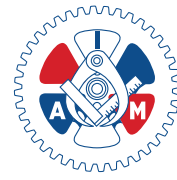


THE COMMUNICATOR



IAM
PRINTING PACKAGING
& PRODUCTION
WORKERS UNION

Volume 4 Number 4 | IAM/Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America | Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2026

**Timely Tribute
Honors Service
Of Former
President
Steve Nobles**



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**Aiding Union
Families Hit
By Tornado
In Wisconsin**



PHOTO COURTESY DISTRICT COUNCIL 1

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**Labor Leaders
Oppose SEC
Plan to Go
‘Paperless’**



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Organized Labor Pledges Massive Midterm Turnout

By Fred Bruning
The Communicator

Midterm elections are approaching. Organized labor is ready. The AFL-CIO pledges to energize its 16 million affiliated voters, train 50,000 monitors “to defend working people’s rights at the ballot box” on Nov. 3 and focus attention on the threat of unregulated artificial intelligence and its threat to working people.

For American workers, this is a perilous moment, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler warns.

“...everything workers have organized and fought to win is in jeopardy,” Shuler said after the AFL-CIO’s 30th Constitutional Convention in Minneapolis. But, Shuler promised, “Together, we’ll unite millions of workers to build power in unions, protect and strengthen our democracy, and provide a check on runaway corporate greed.”

Also striking an urgent tone was IAM Union International President Brian Bryant.

“We’re knocking on doors,” Bryant said in a speech before the American Federation of Teachers. “We’re making calls. We’re having conversations with our members. And

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Already a success, the IAM Union-PPPWU merger was hailed by AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, left, IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro, center, and IAM Union International President Brian Bryant.

**Castro, Bryant Hail
Rapidly Developing
Relationship of
Common Purpose**

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IAM UNION PHOTO

**This issue of The Communicator includes a notice on
worker objections to agency fees. PAGE 13**

Civic Duty Demands That Union Members Learn Issues and Vote

IT'S BEEN SOME THREE MONTHS.

In June, PPPWU members voted to merge with IAM Union – the highly regarded, 600,000-strong labor organization once known as the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

Since then, we've seen our new partnership pay off.

Where IAM/PPPWU and IAM members work side-

by-side, there is a growing sense of solidarity, mutual respect and support.

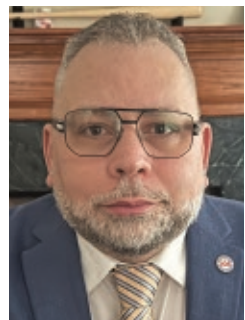
When tornadoes hit Wisconsin and upended life for some of our union brothers and sisters, IAM Union generously helped through its disaster relief program which added to the good-hearted financial contributions

of our own members.

IAM has provided resources and expertise in negotiations giving us an edge and making clear we had powerful friends on our side.

With IAM, we are opposing a Securities and Exchange Commission proposal to scrap paper financial notifications in favor of email – a move that would hurt envelope manufacturers and some of our members, too.

On a lighter note, I was invited by the IAM Wood, Pulp and Paper Council to send a video greeting to the 7th annual "Chillin' & Grillin'" Competition – a virtual, two-day event sponsored by IAM Union International President Brian Bryant that serves as a fund-raiser for Guide Dogs of America/Tender Loving Canines.



And let me tell you about President Bryant.

He is a prominent national figure – leader of one of the country's most respected labor organizations who, impressively, was appointed this year to chair the influential AFL-CIO Legislative and Policy Committee – and a decent, down-to-earth guy.

President Bryant, a former Maine pipefitter with strong union roots, is always there when we call. He is quick to offer counsel and support. I already consider him a personal friend and trusted ally.

At IAM Union, the IAM/PPPWU is treated with respect – by President Bryant and everyone else.

I am reminded of a remark by IAM Union General Secretary-Treasurer Dora Cervantes during a visit to our June special convention in Maryland. "You are home," Cervantes told PPPWU delegates. IAM Union leaders and staff have followed through impressively on that promise.

The early stages of bringing the IAM Union and IAM/PPPWU families together have already shown the strength of this partnership," President Bryant told editors of The

Communicator recently. "We're already working together, supporting each other and delivering for our members – and this is only the beginning."

Among the many virtues of our IAM merger partners is an admirable tradition of civic duty.

IAM is politically active – the union holds an annual nonpartisan conference to coordinate strategy – and leaders know elections make a difference.

We share that view with IAM Union.

Crucial midterm elections are only a few weeks away.

The present Washington administration is no friend of labor – sad but true.

Organizing rights have been rolled back, workplace safety standards compromised, mass firings imposed, lawsuits filed against unions.

The New York Times reported that during the ICE immigration crackdown in Minneapolis, government agents spied on labor groups including the Communications Workers of America, Service Employees International Union and our friends at the AFL-CIO.

We must reject this kind of intimidation

I join IAM leaders in urging all our members to study the issues carefully and vote for candidates who will stand up for unions and the hard-working people they represent.

OUTLOOK

BRIAN BRYANT IAM UNION INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Prioritize Working People – not Oligarchs

AS WE HEAD TOWARD THE MIDTERM ELECTIONS, WORKING people have an opportunity—and a responsibility—to make our voices heard.

For union members, elections are not about political parties. They are about our jobs, our contracts, our retirement security, our right to organize, and whether working people have a fair shot at getting ahead.

Throughout my career in the labor movement, I have seen firsthand how decisions made in Washington and in statehouses across the country directly affect what happens at our workplaces and bargaining tables.

That's why I encourage every IAM/PPPWU and IAM Union member to study the issues, know where the candidates stand, get involved and vote.

One of the best ways to get involved is through the IAM State Council in your state. These bodies are by and for our members, bringing together IAM members from across industries and communities to make our collective voice heard in the political process.

Our state councils make endorsements based on a simple premise: Are you standing with us or against us? Are you going to fight for working people, defend our right to organize and bargain collectively, protect good union jobs and retirement security, and against corporations that put profits ahead of people?

We mobilize around those decisions. We knock on doors, make phone calls, talk with our coworkers and neighbors, and make sure union members understand what's at stake.

Another important way to strengthen our political voice is by contributing to the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League (MNPL).



MNPL is funded entirely through voluntary contributions from IAM members – not union dues. Those contributions allow us to support candidates who support us and to build political power for working people.

That work is especially important in these midterm elections.

We must take this country back for working people and build a new economy centered on fairness – not more giveaways to billionaires, oligarchs and corporations that already have more than enough.

Working people create the wealth of this nation. We build the products, move the goods, keep our transportation systems running, manufacture the equipment that keeps our country safe, and make our communities work. Our economy and our government should recognize that value.

The labor movement has always understood that what happens at the ballot box affects what happens at the bargaining table. When working people stand together, organize and vote for our shared interests, we have tremendous power.

Get involved with your IAM State Council. Make contributions to MNPL. Talk with your coworkers and family. Learn where the candidates stand. And most importantly, make a plan to vote.

Together, we can build an economy and a country that deliver for working people.



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After Merger, the Signs of Solidarity are Unmistakable

TIME FLIES – IN THIS CASE, FROM THE IAM/PPPWU OFFICE IN SILVER Spring, Maryland to new quarters at IAM Union's complex in Upper Marlboro.

Moving a unique wooden PPPWU clock – donated by Larry Best, business agent of Local 527-M, to honor former president Steve Nobles – was more than an exercise in interior design. (Page 4)



It represented a growing relationship of mutual support between the 600,000-strong IAM Union and former PPPWU – now the IAM/PPPWU – in the weeks following a June merger vote by PPPWU union members. (Page 9)

Signs of solidarity were unmistakable.

IAM Union aided generously in a relief effort for union members displaced by a tornado in Wisconsin. (Page 5)

IAM and IAM/PPPWU workers in the same shops are building strong and productive relationships. The unions are working together to block an ill-advised effort by the Securities and Exchange Commission to introduce paperless financial notifications – a move that could hurt the printing and envelope industry and its thousands of unionized workers. (Page 10)

After Maggie Peck, executive director of The Members Retirement Plan, spoke at a meeting of IAM Union leaders in Missouri, interest in the retirement program was immediate.

“We’re excited to continue learning from one another, sharing resources and finding new ways to build power and opportunity for our membership,” said IAM Union Midwest Territory General Vice President Sam Cicinelli. (Page 9)

Union members know that power and opportunity also depend on political leadership.

With critical midterm elections only weeks away, organized labor is urging members to be aware and informed citizens – and vote for candidates committed to protecting workers and their unions. (Top Story, Page 1)

“We’re knocking on doors,” said IAM Union International President Brian Bryant.

“We’re making calls. We’re having conversations with our members. And we’re encouraging our own members to run for office. Because there is no better way to have a voice in the halls of power than to be that voice ourselves.” (Page 8)

Around the country, a number of union members and other pro-worker candidates are competing for state and national posts – or are already in place. (Page 8)

IAM Union member Taylor Rehmet won election earlier this year to the Texas state senate and drew support from across the political spectrum.

“This is about unifying us, right?” Rehmet said. “That’s a core tenet of being in a union. That’s something else my union taught me – that we all need to be unified and focus on what brings us together, not what divides us.”

Another basic principle of organized labor is service to members – and their communities.

That’s why IAM Union holds events like the annual “Chillin’ & Grillin’” barbeque to benefit Guide Dogs of America/Tender Loving Canines. The cook-off – an unusual digital event – raised nearly \$20,000 this year and drew praise from IAM/

PPPWU President Israel Castro who spoke briefly to contestants in a video greeting.

Castro said he is just as proud of IAM/PPPWU’s own civic engagement symbolized by the annual District Council 3 William Browning Golf Scramble at Golden Hawk golf course, Casco, Michigan.

“By benefiting those in need, we show our dedication to the common good, reach out to people facing adversity and gain respect,” he said. “A win-win, all around.”

Since it began nearly a quarter-century ago, the tournament has raised more than \$200,000 for charities including autism awareness, and aid to hungry neighbors and victims of domestic abuse.

Helping again at this year’s golf Scramble was Lily Cottick, granddaughter of Steve Nobles and, at 11, an ardent volunteer worker. Lily, from St. Clair Shores, Michigan, said she knew many people have difficult lives and personal struggles. (Page 16)

“I want to help and make things easier for them,” she said.

Her granddad said Lily reflects the high ideals of care and compassion emphasized by unions, their members and families across the country.

“I am immensely proud,” he said.



COMMENTARY JIM HIGHTOWER

Income Gap Closed! Oh, You Hadn’t Heard?

Wow, here’s some blockbuster economic news from Team Trump: The income gap between the rich and the rest of us is over!

How do we know this? Because Scott Bessent says so. Who’s he? Secretary of the Treasury – Trump’s top economic official.

A son of inherited wealth, he’s a Yale graduate, a Wall Street whiz, a billion-dollar hedge fund speculator, and... well, Scott says he knows financial stuff.

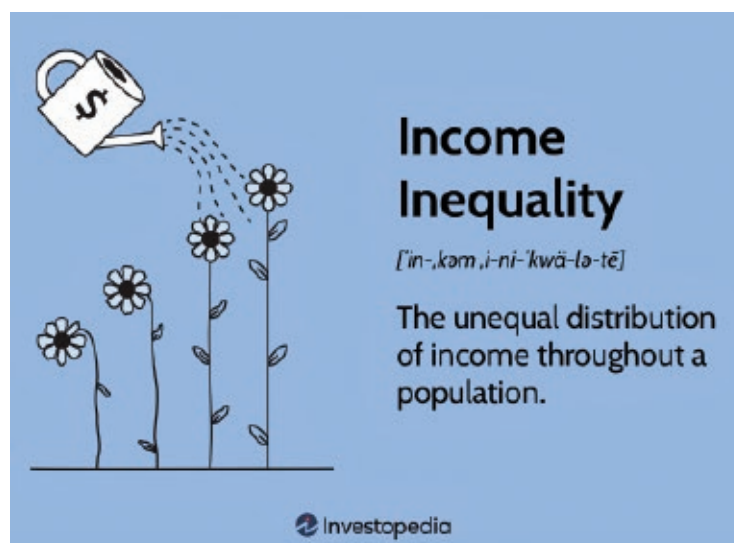
So he officially proclaimed this month that the “K-shaped economy... is a thing of the past.”

He’s referring to the letter K, which economists use as a graphic shorthand to show the wealth of moneyed elites is zooming up, while the well-being of the middle-class and poor plummets.

“I got sick of hearing about this K-shaped economy,” said this expert of high-finance.

So he did what Trump would do. Bessent simply decreed that the rich-poor economic divide is “over.” As evidence, he pointed to Trump’s elimination of the federal tax on workers’ tips.

Could someone please enlighten our eminent treasury chief?



No doubt some waiters and bartenders will get a few nickels and dimes from this token tax ploy, but it doesn’t even register on the scale of economic fairness.

Plus, a partisan Wall Street millionaire like Scott has zero credibility with working class families.

They’ll know when inequality is “over,” because their in-come will finally begin to cover the ever-rising out-go caused by corporate greed and plutocratic government.



America’s last great Republican President, Abraham Lincoln said: “You can’t fool all the people all the time.” But Trump and his clique of clueless henchmen like Scott Bessent keep trying to prove Lincoln wrong.

Populist author, public speaker, and radio commentator Jim Hightower chronicles the ongoing fight by America’s ordinary people against rule by plutocratic elites. Subscription rates for Hightower Lowdown commentary available at <https://jimhightower.substack.com>

A Timely Tribute to Honor Steve Nobles

By Zachary Dowdy
Special to the Communicator

It was a gift whose time had come.

When former PPPWU President Steve Nobles announced he was retiring last year after four decades as a union leader, Larry Best, business agent at Local 527-M, Atlanta, wanted to mark the occasion with something special – a clock like no other.

“We just felt like we should honor him,” said Best. “He’s been a good friend of mine and the union.”

Best contacted Nicole Shrimplin, who had been making clocks and many other custom-made items for years at her unionized company, Altered Wood Innovations, in Melbourne, Florida.

At first, Best intended to deliver the gift to Nobles at the inaugural Solidarity Conference in Atlanta last fall but finally decided to send it directly to the PPPWU’s Maryland headquarters.

When the gift arrived, Nobles was struck by its design and workmanship.

“My first reaction was, ‘This is just beautiful,’ he said. ‘I didn’t anticipate it to be as nice as it was.’”

Fashioned of teak and three feet in diameter, the clock features a face with Roman numerals and the PPPWU emblem of interlocking gears within a large circle shaped like a sprocket flywheel.

Its beauty lies in the detail, said IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro.

“The clock is a perfect representation of the professionalism that characterizes our union,” Castro said. “And it is a fitting tribute to Steve Nobles, a committed union leader who always demanded the best of himself and accepted nothing less.”

Described by Castro as a “one-of-a-kind work of art,” the clock was displayed briefly at IAM/PPPWU offices in Silver Spring and then moved to IAM Union headquarters in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, following the PPPWU-IAM Union merger vote in June.

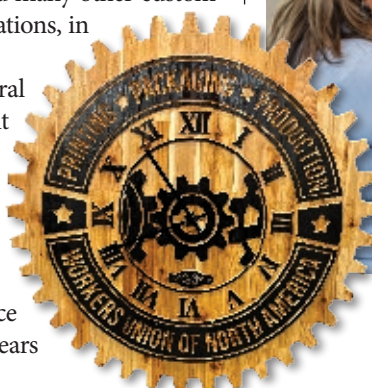
George Tedeschi, IAM/PPPWU president emeritus, said he noticed the clock on a visit to union offices in Silver Spring soon after its delivery.

“A remarkable piece and unlike anything I had ever seen,” said Tedeschi, who serves as top editor of The Communicator. “And it has special meaning because it honors the outstanding service given our union by Steve Nobles throughout the years and as president. I knew we had to do a story for the newspaper.”

Nicole Shrimplin said the clock took seven hours to create at a cost of nearly \$1,000.

The job was a challenge, Shrimplin said – one that she welcomed.

“The work is my Zen, my go-to for relaxation,” she said, “The more detail the better. It was really cool to bring something to life.”



A wooden clock representing the PPPWU was installed at IAM Union headquarters by, left-right, IAM Union General Secretary-Treasurer Dora Cervantes, Paul Kendall, assistant secretary to Cervantes, and IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro.

Altered Wood makes a variety of products, ranging from flags to beer mugs, each embossed with a personal touch, said Shrimplin, who runs the business with her husband, Cole.

The couple said they have a strong belief in unions and felt it important to affiliate with the PPPWU. It is an alliance that has paid off. “Typically, unions like to do business with unions,” Nicole Shrimplin said.

Other labor organizations have used Altered Wood Innovations to create clocks similar to the one designed for Nobles and PPPWU, Shrimplin said.

“We like to do things that are very unique, that you won’t find in retail stores,” she said. “We try to stay apart from everybody else.”

Shrimplin’s creation is on permanent display in IAM/PPPWU offices at IAM Union – a minute-by-minute tribute to artistic inspiration, the service of a dedicated labor leader and union solidarity.

For information on the products and services of Altered Wood Innovations, contact Nicole or Cole Shrimplin at (321) 216-7990. Email: awidevelopmentsllc@gmail.com. Website: alteredwoods.com. Address: 1888 Crane Creek Blvd, Melbourne, Florida 32940

DC-3 President Richardson Named to General Board

Dean Richardson, a union professional who served in various posts on the local level and earlier this year became president of District Council 3, has been appointed Central Region representative on the IAM/PPPWU General Board.

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro said Richardson would do an “outstanding job” representing Central Region members after swearing him in over the summer.

Richardson, named to the board as replacement for Central Region member Michael Consolino, vowed to “look out for the best interests of our members as we grow our union.”

In 1991, Richardson began work at the American Paper Products Co. in Boardman, Ohio, an envelope manufacturer near Youngstown covered by the GCIU, and then spent 15 years at West Penn Printing, New Castle, Pennsylvania, a publisher of several local newspapers.



Dean Richardson

At West Penn, Richardson served Local 508 and then Local 25-M as shop steward, member of the executive board and vice president, a position he still holds.

He became District Council 3 business agent in 2023, was elected vice-president the next year and succeeded Linde Shaw as DC-3 president in 2026 when Shaw assumed duties as DC-3 secretary-treasurer.

Richardson, 61, who is married and has three children, joins the general board at a time of transition and renewed energy following a June PPPWU vote to merge with the 600,000-strong IAM Union.

“The merger is a fantastic thing,” said Richardson. “IAM’s mission and attitude make it a great fit for us. I see great things coming down the road.”

Adding to that sense of optimism, he said, is the energy and effectiveness of IAM/PPPWU President Castro. “I have nothing but utmost faith in our current leadership,” Richardson said.

UNIONS ‘EXTREMELY POPULAR’ ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM

The American public is pro-labor.

Latest Gallup Poll results show support for unions is the highest in more than 60 years, reports the Economic Policy Institute.

“Unions are extremely popular,” said an EPI analysis that noted 56 million workers say they would “join a union if they could.”

Gallup found that 71 percent of Americans approve of unions. Enthusiasm is highest among Democrats and independents but, despite anti-union GOP policies and rhetoric, 52 per cent of Republicans said they favored organized labor.

Americans say decline in union membership over the last several decades is bad for working people, according to Gallup. The polling organization also found that public

sentiment favors unions over big corporations by the widest margin ever recorded – up by 16 points.

“It should be no surprise that the public views unions favorably,” said EPI. “Unions help workers win higher wages, advocate for safer and healthier workplaces, support a thriving middle class, and strengthen democracy by boosting civic participation.”

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro said the latest Gallup findings represent a “great opportunity” for building union ranks.

“The public is with us and millions of American workers say they want union membership,” Castro said. “We have to seize this moment, redouble our efforts and bring those people aboard.”





A fierce July tornado devastated the RR Donnelley plant in Menasha, Wisconsin, closing the facility permanently and leaving union workers to cope with loss of employment, ruined houses and disrupted lives.

Union Aiding Wisconsin Twister Victims

By Dawn Hobbs

Special to the Communicator

The most powerful tornado in 30 years tore through the town of Menasha in eastern Wisconsin, leaving a trail of destruction that affected more than 50 IAM/PPPWU members of Local 77-P and nearly wiped out the RR Donnelley plant where 18 of those members worked.

Emergency contributions and benefits from the IAM Union Disaster Relief Fund are being distributed through IAM/PPPWU District Council 1 and Local 77-P to members who sustained damage to their homes, suffered job loss or faced unexpected travel expenses after being temporarily assigned to distant Donnelley plants.

Months after the July 27 tornado raged through Menasha, members continue piecing their lives together – clearing yards, repairing homes and battling insurance companies while they struggle to make ends meet. With the Donnelley plant permanently shuttered, some workers await critical severance packages from the company.

After the tornado struck, IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro and the IAM Union Communications Department quickly created a dramatic video showing wreckage and seeking donations.

Castro said approximately \$4,000 was raised quickly and more is needed.

“This is going to be a very long recovery process for some and they will need as much assistance as we can give them,” Castro said. “This is an opportunity for us to really help our union brothers and sisters get back on their feet.”

Scott Miller, president of Local 77-P, Neenah, Wisconsin, and president of District Council 1, has been working hard to ensure that happens.

From clearing roads to comforting tearful members and helping with relief applications, Miller said the work is emotional. “I just really need to help them and do what I can for them,” he said. “It just breaks my heart that everyone is going through this.”

Meteorologists said the tornado developed in the Fox Valley region of Wisconsin and traveled south across Neenah and Menasha.

Though no deaths were reported at RR Donnelley, it was a harrowing experience for those inside the Menasha plant, workers said.

Several narrowly escaped injury when the F3-rated tornado – the most severe is F5 – nearly flattened half the shop, tore off a portion of the roof, hurled debris around the work

floor and sent power lines sprawling over cars in the company parking lot.

Dodging shards of glass and debris, workers raced for the plant’s emergency shelter as the tornado – winds reaching 140 miles an hour – uprooted trees and lifted the Donnelley factory roof.

“If we would have stayed in our department, we’d probably be dead,” said platemaker Amy Young, a 29-year employee who serves as a Local 77-P shop steward.

Young, whose auto was one of the many totaled by the tornado, now drives a rental car nearly 300 miles to a Donnelley plant in Oakdale, Minnesota. Eight other employees were transferred to a facility in De Pere, 25 miles from Menasha.

“It’s been very stressful on both me and my husband,” Young said. “There’s the car insurance, the costs of the travel, having to pay for everything up front. And then there’s not knowing what’s going on.”

Adding to the uncertainty is Donnelley’s decision not to rebuild in Menasha. Union leaders and company representatives began negotiations on severance packages in September.

“It’s been rough,” Young said. “I just have a knot in my stomach all of the time.”

Many other union members face hardship.

Mark Tessen, who has worked at ProAmpac, a flexible packaging company in Menasha, for 11 years and serves as an IAM/PPPWU shop steward, was at lunch in nearby Darboy when the sirens sounded.

A ride home to Menasha that usually takes 15 minutes dragged on for three hours. Tessen had to hike the last few miles because downed trees and power lines blocked roads.

“All of the way back I just kept thinking my house is fine, it’s fine,” Tessen said.

But when Tessen finally arrived, he found his house wasn’t fine.

“I had extensive damage to house and garage,” he said. “Siding was down, parts of my roof was torn off, windows are gone.”

To make matters worse, Tessen said, now he must battle the insurance company.

“They’re low-balling me,” he said. “Who has time for all of this? I’m working almost every day, I’m trying to fix the house, and I’m arguing with the insurance people. This whole thing is traumatizing.”

Despite the difficulties, Tessen said he is grateful for the help of Miller, Local 77-P, and IAM Union donations. “Unions are all about taking care of each other,” he said. “And we really see that now.” ■

Amid Devastation, Local Leader Raced to Help Others

Scott Miller, president of IAM/PPPWU Local 77-P in Neenah, Wisconsin, knew it was going to be bad.

A severe tornado was roaring through the Fox Valley region and hit nearby Menasha where dozens of his members worked at RR Donnelley and other printing and packaging plants in the vicinity.

Miller knew what he had to do.

He jumped in his Ford F-150 pickup truck to assess damage and provide aid.

He helped clear roads and hauled debris.

When roads were blocked to traffic, he hiked through rubble and downed trees to check on members at their homes.

It was a daunting mission.

“I’m not sure I’m going to be able to contact everyone,” Miller said immediately after the tornado hit. “I can’t find them. There’s no addresses on the houses. We can’t reach them. I just don’t know.”



PHOTO COURTESY DISTRICT COUNCIL 1

Scott Miller, left, president of IAM/PPPWU Local 77-P, Neenah, Wisconsin helped tornado victims like Mark Tessen, a 77-P shop steward.

Days later, Miller began locating union members. None had died in the disaster but many found homes badly damaged.

“They have roofs off, siding, windows, trees all over,” he said. “My guys are helping people. I’ve taken out more than 15 loads of debris and insulation, roofing, siding, and trees from the houses. It’s a mess. All this work, and we haven’t even made a dent.”

Also of major concern were several union members thrown out of work when the tornado hit – and permanently closed – the Donnelley plant.

Miller, who also serves as District Council 1 president, began working on their behalf – finding jobs at other Donnelley facilities, negotiating severance packages for those intending to leave the company, and distributing IAM Union Disaster Relief forms and pre-paid gift cards made available by DC-1 for all members who needed immediate financial help.

“Scott has been out there at the shops, and on the phone, and at Ground Zero every day,” said Marty Hallberg, DC-1

secretary-treasurer. “He’s trying to help everyone get things cleaned up, get roads passable, and he’s out talking to members trying to figure out what everyone needs. It’s remarkable.”

It took weeks before Miller could accurately gauge the damage.

More than 50 members had been affected by the tornado – 25 active and 10 retirees whose homes were damaged to various degrees and as many as 18 workers whose employment future is uncertain because of the Donnelley plant closing.

“You know, it really hurts my heart there’s so many people affected – with their homes, with their jobs, with everything,” Miller said.

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro lauded Miller’s hard work and selflessness.

“Scott cares about people, truly and deeply,” Castro said. “This is what leaders do. They don’t just sit behind a desk. When push comes to shove, you get in there and help your people.”

– Dawn Hobbs

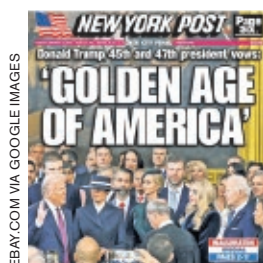
To provide assistance, send donations to the IAM/PPPWU international office, 12301 Old Columbia Pike, Suite 310, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20904. Note “Fox Valley Relief” on memo line of check.

Imperial Agenda Or Vote for the People?

What happened to the golden age?

As crucial midterm elections approach, working people have a right to ask.

President Donald Trump promised things were going to be better than ever – lower costs, a surge in manufacturing, unparalleled health care, and, of course, global peace achieved overnight.



“The golden age of America begins right now,” Trump said in his 2025 inaugural address. “From this day forward our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world.”

Instead of that glorious new day we have higher prices, a loss of factory jobs, millions cut off from basic health services and a questionable war in Iran that has

stretched the U.S. military and put added pressure on consumers.

In the New York Times, economic analyst Steven Rattner reviewed Trump’s performance.

Here are key findings:

- When Joe Biden left office, the economy was growing at 2.75 percent. Under Trump second-quarter growth was 1.5.

- President Trump said he would quickly balance the federal budget but his “One Big Beautiful Bill” sent the country’s deficit – the difference between federal spending and tax revenue – soaring to new highs.

- National debt – how much the government owes – soon will exceed the World War 2 record.

- Manufacturing grew steadily under Biden. So far in Trump’s second term, more than 60,000 factory jobs have been lost.

- Inflation was just over 2 percent when Trump returned to the White House. It’s higher now.

- Presidents can’t do much about global oil prices but Trump predicted gas at \$2 a gallon. The national average was near \$4.50 last month and diesel has hit record levels.

- Housing would be cheaper, Trump vowed. Real estate remains stubbornly out of reach for many Americans and mortgages stuck at around 7 percent.

- Health care? In order to finance the “Big Beautiful Bill” as many as 5 million people have been thrown off Medicaid. At the same time, Trump administration cutbacks in the Affordable Care Act – “Obamacare” – boosted insurance costs for millions more.

It’s a sorry scorecard and Trump’s approval rating – in the low 30s over the summer – shows widespread disapproval even though the president claims these are the best of times.

Voters who bought the idea of an all-powerful president who could usher in a period of untold wealth and abundance are coming to grips with a sobering reality: He hoodwinked them.

And that bring us to the midterms.

Trump could not have done this much damage without the help of obedient allies on Capitol Hill who, out of fear or misguided loyalty, indulged his every wish and rarely complained about Oval Office excesses.

Even as Trump spent more time planning grandiose building projects – a ballroom, a triumphal arch, a needlessly expensive helipad on the White House front lawn – than easing the struggles of constituents, his party rarely raised a voice.

Those same silent partners stood by when Trump was trashing labor rights, summarily firing tens of thousands of unionized federal workers, cutting workplace safety compliance and tilting the National Labor Relations Board toward business.

On Nov. 3, voters have an opportunity to change course and elect worker-friendly candidates who will hold Trump accountable and halt an imperial agenda that benefits the wealthy at the expense of everyone else.

Republican or Democrat, union member or unaffiliated, the choice should be clear.

Choose candidates who will protect not only the super-rich but all American families, respect workers, support unions and show the White House it’s still the people, not the powerful, who run this place.



Point of View

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Debt Soars as Rich Get Richer

The U.S. national debt has officially surpassed \$40 trillion months earlier than forecasters had expected because of billions of dollars in lost revenue from President Trump’s invalidated tariffs, tax cuts (mostly to big corporations and the very wealthy) and soaring costs of the Iran war.



An increasing portion of our nation’s budget – and your tax dollar – is dedicated to paying interest on this growing debt.

That’s money we don’t spend on schools, health care, roads and bridges, and social safety nets. We’ll soon be paying more interest on the federal debt each year than we spend annually on Medicare.

So, who exactly receives these interest payments?

Foreign governments and foreign investors hold only about 30 percent of our debt. The rest – roughly 70 percent – is held domestically. That is, we pay the interest to ourselves.

And who, exactly, is “ourselves?”

The Federal Reserve holds part of this debt, state and local governments hold part.

But the biggest chunk – nearly half – is held by mutual funds, pension funds, insurance companies, and banks.

And who owns them? Americans who invest in these funds – and who thereby, directly or indirectly, hold Treasury bills.

And who, exactly are these Americans – the Americans who are directly or indirectly collecting a large amount of the interest we’re paying on the national debt?

The richest 1 percent of U.S. households hold about 35.6 percent of all financial assets – shares of stock, corporate bonds, and Treasury bills – so it’s safe to assume they hold at least a third of all Treasury bills.

In the 1950s, under President Dwight Eisenhower, the richest Americans paid a marginal tax rate of 91 percent.

Today, the tax rate on wealthy Americans is far lower.

The richest 400 Americans pay an average effective total tax rate of about 24 percent – including federal, state, local, and corporate taxes.

Jeff Bezos – America’s second or third richest person – paid no federal income taxes in 2018. Trump paid no federal taxes for years before he became president.

So now, wealthy Americans finance the federal government mainly by lending it money and collecting interest payments on those loans.

As I said, interest payments on the national debt this year have surpassed \$1 trillion, and a big chunk of that is going to wealthy Americans.

Keep following the money.

One of the biggest reasons the federal debt has exploded is that tax cuts – starting with the George W. Bush administration in 2001 and extending through Trump’s 2018 and 2024 tax cuts – have reduced government revenues by \$10.6 trillion.

Most of the benefits from those tax cuts are also going to the wealthy.

Since 2000, 65 percent of the benefits from tax cuts have gone to the richest fifth of Americans – 22 percent to the top 1 percent.

So, you see what’s happened?

Decades ago, the wealthiest Americans financed the government by paying higher taxes. Now, the government pays wealthy Americans interest on a swelling debt, caused largely by lower taxes on wealthy Americans.

Which means a growing portion of your taxes and mine is now paying wealthy Americans interest on those loans instead of paying for government services everyone needs.

So, from now on, whenever you hear someone fret about how huge, horrible, and out-of-control the national debt is, explain to them that it’s largely because of tax cuts – to the wealthy.

Robert B. Reich served as secretary of labor in the Clinton administration and is Emeritus Carmel P. Friesen Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley. He has written numerous books including the latest, “Coming Up Short: A Memoir of My America.” This piece appeared originally as a Substack newsletter (robertreich@substack.com).

Turmoil, Home-Grown



It is time to remember a slogan from the 9/11 terrorist attack that appeared on trains, buses, storefronts and just about everywhere in New York and beyond: “If You See Something, Say Something.”

In this instance, the danger is not from evil foreign forces. We are talking about economic turmoil – a threat entirely home-grown.

President Trump’s disastrous policies have raised gas prices, sparked inflation and made life so expensive for millions of Americans that families must choose between filling up the gas tank or grocery cart.

Many can’t do both. Inflation is up. Gas costs are spiraling. Diesel, which powers trucks, trains and agricultural equipment is well over \$5 a gallon.

Fertilizer, an oil-based product, is in short supply and hard-pressed farmers have no choice but to pass higher costs onto consumers.

Yet Trump, who accepts responsibility for nothing, continues to claim prices are falling and the economy couldn’t be better.

Meanwhile his futile and counter-productive war in Iran keeps the Strait of Hormuz largely blocked and gas prices volatile and way too expensive.

Relying on a playbook learned years ago from ruthless attorney Roy Cohn, the President repeats falsehoods so brazen that even obedient Republicans are backing away from his fantastical claims as midterm elections draw near.

Over the summer, Trump made matters even

worse by renewing a trade war with Canada.

The nation to the north is probably the best neighbor a country could have – standing with the United States in war and peace – but Trump, unhappy with the independent spirit of Prime Minister Mark Carney, blunders ahead, anyway.

If this sounds crazy, might be something to consider.

The world is in turmoil but Trump speaks mostly about his new White House helipad and building a triumphal arch in Washington. This is NOT normal.

It is time for an intervention.

The way to do that is to get out to vote – and persuade others to do the same.

And let’s be clear, this is not a partisan issue.

Independent voters, traditional Republicans, and even disillusioned MAGA enthusiasts angry at high prices, a senseless war and foolish schemes, are ready to reconsider.

In other words, people have seen enough.

On Nov. 3, let’s hope American voters “Say Something” – and that it is heard, loud and clear, all the way to the White House. ■

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

Public Opinion

BY HAROLD MEYERSON

Organize Like it’s the 30s



If there’s a problem with the American economy, it’s only because some people have to work for a living.

Income from investment – the primary source of income for roughly 1 percent of Americans – is soaring.

The remaining 99 percent, who depend primarily on income from their work, are the people dealing with prices and necessities that may be out of reach.

Since “workers are more productive than ever,” then according to traditional economic folk wisdom, wages should not be refusing to “budge,” but should be rising in tandem with productivity.

By the mid-1990s, however, economists at the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) documented that around 1980, productivity continued its merry ascent while wages began lagging behind.

To a significant degree, the increases in productivity have come from replacing humans with machines, which has tended to reduce costs and increase revenues for employers.

But that in itself doesn’t explain why the remaining workers have generally not seen their wages rise along with productivity gains.

Since the end of the 1970s, virtually all American corporations have done everything they could to weaken their workers’ power to increase their income, while they and their investors enjoyed increases in profits, dividends, and buybacks.

Corporations have routinely off-shored production, reclassified employees as independent gig workers, and broken what’s left of the nation’s labor laws to keep their employees from forming or joining unions.

A study by the Economic Policy Institute showed that if the American workforce were still unionized at roughly the 30 percent share it was at in the decade following World War II, the median American worker would have 14.5 percent higher wage income.

Getting anywhere near that level of union representation would require a wholesale rewriting of labor law so that it once again enabled workers to join unions without fear of being fired for supporting an organizing drive.

That kind of tactic already is illegal but the penalty is so minimal employers are tempted to start sacking workers as soon as they hear of union activities.

Needed now is massive political pressure from the 90 percent of workers whose income does not guarantee the American Dream – organizing on a scale not seen since the 1930s and ’40s, if not even greater.

For now, that still requires organizing at worksites, as well as online, at meeting halls, on street corners, as workers and as citizens. And that would only be the beginning. ■

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.

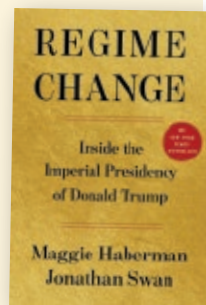
All the Best

Print

Regime Change: Inside the Imperial Presidency of Donald Trump

Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan

What’s left to say? Donald Trump has engaged in self-dealing, bullying tactics, misdirection, favoritism, revenge and vindictiveness. He is a president like no other, trashing political norms as easily as he tore down the East Wing of the White House for an absurdly oversized ballroom. We knew all that. But New York Times reporters Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan uncovered important new material that demonstrates how, in a second term, Trump considers himself unbounded, above the law and determined to stake his claim on history. The question raised by this important book is not whether Trump will leave a mark but whether it ever can be erased. **Simon & Schuster, \$34**



Music

Carry the Light

Peter Frampton

Peter Frampton, struggling with a degenerative muscular disease called inclusion body myositis, has not released an album of original tunes since 2010. But “Carry the Light,” coproduced with Frampton’s son, Julian, shows that the virtuoso guitarist and revered songwriter has lost none of his creative edge. More than in the past, Frampton, 76, focuses on social issues – war, authoritarianism, climate change – but it is his melodic genius and musicianship that assure the legacy of a brave and resilient artist undiminished by age or infirmity. **Universal Music Enterprises (UME), \$13.98**



Video/Streaming

Life, Larry and the Pursuit of Unhappiness:

An Almost History of America

Larry David, Jeff Schaffer, creators

What happens when you team high achievers like Michelle and Barack Obama with the impossibly irreverent comedian Larry David on occasion of the nation’s 250th birthday? The result is a zany, seven-episode breeze through U.S. history with David posing as a number of American icons – Alexander Graham Bell, Merriwether Lewis (the Northwest Passage guy), astronaut Buzz Aldrin – and outspoken, ironic tour guide. (As a colonist during the Revolution, David, star of “Curb Your Enthusiasm” HBO series, suggests the Declaration of Independence outlaw sharing dessert, stroking a beard or squeezing under someone else’s umbrella.) Wacko, for sure, and a departure from the serious material usually turned out by the Obamas’ Higher Ground Productions but suitable for a moment when, given the gang running things in Washington, all you can do is laugh. **Streaming on HBO Max.**

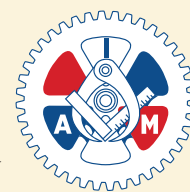


Internet

IAM Union News

goiam.org/news/

IAM Union, the IAM/PPPWU’s new merger partner, is a sophisticated labor organization that understands the importance of outreach and communication with its 600,000 members. Based at union headquarters in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, a large staff of writers and video producers keeps the information flowing. One of the team’s most impressive products is IAM’s bright and buzzy newsletter that provides up-to-date information on a varied range of subjects from heat risks in the workplace to a charity motorcycle ride – important material, nicely presented and, for IAM/PPPWU members, a reminder of why alliance with IAM Union was the right choice.





‘Put American People First’

continued from PAGE 1

we’re encouraging our own members to run for office. Because there is no better way to have a voice in the halls of power than to be that voice ourselves.”

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro joined the call for political awareness and a motivated electorate.

The IAM/PPPWU leader urged members to stay informed on vital labor issues – workplace safety, bargaining rights, the impact of technology – and said “in a spirit of solidarity and common purpose” the IAM/PPPWU will aid IAM state councils in voter turnout efforts.

“There is a lot on the line this November and we cannot be bystanders,” Castro said. “This White House and its enablers on Capitol Hill have done nothing for working people after promising the world.”

Tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump and the economic disruption of a questionable “war of choice” in Iran have hit consumers hard in the grocery aisles and at the gas pump, Castro said. “We have to elect worker-friendly candidates who put the American people first and not the interests of Big Tech billionaires and Washington insiders.”

Democratic strategists told the Washington Post that union voters could be decisive in as many as 10 House races. The paper said that while many union members have soured on President Donald Trump they also want Democrats to “fight harder on economic issues” for working-class Americans.

In response, Democrats are “trying to pick up disenchanted union voters by vowing to strengthen unions, tax the wealthy and bring down costs,” the Post said.

At a speech to steelworkers in Pennsylvania, House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries said the stakes were high for working-class families in November.

“America cannot afford two more years of a MAGA Republican Congress,” Jeffries said. “As House Democrats, we will build an economy that works for everyday Americans and drive down the high cost of living in every possible area because life is too expensive.”

Jeffries met over the summer with labor leaders in upstate New York as part of a campaign to elect more worker-friendly candidates. Joining the group was Mike Stafford, president of IAM/PPPWU Local 503-M, Rochester, who said the effort was essential.

“The way I look at this is that unions can be working as hard as we want, but it’s not going to matter if labor doesn’t have the support of those in power,” said Stafford who is also leader of the Henrietta Democratic Committee in Henrietta, New York. (See Local Stops, Page 11.)

Among the most pressing concerns for union officials is the rapid advance of artificial intelligence and its impact on the workplace.

“...if you see what’s already happening to jobs and what AI is already displacing, and multiply that times infinity, that’s going to create a lot of harm and a lot of disruption,” AFL-CIO leader Shuler said on the public radio show, “Marketplace.”

The Washington Post reported that AI worries are widespread.

“Voters are torn between optimism and fear about AI, polls and other evidence show, and the technology is now fused with long-standing electoral issues such as the economy and the cost of living, corporate power and the future prospects of working Americans,” a Post story said.

Shuler said under the proper conditions AI could have positive effects – but labor must be involved in setting the rules.

“We want to be on the cutting edge,” she said. “We want to be working with the firms that share our values to make sure that we’re charting the course responsibly. But at the same time, if we have companies who are going to be reckless and irresponsible, we’re going to fight them.”

Consistent with Shuler’s position, the AFL-CIO at its June convention passed a resolution vowing to “take on the billionaires and tech CEOs” and protect workers against the uncontrolled advance of artificial intelligence.

The United States economy must put “workers and our unions at the center” and benefit “working people from start to finish,” the AFL-CIO said – a message that signaled an “amazing” display of “positive unionism,” according to IAM/PPPWU international representative Jim Longerbone, who attended the convention with IAM/PPPWU Mountain Region General Board member Marty Hallberg.

But in order to give workers an edge in matters of technology and government policy, said IAM/PPPWU President Castro, union members must be informed and engaged in the political system.

“Across the country, we can make a difference in midterm elections,” he said. “If we want working class policies, we have to vote for working class candidates and defeat those who put power and privilege ahead of the American people.” ■

Candidates Motivated by Principles of Organized Labor

By Fred Bruning
The Communicator

It’s not exactly a case of if-you-can’t-beat-‘em-join-‘em but union members around the country are running for office in a determined effort to bring a badly needed working-class view to local, state and federal government.

Labor experts and activists say union candidates energize elections and meet the demands of dissatisfied voters.

“We found that candidates who come out of the union movement are exactly what many people in the country desperately crave – politicians who sound like them, who advocate for working people, and who provide solutions that actually work to fix our broken system,” said researchers for the nonprofit Center for Working-Class Politics in a piece published by the Guardian newspaper.

For these candidates, principles of organized labor are a motivating force.

“This is about unifying us, right?” said Taylor Rehmet, an IAM Union member elected earlier this year to the Texas state senate. “That’s a core tenet of being in a union. That’s something else my union taught me – that we all need to be unified and focus on what brings us together, not what divides us.”

Rehmet, an Air Force veteran and mechanic at Lockheed Martin in Fort Worth who has held local and state IAM Union leadership roles, drew national attention when he flipped a seat held by Republicans for 35 years despite being widely outspent by his opponent.

He drew support from across the political spectrum.

“It shows that they’re politically upset with both sides,” Rehmet said. “We have not had

continues on PAGE 16



Air Force veteran Taylor Rehmet, a local and state IAM Union leader, flipped a seat held by Republicans for 35 years when he was elected earlier this year to the Texas state senate.

An 'Inspiring' Alliance is Paying off Already

Three months after PPPWU members voted to merge with IAM Union, officials say the organizations are rapidly developing a close working relationship, sense of common purpose and commitment to mutual aid.

Leaders promise this is just the start.

"We're already working together, supporting each other and delivering for our members – and this is only the beginning," said IAM Union International President Brian Bryant.

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro said the cooperative spirit evident since June balloting overwhelmingly authorized an alliance with the 600,000-strong IAM Union has been "inspiring" and pointed toward a productive and rewarding future.

"President Bryant and IAM Union are proving daily what a wise choice our members made," Castro said. "The respect, friendship and support extended to our members, staff and officers could not have been more impressive. In every way, we are going forward – together."

Examples of a partnership that is paying off:

- IAM Union contributed generously to our own disaster relief effort on behalf of IAM/PPPWU members affected by devastating tornadoes that struck Wisconsin.
- Officials of the IAM Wood, Pulp and Paper Council joined IAM/PPPWU leaders in opposing a job-killing effort by the Securities and Exchange Commission to introduce a paperless investor notification system that would harm envelope-makers and union workers in that sector.
- IAM is lending added expertise to contract negotiations and putting companies on notice that IAM/PPPWU has a powerful partner at its side.
- Maggie Peck, executive director of The Members Retirement Plan, was greeted warmly at an IAM Union Midwest Territory meeting in St. Louis where she discussed the pension fund and advantages of TMRP enrollment.
- Via a video connection, Castro extended best wishes to contestants in the 7th annual "Chillin' & Grillin'" Competition, two-day event sponsored by Bryant that raises funds for Guide Dogs of America/Tender Loving Canines.
- IAM/PPPWU and IAM Union members working in the same shop say they are building strong relationships on personal and professional levels.
- The William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center in Hollywood, Maryland – known as the "W3" – is providing training opportunities for IAM/PPPWU members.

Among the most important aspects of the new alliance, Castro said, is the ability of IAM/PPPWU members to attend classes at the IAM's William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center, an impressive waterside facility in Hollywood, Maryland, known as the "W3." Over the summer, he said, four IAM/PPPWU members – Ray Prestage of District Council 4; John Eszovics, a staff representative at DC-3; Jim Lucken and Jeff Vogel, staff representatives at DC-1 spent a week at a W3 leadership program. "This is a great opportunity for our members to learn and excel," Castro said.

Bryant said, after three months, all signs pointed to an enduring association between two proud and determined labor organizations.

"The early stages of bringing the IAM Union and IAM/PPPWU families together have shown the strength of this partnership," he said.

As part of the merger agreement, IAM Union is providing office space at its expansive



IAM UNION PHOTO

The IAM Union-PPPWU merger ratified in June by members has been an 'inspiring' winner for both organizations, said IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro, center, and IAM Union International President Brian Bryant, right, vowed 'this is only the beginning.' At a special convention in June, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler gave support to what is proving a powerful and productive alliance.



IAM/PPPWU PHOTO

Among the advantages of the IAM Union-PPPWU alliance are classes at the IAM's William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center in Hollywood, Maryland, known as the "W3." Over the summer, Ray Prestage, left, District Council 4; John Eszovics, second left, District Council 3; Jeff Vogel, second right, and Jim Lucken, far right, both of District Council 1, enrolled in a leadership program. Cathy Wallace of the W3 staff provided transportation.

international headquarters in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, and IAM/PPPWU is in the process of moving operations from its Silver Spring facility.

At one point, IAM's second-highest officer, General Secretary-Treasurer Dora Cervantes, helped mount a large wooden PPPWU clock on the wall.

"That's solidarity," said Castro.

INTEREST IN PENSION PLAN IS ANOTHER SIGN OF PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP

In a sign of rapidly advancing cooperation between merger partners, Maggie Peck, executive director of The Members Retirement Plan, spoke at IAM Union's Midwest Territory summer meeting to report on the "unique" pension fund that serves nearly 4,000 active PPPWU participants.

Result?

"There was huge interest and a lot of good, in-depth questions," said Peck, who addressed 120 IAM Union leaders in Hazelwood, Missouri. "But the overwhelming response was: 'When can we roll this out to our members?'"

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro said Peck's appearance at an IAM Union event underscored the collaborative spirit evident following a merger vote in June by PPPWU members. "IAM Union is there for us and we are always ready to return the favor with support, information and expertise," he said.

Supervised by IAM/PPPWU trustees, The Members Retirement Plan (TMRP) allows members to set aside as much as \$7,000 annually in a fund that provides lifetime payments. Members enroll through local unions. Employers do not contribute but agree to deduct money from paychecks and transfer receipts to the fund.

Peck told the IAM Union audience – including IAM Union International President Brian Bryant and General Secretary-Treasurer Dora Cervantes – that



ROSS OLSON/IAM UNION

Maggie Peck, TMRP executive director, provided information on the retirement plan at a Midwest Territory meeting of IAM Union. 'Huge interest, great questions,' said Peck.

TMRP continues to grow and is the only remaining "supplemental pension" plan of its kind in the country.

"That's what makes us unique," she said.

Peck attributed the plan's continued success to dedicated members of the board of trustees who have "worked hard over the years to provide this benefit for members."

IAM Union officials said Peck's presentation – others are expected before year's end – was an encouraging indication of teamwork between merger partners.

"Introducing TMRP and the retirement security it can provide to many IAM members is a great example of what this partnership means in practice," said IAM Union Midwest Territory General Vice President Sam Cicinelli. "We're excited to continue learning from one another, sharing resources and finding new ways to build power and opportunity for our membership."

Bryant also hailed Peck's address and the unity her visit represented.

"Maggie Peck brought important information in her Midwest Territory presentation – another sign of how quickly IAM Union and PPPWU are building a productive relationship of mutual cooperation," Bryant said.

Peck said she was happy to be part of the process.

"That's what unions do," she said. "We help and look out for each other."

America's Well-Being Risked by Washington 'Follies'

The bill is coming due for President Donald J. Trump's economy and all America will be paying it.

Increased inflation, reckless government borrowing and looming threats to Social Security are the calamitous results of the Trump Administration's chaotic economic policy.

The most recent example of this bureaucratic dysfunction is Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's heavy-handed bond market interventions.

Bessent announced in August a bond buyback program that was supposed to lower the federal government's borrowing costs and decrease inflationary pressures.

In combination with aggressive tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump and extravagant government spending, Bessent's bond market follies have created persistent, structural inflation and a staggering \$40 trillion in national debt – conditions that threaten the well-being of all Americans and especially the working class.

Wall Street investors quickly shrugged off the Bessent maneuvers and pushed the 30-year Treasury yield back past 5.27 percent as massive government borrowing outpaced market demand. The 10-year is approaching 5 percent. Both are likely to go higher.

Desperate short-term fixes like Bessent's distort market



signals and conflict with Federal Reserve goals for a stable economy. They will raise investor fears of deeper financial instability and unpredictability.

President Trump – ever the real estate promoter – is frantic to keep interest rates down at all costs. These rates have a direct effect on his personal investments.

Other tactics used by the President have included loudly bullying the Federal Reserve and threatening criminal prosecution to force the agency to lower short-term interest rates.

None of these malicious efforts have succeeded.

Bad government policies, whether motivated by political concerns or personal interest, can have immediate, disastrous consequences.

Attempts to manipulate markets never work over the longer term because fundamental factors drive the broader economy. Short-term policy initiatives cannot overcome economic realities for any extended period.

Treasury Secretary Bessent's irresponsible financial engineering goes along with other questionable policies – including some that have opened the door to crypto currency scams, insider stock trading and shady foreign real estate deals.

Most mainstream economists are appalled.

Experts rightly warn that mixing heavy market manipulation with broad trade barriers fuels structural inflation and weakens confidence in U.S. fiscal management.

At the same time, war in Iran is hiking fuel costs and adding to inflation.

That pressure – plus a shaky government bond market – will increase the cost of borrowing and make it more difficult to resolve Social Security funding problems. The system is predicted to become insolvent in 2032.

If Social Security is not fixed, benefits could be cut \$500 a month or more affecting 62 million Americans.

What's needed is government economic policy that addresses the needs of all Americans, not a favored few. This requires a long-term, coherent strategy – something in which the Trump Administration shows no interest. ■

George M. Kraw is a benefits lawyer in Silicon Valley and was a labor representative to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation Advisory Committee from 2002-2005.

Unions, Industry Slam 'Paperless' Scheme

IAM/PPPWU and IAM Union officials are joining industry and labor leaders demanding that the Securities and Exchange Commission withdraw a proposal to end paper notifications in favor of a paperless "e-delivery" system that leaders say would harm envelope manufacturers and jeopardize union jobs.

The SEC said a digital notification arrangement would "make information more readily accessible and useful for investors" and provide savings in paper, printing and postage costs but labor and industry representatives reject the claim and say hard copy notifications are the most secure and efficient.

"This proposal is an attack on the paper industry and its workers, including many in the IAM/PPPWU and those represented by our merger partner, IAM Union," said Israel Castro, IAM/PPPWU president. "It is a needless and counter-productive move intended to please big banks, Wall Street and powerful financial institutions."

He pointed out that investors already have the option of choosing e-delivery over notifications delivered by mail. "If the SEC goes forward with its paperless proposal, American investors will be denied that option," Castro said.

Another concern, Castro said, is that many investors are older and unfamiliar with computer-based communications. "Those people will be disenfranchised and this,



alone, is reason to abandon a plan that mainly serves the greed of big banks and financial institutions," he said.

In order to coordinate strategy, Castro has consulted officials of the IAM Union Woodworkers Department – a division that covers the wood, pulp and paper industries – and said talks were productive. "The IAM Woodworkers group has been a great ally," he said.

Industry leaders also are pushing back against the SEC proposal.

Mark S. Hiltwein, chief financial officer of Cenveo Worldwide Limited, a major envelope manufacturer, told Castro in a letter that a paperless SEC system "would destroy a significant amount of demand for printed products and would likely result in loss of workforce."

A document accompanying Hiltwein's letter pointed to research showing 80 percent of Americans favor a choice between electronic and paper delivery and 65 percent say they fear personal information stored electronically is increasingly vulnerable to criminal activity.

"We are going to fight this ill-advised SEC proposal," Castro vowed. "It is bad for unions, workers and industry. It does not serve the public interest. The SEC should acknowledge it's a foolish idea and keep a system that gives investors a choice." ■



IT COUNTS WHERE YOUR CARD IS MADE

With holiday greeting cards already on the shelves, union leaders are urging members to check where the items were made and buy products manufactured domestically – an especially important concern for workers in the paper and print industries.

"There is no need to settle for foreign merchandise," said IAM/PPPWU President Emeritus George Tedeschi. "Shoppers in the United States and Canada should support union workers and companies."

The AFL-CIO made a similar appeal.

Supporting domestic manufacturers is a way to recognize "the hard work and craftsmanship" of their employees and amounts to "an important act of solidarity," the labor federation said.

Tedeschi said with little effort, shoppers can have an impact.

"It only takes a moment to look at the back of a card to see where it's made," he said. "But that simple act, multiplied thousands of times, can make a difference. As members of the IAM/PPPWU, we should do all we can to keep our paper and print industries secure and prosperous."

CUBBISON CONTRACT AFTER NEARLY DECADE OF BATTLE

The hard-fought struggle lasted nine years at Cubbison Co. but IAM/PPPWU members stood tough and recently ratified a contract that includes a significant boost in benefits and pay.

"I am very proud of this membership," said IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro. "This contract win is a direct result of the membership holding strong and showing solidarity."

Castro said Local 25-M workers at the Cubbison metal label printing plant outside Youngstown, Ohio, should serve as a model for union members nationwide. "When members stand strong, members win."

Leaders at District Council 3 saluted the resolve of members and assistance of the IAM/PPPWU international union.

"We are extremely proud of everyone for staying the course," said Dean Richardson, DC-3 president.

A contract agreement was reached three months after the courts ordered the company back to the table. Leaders credited attorney Matt Watts and the union's legal team for their success.

Richardson also applauded chief shop steward Matt White for particularly valuable service. "Matt represented the membership very well and maintained composure in a very stressful negotiating atmosphere."

The lengthy contract ordeal involved a number of legal battles and an NLRB ruling that found the company in violation of more than 20 counts of federal labor law, including bad faith bargaining.

"It's hard when the justice system goes as slowly as it does," said recently retired international representative Chris Hancock, who served as the lead negotiator.

Ultimately Cubbison employees won "the largest wage increase they've ever received," Hancock said. The contract improved vacation benefits and provided a dues checkoff system.

"It was a tough situation to go through for everyone," Hancock said, adding that it was the longest campaign he had worked on during his 37 years with the union. "But it was one of the most worthwhile."



ADMORE WORKERS WIN 'BEST' WAGE PACKAGE

IAM/PPPWU members at Admore Folders in Macomb, Michigan, recently overwhelmingly ratified a contract that offered significant wage increases and the front-load of sick time hours.

Admore workers "received the best wage increase they've seen yet," said Linde Shaw, secretary-treasurer of District Council 3.

Widely recognized as the "original pocket folder company," Admore is a major manufacturer of presentation folders, school folders, and a special Halloween edition of folders each year. Admore also does digital and commercial printing.

The 43-member shop has been represented by the PPPWU and its predecessors since 1997.

The settlement came after only three days of contract talks. Shaw hailed the hard work of negotiating team members, Bryan Dominic, a steward; members Todd Nitzel, Maria Norman, Peyton Kruse; and Dean Richardson, president of DC-3 recently appointed to the IAM/PPPWU general board.

"A fair contract and good wages are earned when members stick together and know their worth," Shaw said. "I really want to thank all of them for their loyalty, solidarity and commitment to a stronger future together."



'NEXT YEAR, BRISKET,' CASTRO SAYS AFTER BBQ

The IAM Wood, Pulp and Paper Council's 7th annual Chillin' & Grillin' Barbeque Competition fundraiser for Guide Dogs of America and Tender Loving Canines wasn't held in someone's backyard – it was held in everyone's backyard.

The virtual event raised approximately \$20,000 for nonprofit organizations that provide guide dogs to the blind and visually impaired, and service dogs to veterans and autistic children.

Sponsored by IAM International President Brian Bryant, the electronic barbeque contest involves contestants submitting videos of specialties for rating by appearance and presentation.

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro, who attended the competition remotely, said he was impressed with the innovative format.

"They used to do a traditional barbeque each year but then covid hit," Castro said. "Instead of canceling, they did it virtually and just kept going that way. It was quite the event."

Bob Walls, director of the Wood, Pulp and Paper Council, invited Castro to attend so the IAM/PPPWU leader could experience the joy and fellowship of the yearly cook-off.

"It was a great event," Castro said, "I might even be grilling a brisket next year and try to get IAM/PPPWU members involved, as well."

Throughout its history, Castro said, the PPPWU and its predecessor unions have had "a strong sense of community involvement" with activities like the annual William Browning Golf Tournament supporting autism services and domestic violence programs.

Now, he said, "We can add guide and service dogs to the list."

For more information about the Guide Dogs of America and Tender Loving Canines, go to guidedogsofamerica.org.



Mike Stafford, third left, president of IAM/PPPWU Local 503, Rochester, joined House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, fourth left, and union officials to support worker-friendly candidates in midterm elections.

ROCHESTER LEADER JOINS FIGHT FOR LABOR-FRIENDLY CONGRESS

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and upstate Democratic Rep. Joe Morelle met recently in Rochester, New York, with local union officials – including IAM/PPPWU Local 503 President Mike Stafford – to build support for worker-friendly candidates running in next month's midterm elections.

"To achieve the most for union members, labor needs the support of those in power," said Stafford who also is leader of the Henrietta Democratic Committee in Henrietta, New York, outside Rochester.

More than 100 supporters from New York's 25th Congressional District showed up in July to hear Jeffries and Morelle, both strong union allies, speak about a grassroots organizing initiative called the "House Majority Project."

Stafford said he intends to take part in the campaign to flip seats from union opponents – most in the Republican Party – to labor-friendly representatives.

"We can't have government working against us," Stafford said. "We need it working with us in order for unions to be effective."

PHOTO COURTESY MIKE STAFFORD

Local Stops wants to hear from you. If your IAM/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.

Los líderes instan a votar para proteger a los trabajadores

Fred Bruning
The Communicator

Se acercan las elecciones de mitad de legislatura. Los obreros sindicados están preparados.

La AFL-CIO se compromete a movilizar a sus 16 millones de votantes afiliados, capacitar a 50,000 observadores «para defender los derechos de los trabajadores en las urnas» el 3 de noviembre y centrar la atención en el peligro que supone la inteligencia artificial no regulada y la amenaza que representa para los trabajadores.

Para los trabajadores estadounidenses, este es un momento peligroso, advierte la presidente de la AFL-CIO, Liz Shuler.

«...está en peligro todo aquello por lo que han organizado y por lo que han luchado los trabajadores», afirmó Shuler tras el 30o Congreso Constitucional de la AFL-CIO celebrado en Minneapolis. Sin embargo, Shuler prometió: «Juntos, uniremos a millones de trabajadores para reforzar el poder sindical, proteger y fortalecer nuestra democracia, y poner freno a la desenfundada codicia empresarial».

El presidente del Sindicato Internacional IAM, Brian Bryant, también se expresó en un tono de urgencia.

«Tocamos puertas», afirmó Bryant en un discurso pronunciado ante la American Federation of Teachers [Federación Estadounidense de Maestros]. «Llamamos por teléfono. Conversamos con nuestros miembros. Además, animamos a nuestros propios miembros a que se postulen para las elecciones. Porque no hay mejor manera de tener voz en los círculos del poder que ser nosotros mismos esa voz».

El presidente de la IAM/PPPWU, Israel Castro, se sumó al llamamiento a la concienciación política y a un electorado motivado.

El líder del IAM/PPPWU instó a los afiliados a mantenerse informados sobre cuestiones laborales fundamentales —la seguridad en el lugar de trabajo, los derechos de negociación colectiva y el impacto de la tecnología— y afirmó que, «con espíritu de solidaridad y un objetivo común», el IAM/PPPWU colaborará con los consejos estatales de la IAM en las iniciativas para fomentar la participación electoral.

«Hay mucho en juego este noviembre y no podemos quedarnos al margen», afirmó Castro. «Esta Casa Blanca y sus propiciadores en el Capitolio no han hecho nada por los trabajadores después de prometerles el oro y el moro».

Los aranceles impuestos por el presidente Donald Trump y las perturbaciones económicas derivadas de una cuestionable «guerra elegida» en Irán han afectado duramente a los consumidores en los pasillos de los supermercados y en las gasolineras, afirmó Castro.

«Tenemos que elegir a candidatos que defiendan a los trabajadores y que antepongan los intereses del pueblo estadounidense a los de los multimillonarios de las grandes empresas tecnológicas y a los de los círculos de poder de Washington».

Los estrategas demócratas declararon al Washington Post que los votantes afiliados a sindicatos podrían resultar decisivos en hasta 10 competencias de la Cámara de Representantes. El periódico señalaba que, aunque muchos afiliados sindicales se han desilusionado con el presidente Donald Trump, también quieren que los demócratas «luchen con

más ahínco en cuestiones económicas» en favor de la clase trabajadora estadounidense.

En respuesta a ello, los demócratas están «intentando ganarse a los votantes sindicalistas desilusionados prometiendo reforzar los sindicatos, gravar a los ricos y reducir los costes», según el Post.

En un discurso dirigido a los trabajadores siderúrgicos de Pensilvania, el líder de la minoría en la Cámara de Representantes, Hakeem Jeffries, afirmó que en noviembre había mucho en juego para las familias de clase trabajadora.

«Estados Unidos no puede permitirse dos años más de un Congreso republicano partidario de MAGA», afirmó Jeffries. «Como demócratas de la Cámara de Representantes, levantaremos una economía que beneficie a los estadounidenses de a pie y reduciremos el elevado costo de la vida en todos los ámbitos posibles, porque la vida es demasiado cara».

Una de las preocupaciones más acuciantes para los responsables sindicales es el rápido avance de la inteligencia artificial y su impacto en el ámbito laboral.

«...si observamos lo que ya ocurre con el empleo y lo que la inteligencia artificial ya sustituye, y multiplicamos eso por infinito, eso va a provocar mucho daño y mucha perturbación», afirmó Shuler, líder de la AFL-CIO, en el programa de radio público «Marketplace».

El Washington Post informó que la preocupación por la inteligencia artificial está muy extendida.

«Las encuestas y otros datos muestran que los votantes se debaten entre el optimismo y el miedo respecto a la

inteligencia artificial, y esta tecnología se ha entrelazado ahora con cuestiones electorales de larga data, como la economía y el costo de la vida, el poder corporativo y las perspectivas de futuro de los trabajadores estadounidenses», señalaba un artículo del Post.

Shuler afirmó que, en las condiciones adecuadas, la inteligencia artificial podría tener efectos positivos, pero que los trabajadores deben participar en establecer las reglas.

«Queremos estar a la vanguardia», afirmó. «Queremos colaborar con las empresas que compartan nuestros valores para asegurarnos de que trazamos el rumbo de forma responsable». Pero al mismo tiempo, si hay empresas que actúan de forma imprudente e irresponsable, lucharemos contra ellas».

En consonancia con la postura de Shuler, la AFL-CIO aprobó, en su congreso celebrado en junio, una resolución en la que se comprometía a «enfrentarse a los multimillonarios y a los directores ejecutivos de las empresas tecnológicas» y a proteger a los trabajadores frente al avance descontrolado de la inteligencia artificial.

La economía de Estados Unidos debe «poner a los trabajadores y a nuestros sindicatos en el centro» y beneficiar a «la clase trabajadora de principio a fin», afirmó la AFL-CIO, un mensaje que supuso una «asombrosa» muestra de «sindicalismo positivo», según el representante internacional de la IAM/PPPWU, Jim Longerbone, quien asistió al congreso junto con Marty Hallberg, miembro de la Junta General de la Región de las Montañas de la IAM/PPPWU.

AFTER MINNEAPOLIS ICE ACTIONS, A CALL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

U.S. immigration agents swarmed into Minneapolis earlier this year using tactics that led to widespread protests – many organized by labor groups – and the killing of two demonstrators, poet Renée Good and VA nurse Alex Pretti, by government agents.

Now authorities are investigating – not the deaths of ordinary citizens and conduct of federal officers but organizations that resisted what many activists viewed as a government “occupation.”

A New York Times report showed that Trump administration’s Homeland Security Department looked at the financial records of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

In other action, the U.S. attorney’s office in Minnesota claimed – unsuccessfully – that the AFL-CIO was part of an anti-government “conspiracy,” according to the Times,

While a number of groups, including organized labor, helped rally opposition to the crackdown by ICE and border control agents, the Times noted that demonstrations were largely attended by local residents most of whom said they were pledged “to peaceful resistance.”

Following disclosures in the Times, Bernie Burnham, president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, denounced what he called the government’s “unhinged conspiracy” theories and targeting of labor organizations.

“Instead of holding federal agents accountable for shooting and killing Renée Good and our union brother Alex Pretti or addressing the dangerous and deadly conditions within immigration detention facilities, the Trump administration



continues to weaponize our federal government to intimidate our unions, our communities, and anyone who peacefully opposes their radical authoritarian agenda,” Burnham said.

Burnham said the AFL-CIO “stood in solidarity” with workers and immigrant union members and “will not let any attack distract us from continuing our work to improve the lives of working people.”

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.

Annual notice is hereby given of the policy on worker objections to agency fees which has been adopted by the General Board in response to the United States Supreme Court's 1988 decision in *Beck v. CWA*. The policy sets forth a formal procedure by which an agency fee payer may file an objection to the payment of that portion of his or her dues which is attributable to expenditures for activities which are not germane to collective bargaining. The policy applies only to agency fee payers who work in the United States. The policy applies to the International, district councils, and local unions.

Agency fee payers (also referred to as "financial core members") are those individuals covered by a union security agreement who meet their financial obligations by paying all dues, fees, and assessments, but elect not to become or remain actual members of the union. Agency fee payers may not exercise the rights of membership such as running for union office, electing union officers, ratifying contracts, and voting on strikes. They may be eligible to receive strike benefits if they are participants in the Emergency and Special Defense Fund, but they are not eligible to receive benefits from the Graphic Communications Benevolent Trust Fund whose benefits are for members only.

Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2026

2. Objectors will be given an explanation of the basis for the fee charged to them. That explanation will include a more detailed list of categories of expenditures deemed to be “chargeable” and those deemed to be “nonchargeable” and the accountants’ report showing the International’s expenditures on which the fee is based. Objectors will have the option of appealing the union’s calculation of the fee, and a portion of the objector’s fee shall be held in escrow while he or she pursues that appeal. Details on the method of making such a challenge and the rights accorded to those who do so will be provided to objectors with the explanation of the fees calculation.

Objections should be sent to the attention of the Agency Fee Administrator, Office of the Secretary-Treasurer, Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America, 12301 Old Columbia Pike, Suite 310, Silver Spring, MD 20904-1637. The objection should be signed and contain the objector's current home address, place of employment, and district council and/or local union number. Copies of the full text of the procedures for worker objections to agency fees are available upon request from the Agency Fee Administrator.



FOCUSJOURN VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

Labor Demanding an AI ‘Roadmap’

What is the future of work – and workers – in an economy increasingly tied to artificial intelligence?

The question is elusive but urgent, says the non-profit Economic Policy Institute and 40 allied organizations calling on Congress to protect workers in a rapidly changing technological environment.

EPI and its labor-friendly allies warned in a letter to Capitol Hill that “without appropriate guardrails” artificial intelligence may jeopardize workers’ rights, prompt workplace discrimination, endanger privacy and “dramatically impact the economic stability of working families.”

Pro-labor advocates noted that little progress has been made on a “roadmap” released two years ago by the bi-partisan Senate AI Working Group. “...America’s workers cannot afford to wait,” the letter said.

While endorsing the idea of AI investments, the working group’s “roadmap” called for extensive retraining programs and guarantees that consumer protection and civil rights laws will apply in cases related to artificial intelligence.

Similar concerns were raised at a three-day AI summit hosted by the IAM Air Transport Territory representing more than 100,000 workers in the air transport sector.

“As technology continues to reshape our industries, it is critical that our union stays ahead of the curve,” said IAM Air Transport Territory General Vice President Richie Johnsen.

Polling shows the public opinion strongly in favor of AI precautions, EPI and the other groups said. It is essential, they added, that Congress provide a “baseline of protection for people across the country, with a core focus on workers’ rights and livelihoods.”

Making AI concerns more critical, the letter said, are Trump administration policies that favor an unregulated AI environment and “prioritize corporate capture over public good.”

The worry is real, said IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro.

“Artificial intelligence is here to stay and can prove a great benefit in many situations,” Castro said. “But we need sensible safeguards on AI applications – especially with this White House – and join others calling for Congress to protect the American worker.”

Spending a Bundle to Stop Unions

Fighting unionization is a major priority for big business – and an expensive one.

Employers spend \$1.7 billion a year on consultants and legal advice in an effort to block organizing efforts, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

“These consultants work to prevent a union election from taking place – and if that fails, to ensure that workers vote against the union and then stall negotiations over a first collective bargaining agreement,” an EPI Report said.

Prominent law firms have generated enormous revenue from applying anti-union tactics at major employers including Amazon, Starbucks, Trader Joe’s with “undeniable impact on workers’ ability to organize and bargain collectively.”

How to even the odds? Demand elected officials pass legislation – like the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act – to safeguard unions and collective bargaining. “This is critical to the health of our economy and to ensuring that workers receive a fair share of the profits they help produce,” EPI said.



IAM Backs Jackson in Crucial Race

Control of the U.S. Senate could be decided in Maine where Troy Jackson, a fifth-generation logger endorsed by the state councils of IAM Union and the AFL-CIO seeks to unseat five-term GOP incumbent Susan Collins.

“Our Maine state council is proud to endorse Troy because we know he’ll always put working people ahead of corporate special interests and never stop fighting for the men and women who keep our state moving,” said IAM Union Maine State Council President Anthony Leeman.

Jackson, who served in the Maine Senate for 20 years, six as senate president, gained the Democratic nomination after the previous candidate, Graham Platner, left the race amid an allegation of sexual assault – which he denied – and reports of troubling behavior.

“Troy has a stellar record of legislative accomplishments including strengthening collective bargaining rights, winning free school lunches, making childcare more affordable, taking on big Pharma and lots more,” said a statement by the Maine AFL-CIO.

Describing himself as a “lifelong fighter for organized labor,” Jackson, a Democrat, helped lead a 1998 blockade along the Maine border to protest unfair trade policies that put Maine loggers at a disadvantage – an effort that launched Jackson’s political career.

“Troy Jackson knows firsthand what it means to work hard for a living and fight for a better future for working families,” said IAM Union International President Brian Bryant. “Throughout his career, he has stood shoulder to shoulder with union members and working people, never backing down from a challenge when workers’ rights were on the line.”

Though Collins is viewed as a daunting opponent, polls show the race tight – and crucial to Democratic hopes of taking control of the Senate. “As Maine goes, so may go the Senate,” said an online report by PBS: (See related story, Page 8)



Straight Talk from the ‘Storytellers’

National Park Rangers have a love of the land – and U.S. history.

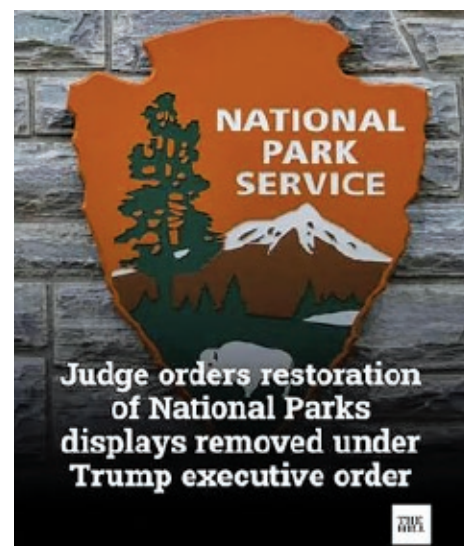
That puts them at odds with an executive order issued by President Donald Trump demanding that national park signage eliminate references to sensitive material – regarding slavery and climate change, for instance – that, Trump says, “inappropriately disparage Americans.”

The Labor Force, a worker advocacy group, is urging support for rangers who joined a lawsuit challenging Trump’s edict. They prevailed in court and the White House appealed.

Park rangers – many seeking to organize and some already members of IAM Union – “are America’s storytellers,” one ranger told The Labor Force. “...it’s a big part of our work on behalf of the people. And when we unionize, we are in a stronger position to tell and protect those stories.”

Trump also has alarmed rangers with deep cuts in the budget of the Bureau of Land Management and orders to scale back the size of two national monuments in Utah by 3 million acres.

“These changes go against what the majority of the public want and once we lose these lands they could be gone forever,” a ranger told The Labor Force.



DRIVE AWAY WITH **CAR RENTAL SAVINGS**

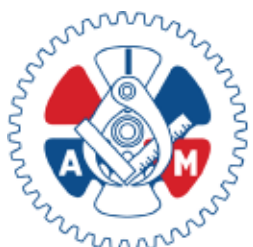


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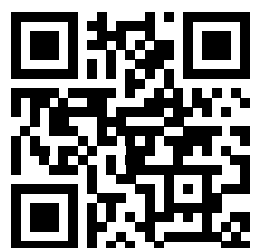
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'Working-Class Representation'

continued from PAGE 8

enough representation on either side, and we're going to have to find a way to meet the moment – and that's what I did."

IAM Union members are running for a variety of offices around the country – a commitment to civic duty hailed by IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro.

"Our new merger partners are devoted not only to advancing the labor movement but answering the call of public service," Castro said. "We are proud to be part of such a highly motivated, forward-thinking organization."

Castro recalled that Ralph Meers, a beloved PPPWU member who died last year at age 85, ran for the Georgia House of Representatives in 2018. Meers, a Democrat, lost but said he did not regret entering the race. "Duty dictates that I fight for our values and positive change," Meers said. "We have so much that needs to be done."

In races from school board to city council, from the state house to U.S. Congress, labor candidates are taking up that challenge.

They are bringing a working-class message to voters in New Jersey, for instance, where the state AFL-CIO says it is endorsing "dozens" of union members running for office.

Among them is Donald Norcross, an electrician and six-term member of the House of Representatives who served as an IBEW business agent and co-founded the Congressional Labor Caucus and bipartisan Building Trades Caucus.

Norcross sponsored – and helped push through – the Faster Labor Contracts Act intended to keep employers from stalling after a successful union drive. The measure awaits Senate action. "Solidarity forever, and it's time to get this bill over the finish line," Norcross said in comments posted on his Congressional website.

Also running for Congress in New Jersey is Analilia Mejia, a former union organizer who served in the Department of Labor under President Joe Biden and is seeking a full House term after winning a special election in April. "I began my career as a union

organizer because I believe working people deserve a seat at the table and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives," Mejia said in statement.

Union candidates are drawing attention around the country.

In Nebraska, Dan Osborn, a mechanic and former union leader known as a "prairie populist" is seeking to unseat incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Pete Ricketts. Running as an independent, Osborn, a Navy veteran, remains upbeat in a close race. "Every day, I roll up my sleeves and get to work, fixing what needs fixed," he says.

Bob Brooks, president of the Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association and former leader of Local 735 of the International Association of Fire Fighters, is running for Congress in the state's 7th Congressional District against GOP incumbent Ryan Mackenzie.

"This is a victory for every person across our community who has felt left behind, is tired of a broken Washington and is ready to send more working-class voices to Congress to fight for us," Brooks said after winning his primary in May.

Perhaps the highest profile race involving a union candidate is in Maine, where former IAM member Troy Jackson hopes to send GOP Sen. Susan Collins into retirement after five terms. (See Press Run, Page 14.)

A fifth-generation logger who served for six years as Maine Senate president, Jackson is backed by the state councils of IAM Union and AFL-CIO. He replaced Democrat Graham Platner, who dropped out of contention amid allegations of inappropriate behavior that Platner denied.

The battle against Collins is tight and could decide control of the Senate. "Power is never just given to working people," said Jackson. "We have to bond together and take it,"

It is vital that candidates bring "working-class representation" to government at all levels, said IAM Union International President Brian Bryant.

"They've built skills through representing all kinds of people as union stewards, standing up to injustice, and fighting for fairness," Bryant said. "We are excited to see more union members take their representation beyond our contracts and our union, to the public." ■

– IAM Union Communications Representative Angela Colaizzi contributed to this report.

Like Her Granddad, Lily, 11, Wants to Help Others

Lily Cottick was in a union march at age 1 and still has the spirit.

Granddaughter of former PPPWU president Steve Nobles, Lily, 11, is a devoted volunteer worker who – for the seventh time – assisted at the annual District Council 3 William Browning Golf Scramble held this year at the Golden Hawk golf course, Casco, Michigan.

The event raises funds for autism awareness and contributes to organizations aiding wounded veterans, victims of domestic abuse and individuals without enough food. Now in its 23rd year, the golf Scramble has raised more than \$200,000 for charity.

Lily, a seventh-grader at Jefferson Middle School in St. Clair Shores, Michigan, said she knows many people have health and economic difficulties. "I want to help and make things easier for them," she said.

Nobles, who retired last year as union president, said Lily's devotion to those less fortunate is gratifying. "I am immensely proud of her willingness to help," said Nobles, who recalled one-year-old Lily in a stroller at a 2015 Labor Day parade in Detroit.

IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro said Lily and her granddad represent the kind of community spirit that honors the labor movement and urged more members to become involved in local outreach.

"We want to encourage wonderful young people like Lily – and everyone in union families – to be active in their communities and generous to their neighbors," Castro said. "By benefiting those in need, we show our dedication to the common good, reach out to people facing adversity and gain respect. A win-win, all around." ■



Lily Cottick, 11, a devoted volunteer and granddaughter of former PPPWU President Steve Nobles, right, represents the kind of 'dedication to common good' characteristic of union families, said IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro, left.

EMPHASIZING THE VITAL ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUNG WORKERS

The IAM/Union Women's and Young Workers Conference drew 400 high-spirited union members to Chicago last month to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the IAM Women's Department and emphasize the vital role of women and young people in the labor movement. Many of the 400 conference attendees rallied at one point to demand government policies that benefit workers and not the powerful group of American oligarchs gaining influence in Washington. Representing the IAM/PPPWU at the conference were Brittany Ruiz and Marc Jackson, Local 415-S, Chicago; Lyndsay Drabenstot, Local 17-M, Indianapolis; Linde Shaw, secretary-treasurer of District Council 3; Maggie Peck, of District Council 4 who serves as executive director of the TMRP pension plan; IAM/PPPWU President Israel Castro and Secretary-Treasurer James Santangelo. 'The conference was a huge success and advanced a new generation of leaders who will build the labor movement of the future,' Castro said.

