Biden

Public Approval for Unions Continues to Rise

Public opinion continues to move solidly in favor of organized labor despite dwindling union membership and difficulties turning popular support into major organizing victories, according to a poll by the highly regarded Pew Research Center.

Analysts noted that more than 20 percent of American workers belonged to unions in 1983 but only approximately half that number now are affiliated. Such a precipitous downturn was seen by most Americans “as a bad thing for both the country and working people,” a Pew survey showed.

Support for unions generally conforms to political preferences, Pew said.

About three-quarters of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents expressed concern about declining union membership, Pew said, while only 40 percent of Republicans and “GOP leaners” shared their sentiment.

In fact, Pew said, a majority of older Republicans considered the loss of union members a good thing for working people. The view also was held by most wealthy GOP supporters, according to the survey.



‘The wave of organizing will continue to gather steam in 2023 and beyond despite broken labor laws that rig the system against workers.’

– Liz Schuler, president, AFL-CIO



Leaders say efforts to build membership ranks are thwarted more by anti-labor tactics than a lack of interest on the part of workers and point to the need for stronger labor laws.

AFL-CIO President Liz Schuler said working people are “rising up despite often illegal opposition from companies that would rather pay union-busting firms millions than give workers a seat at the table,” according to the online news agency, Politico.

Freeman, Schuler and other labor leaders vow to redouble their efforts in the face of right-wing resistance and corporate opposition. “The wave of organizing will continue to gather steam in 2023 and beyond despite broken labor laws that rig the system against workers,” the AFL-CIO leader said.

Additional major findings from Pew include:

- Two-thirds of Democrats see the decline in organized labor as bad for working people.
- White Democrats are less likely than minority members to express concern about losses in union membership.
- Most conservative Republicans say diminished union membership has been at least somewhat good for working people.
- GOP moderates and liberals are less likely than conservatives to cheer declining union membership.
- Liberal Democrats are most likely to be alarmed by the difficulties facing organized labor while conservative and moderate Democrats are less concerned.