

# Labor Lobbyists ... A Voice For Workers

**Submitted by: Tim Burga & Mandy Haseley**

The Ohio AFL-CIO monthly gatherings of the Labor Lobbyists have been very lively the first quarter of the year. All sectors of the trade union movement have been represented to discuss issues ranging from the state operating budget, collective bargaining, unemployment compensation, education reform, Buy American, prevailing wage, COBRA and health care, and of course, the Employee Free Choice Act.

At the meetings we have enjoyed the company of Rep. Matt Szollosi, House Speaker Pro Tempore, Kris Long, Governor Strickland's Legislative Director, Senator Joseph Schiavoni, Ranking Member, Insurance, Commerce and Labor Committee and staff from the office of Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafarro.

With the reversal of leadership at the Ohio House of Representatives, labor now has a platform with Democratic leadership to discuss our legislative priorities.

This was evident during the Transportation Budget bill (HB2) where the Ohio AFL-CIO successfully pushed for change in state law to tap into the federal recovery funds for extended benefits for unemployment and subsidies for COBRA health care coverage. House Transportation Committee



*From left to right: Donnie Blatt (USW), Ohio Senator Joseph Schiavoni, Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola and Central Ohio Labor Council President Dave Caldwell pose for a photo after the Labor Lobbyist meeting at the Ohio AFL-CIO offices in Columbus.*

Chairman, Peter Ujvagi, and Governor Strickland were very supportive of this effort which passed the General Assembly and signed into law.

Many of the legislative priorities that labor is working on will be presented at the Ohio AFL-CIO Legislative Conference in Columbus on April 22-23. To find out the latest legislative news and action, please go to [www.ohafclcio.org](http://www.ohafclcio.org) for the Ohio AFL-CIO "Capitol Report."

# Workers' Memorial Day Partial Calendar of Events



4/21

**Rose Marie Duffy Lodge, Lima**

Event begins at 6:30

More info contact: Tom Thompson: 419-227-6341 or George Shaffer: 419-424-1424

4/26

**Tuscarawas County**

Steps of Tuscarawas County Court House  
New Philadelphia

More info contact: Hall of Fame CLC: 330-453-3624

4-28

**Crawford / Richland CLC /AFL-CIO**

North Lake Park, Mansfield 5:00 P.M

More info contact: Ron Davis 419-522-9375

4-28

**Dayton Miami Valley CLC**

Worker's Memorial Day Service

More info contact: Wes Wells: 937-259-9814

4-28

**Stark County/Worker's Memorial Day Event**

Golden Lodge USW Hall/Canton

10:00 a.m.

More info contact: Bryon Bell 330-979-0017

4-28

**UAW Local 12 Hall**

Toledo, Ohio Event begins at 5:00

More info contact: Laura Harrison 419-206-5070

4-28

**Tri County Central Labor Council**

United Chemicals Workers Union/UFCW  
1655 W. Market Street/ Akron

More info contact: John Wagner 330-253-2111

5-2

**Central Ohio Labor Council**

"Spring Clean Up" of Worker Memorial Park/  
Columbus

More info contact: Central Labor Council  
614-257-1920

5-9

**Central Ohio Labor Council**

Worker's Memorial Day Dedication

More info contact: Walt Workman 614-257-1920

## Hall of Fame CLC Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Hall of Fame Central Labor Council is currently accepting applications for the 2009 Hall of Fame CLC AFL-CIO Scholarship.

This scholarship is open to Graduating High School Seniors whose Parents or Legal Guardians are union members within the CLC jurisdiction. There will be Four (4) \$500.00 scholarships awarded. The deadline for applications is 5/29/09.

For more information, please contact the CLC at 330-453-3624.

# Unions Team Up To Help Harvest for Hunger

**Submitted by: Laura Harrison & Kris Kreager**

The IBEW Local 245 hosted a cornhole tournament on February 28<sup>th</sup> to raise money for Harvest for Hunger, a regional food and fund drive to feed the hungry in Ohio.

Along with IBEW Local 245, OPEIU Local 19 and CWA Local 4319 also sponsored the event. Local 245 donated the union hall and Ken Erdmann helped to gather local support from other unions and local businesses. Local 19 donated several items for auction at the tournament. Local 4319 donated money to help with prizes and snacks. Other supporters for the event included Rick's Silver Moon Restaurant, Mr. Emblem, and the Carpenters Local 1138. Bay Shore Electrical Maintenance supplied music and a DJ. Congratulations to John Krontz

and Ken Schwartz, champions of the tournament! Over \$600 was raised for Harvest for Hunger.



*Ken Erdmann, IBEW 245; Jane Ridenour, OPEIU 19; Larry Tscherne, IBEW 245; Kris Kreager, Bay Shore Volunteer Committee; and John Runckel, CWA 4319*

# Red Cross Looks To Reach Out To Minority Populations

**Submitted by: Laura Harrison**

The Western Lake Erie Red Cross held a Community Blood Donation Meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup> to brainstorm about ideas on how to reach out to minority communities for blood donations.

The Western Lake Erie Region of the American Red Cross supplies 100% of the blood and blood products used in the 10 counties they serve in Ohio and in Monroe County, Michigan. The Red Cross reports that currently 2.5% of donors are African American, while the 2000 census reports 16.9% of the population in Lucas County is African American. The statistics for the Hispanic/Latino population are similar but not as dramatic. The donor base is 2% Hispanic/Latino while Lucas County's overall population is 4.5%.

According to Kathy Smith, Director of Donor Services, "These two groups are particularly important to the Red Cross as both tend to have a higher instance of type O blood than that of the general population. The standard mix for Type O blood is 45%. The African American population



averages 49% type O, while the Hispanic/Latino population averages 60% type O. Type O negative is of the utmost importance as in an emergency situation it can be transfused into patients of any blood type. Most hospitals order 50% type Os for patient use."

Mark Buford, Red Cross Labor Liaison got some great ideas from Theresa Willis, Director for Community Services for the Ohio AFL-CIO; Wayne Blanchard, UAW Regional Rep; Ray Wood, President of UAW Local 14; and Cenia Willis from CBTU. The group decided to find a spokesperson that can tap into the faith-based community, and to utilize local media outlets to encourage more African Americans and Latinos to give blood. A follow up meeting has been scheduled for May.

# GOOD JOBS. SAFE JOBS.

## Give Workers a Voice for a Change

Please join us for a dinner in recognition of Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have been injured, diseased or killed due to workplace hazards.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, April 21

Drinks available starting at 6:00 p.m.

Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Rose Marie Duffy Lodge at the  
Girl Scout's Woodhaven Program Center  
1870 West Robb Avenue  
Lima, Ohio 45805

**COST:** \$15.00 Single  
\$20.00 Couple

**PLEASE RSVP BY FRIDAY, APRIL 17** to  
Tom Thompson at 419-227-6341,  
e-mail [tom.thompson@unitedway.org](mailto:tom.thompson@unitedway.org)  
or  
George L. Shafer at 419-424-1424,  
e-mail [shafer48@woh.rr.com](mailto:shafer48@woh.rr.com)



*“The bell tolls for those whom we mourn;  
our efforts are for those whom  
we are privileged to serve.”*

IN OBSERVATION OF WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

# Personal Tragedy Turns To Community Good



**Story Submitted by: Mandy Haseley**  
**Photos Submitted by: JoAnn Johnntony**

Cindy Michael, with help from the Mahoning-Trumbull AFL-CIO and their Union Counselors, has found a way to turn personal tragedy into an opportunity to help children who are in need in her community.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, Michael hosted the third annual spaghetti dinner at the Steelworkers Hall in Niles, Ohio. The dinner was held in memory of her young grandsons Mason and Christian and their mother Lena who perished in a still unsolved case of a house fire set to cover up the stabbing death of Lena.

Through the dinner, they were able to raise \$6,000 dollars for children in the community. The money is used to help supply disadvantaged children with book bags filled with school supplies and financially distressed families provide clothing and shoes for their children.

Cindy Michael is staff representative at AFSCME Ohio Council 8.

Further information about Lena, Mason and Christian Memorial Fund is available at [www.lenamasonchristian.org](http://www.lenamasonchristian.org).



# Mortgage Help for Ohio Union Members

**Submitted by: Jennifer Wright Dorr, Union Plus**

Maria Yaeger of Lake County, OH, hopes you never have to experience what she went through when she almost lost her home last year. But this union bus driver, a member of Ohio Association of Public School Employees Local 145, is thankful to her union and her local leader for guiding her to the help she needed—help that is available to all Ohio union members.

“I know there are a lot of people out there just like I was,” she says, “so calm and professional on the job but just so torn up inside about what’s going on at home. Here’s what I have to say to them: don’t be embarrassed. I know it’s hard to ask for help, but help is out there when you call the Union Plus Save My Home Hotline.”

The Save My Home Hotline provides confidential, free consultation with expert counselors who can provide advice, help members find answers and develop an in-depth action plan to help union members keep their homes. It is provided by Union Plus in conjunction with Money Management International (MMI), the largest, full service, nonprofit credit counseling agency in the country.

Yaeger was a hard worker with a good union job for the Willoughby-Eastlake School District, but lately one thing had led to another in her life. When her brother died, she had taken in his two children. When her husband was out of work, their income

Mark Your Calendar



FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2009

THE OHIO AFL-CIO  
ANNUAL GOLF OUTING @  
WILLOW RUN in PATASKALA, OHIO

Registration @ 9:00 a.m.

Shot Gun Start @ 10:00 a.m.

Call Amanda Sabol at 614-224-8271 for details.

## 2009 Ohio AFL-CIO Legislative Conference

*April 22-23, 2009*



The Ohio AFL-CIO's Biennial Legislative Conference will be held April 22-23, 2009 at The Renaissance Hotel, 50 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Columbus, OH 43215.

The registration for the Conference will be \$75 per participant. Please make your check payable to the Ohio AFL-CIO and mail it with the form to the Ohio AFL-CIO attn: Legislative Conference, 395 E. Broad St., Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio 43215. For more information, to make your payment or to receive a registration form, please call Amanda Sabol at 614-224-8271 or [asabol@ohaficio.org](mailto:asabol@ohaficio.org)

We have made arrangements with the hotel to set aside a block of rooms for Wednesday night (4/22) for those who will be attending the Conference. Please make your hotel room reservations directly with the hotel by calling 800-417-1057. When making your reservation, identify yourself as being with the Ohio AFL-CIO to ensure the special rate of \$119 plus tax for a single or double. Parking will be \$10.00 for overnight valet and day of event parking, one vehicle per room, based upon availability. Please keep in mind that the **room cut-off date is March 30, 2009**. We suggest you make your hotel reservation as early as possible.

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# Update from the Alliance of Retired Americans

*Submitted by: Norm Wernet*

## ***Steelworker Retirees Pension Fight Gains Support from Canton City Council***

SOAR members in Canton demonstrated the advantage of an active and organized advocacy strategy for retirees and seniors in the past month. March 9<sup>th</sup> brought retired steelworkers to Canton City Council asking for support in their continuing struggle to gain the pensions they earned at Republic Technologies Inc. and other area employers who have gone bankrupt. The Canton council passed a resolution asking for an audit of the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation and its interactions with steelworker and other pensions.

Paul Santilli, President of the Ohio ARA affiliate in Canton, said, "All we're asking them to do is to abide by the ERISA Law of 1974 in honor and give these individuals a right to get their defined benefit plan that is covered by the PBGC and guaranteed by the PBGC. Paul explained that under the past administration of the PBGC "they are making their own rules. They're taking widow's pensions away. On average, a pension was \$12,000.....\$14,000. The PBGC dropped people down from that to \$200.00 a month."

The federal bankruptcy court rules, which can be changed by Congress, allow the use of worker and retiree compensation to be diverted to corporate executive retention bonuses. The loss of pension income has cost Canton and Stark County millions of dollars each year in tax revenue according to Santilli.

Organizing around this issue continues in Ohio with discussions in the Lorain County. The management employees of Delphi received a similar decision in March taking away retiree health benefits promised by the company. The OARA has been promoting revision of the corporate bankruptcy law and further pension protects as a way to remedy this injustice.

## ***Alliance for Senior Action Takes on Two Community Issues***

Liz Knauf the president of IUE/CWA Packard retirees and Melissa Long a community activist have taken the co-convener roles for the Alliance for Senior Action the OARA affiliate and Community Advocacy Network partnership of labor and community seniors



in Warren-Youngstown. Along with Ray Townsend, Mike Rubicz, Hank Sadinski, Liz and Melissa have engaged the ASA in planning a major community demonstration and rally for the middle class planned for May 2<sup>nd</sup> in downtown Warren. The UAW offered this opportunity to coalesce around the decline in worker and retiree living standards caused by the economic collapse and the loss of jobs. Retirees are mobilizing to promote a secure retirement as a way for younger workers to participate in the economy.

The Alliance for Senior Action leadership has struggled for several months with issues of senior services contracting and delivery and appropriate accountability in the relationship between a major non-profit provider and the Trumbull County Commission. In a series of meeting with the parties the ASA as a community advocacy network was able to promote dialogue and trust. The result was a full year service delivery contract approved by the Trumbull County Commission on Wednesday April 1. A county senior levy funds many of the services and supplements dollars from the Ohio Department of Aging through the office of the Area Agency on Aging and is up for renewal soon. The Alliance for Senior Action wanted the issues settled before the levy campaign.

## ***Medicare Privatization Remains on the Republican Agenda***

In a move to reclaim the issue of fiscal discipline after years of profligate out of control spending, the Republican House Congressional leadership under Ohio's John Boehner offered a budget resolution that reduced Medicare to a voucher system for those who would reach 65 in the year 2020 and after to purchase private insurance. The fact that in Ohio any serious pre-existing condition results in an inability to purchase insurance was lost on them. The Republican way to control healthcare cost is to deny access to healthcare. Is that right?



GEORGE TUCKER  
Executive Secretary



SALLY POWLESS  
Regional Director



MIKE HAUPRICHT  
Executive Secretary



DON CREE  
President



BILL LICHTENWALD  
President



LLOYD MAHAFFEY  
Director, Region 2-B

# WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Time: 5:00 P.M.

Location: UAW Local 12 Hall  
2300 Ashland Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio

*Food and Refreshments*



Preserve Safe Jobs

*“Give Workers A Voice  
For A Change”*

*Good Jobs ....*

*Safe Jobs*

## Workers Rally in New Philadelphia to Support Employee Free Choice Act

*Submitted by: Bryon M. Bell, Northeast Area Labor Federation*

Working families gathered Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup> on the steps of the Tuscarawas County Courthouse to demand passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. Community leaders and legislators joined workers in calling for labor law reform that would restore essential fairness to employees who want to organize in their workplace and form a union.

Peg Smith was part of the organizing committee to form a union with United Steelworkers Local 2737 last year at Meteor Sealing Systems in Dover. She said “Current law does not stop workers from being fired, coerced or forced to work different schedules during union organizing campaigns. Meteor continues to be profitable, and because our co-workers have a contract, we bargain for wages and benefits that support our families and our communities’ tax base.”

The Employee Free Choice Act would allow workers to choose to have a new union formed by either a majority sign-up process or an election. Under current law that choice is left to the company. “Most corporations choose to pursue elections because it provides them time to intimidate and mislead workers,” said Melissa Campbell of USW 2737. “Through captive audience meetings and letters to workers and their families, corporations overwhelm workers with false information and threats of job loss and plant closures.”

The Employee Free Choice Act would stiffen penalties for companies who break the law during organizing campaigns by intimidating, harassing, or unjustly terminating employees.

“Workers know what is in their best interests, not the management team. Workers who decide to form a union shouldn’t have to be pressured or feel like their jobs are in jeopardy, just because they are using their right to form a union,” said Rev. Archie Jackson of New Philadelphia. “As a matter of fairness, it makes sense that workers should have their say in how they form a union, and the process should be free from intimidation.”

Workers at Case Farms in Winesburg, a small Holmes County community, know the need for the Employee Free Choice Act all too well. In 2007 the 450 workers at the chicken processing facility voted by a margin of over two-to-one to form a union with the United Food and Commercial Workers.

To date the company has yet engage in sincere bargaining with the new union, and the workers were forced to strike last May – a strike that has continued for almost a year. “First they offered a two-cent raise,” said Tim Mullins, and



*Workers rally in support of the Employee Free Choice Act in New Philadelphia, OH.*

Organizer for UFCW, “then raised that, finally, to a nickel. They haven’t legitimately addressed any of our issues.”

Ken Brown, who has worked at the Case Farms plant for over twenty years, explained that the company’s refusal to bargain on financial issues is one of the main motivations for the strike. “I’m making \$8.10 an hour now, after 20 years at this place, same as the new guys that just got hired in.” He asks, “How are you supposed to feed a family on that?”

Another key issue for the UFCW members is safety. Brown relayed a particularly chilling example of Case Farms’ disregard for the health of their employees. “I’d had heart problems, high blood pressure, and a heart attack, and I was having chest pains on the job,” he said. “So, I went to the boss to ask to get help. He gave me two aspirins and told me to get back to work.”

A key provision of the Employee Free Choice Act would provide a clear path to a first contract for a newly organized union. Currently an employer may refuse to bargain fairly with workers in hopes that in time the union can be decertified, but once this legislation is passed into law, workers like those at Case Farms can count on reaching an agreement that respects their worth and rights in the workplace.

State Senator Joe Schiavoni of Canfield (D-33<sup>rd</sup> District) attended the rally to show his support of the workers at Case Farms and the Employee Free Choice Act. “For too many workers, forming a union is not a choice free from intimidation by corporations,” Schiavoni said. “Workers’ free choice to form a union is the best opportunity for working families to get ahead and strengthen Ohio’s economy and our national economy.”

During the rally, over 100 letters were collected that area workers had written demanding that Senator George Voinovich (R-Ohio) support the Employee Free Choice Act.

# Resource for Ohio Homeowners Helps You Save Your Home

Submitted by: *Jennifer Wright Dorr, Union Plus*



Millions of homeowners today are facing “payment shock” as adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) reset.

Homeowners often have fallen victim to predatory lending practices, lured into deals that are too good to be true. The recent surge in foreclosures means that many working families are being put out of their homes. Don't let it happen to you!

To help union members in these troubled times, the Union Plus Save My Home Hotline has been created to provide information and advice. Available to Ohio union members and their families, this new resource is serving a critical need in this uncertain mortgage marketplace.

“I know there are a lot of people out there just like I was,” says Ohio union member Maria Yaeger, “so calm and professional on the job but just so torn up inside about what’s going on at home. Here’s what I have to say to them: don’t be embarrassed. I know it’s hard to ask for help, but help is out there when you call the Union Plus Save My Home Hotline.”

Whether you are looking to stay ahead of the game, falling behind on your payments, or in foreclosure,

the Save My Home Hotline can help. Free, confidential telephone counseling is available 24 hours a day.

HUD-certified counselors from the nation’s largest nonprofit credit counseling service can help you establish a budget, set priorities and explain all the available strategies to stop foreclosure and help you keep your home. You’ll even receive a written Homekeeper Action Plan to follow. Landlords and lenders often are willing to be flexible about repayment of late or missing payments.

The counselors can also help BEFORE you get in trouble by working with you to develop a budget and action plan to manage your debt, including credit cards, student loans, tax debt, etc.

The Save My Home Hotline is dedicated to educating homeowners about their loans. Don’t wait until trouble comes knocking at your door.

To get your financial house in order, call the Save My Home Hotline at 1-866-490-5361. Visit [UnionPlus.org/SaveMyHome](http://UnionPlus.org/SaveMyHome) for more information.

In addition to a money-saving credit card, the Union Plus programs include free and discounted legal services, education services, discounted health services, a home buying program, travel and recreation discounts, and much more. For more information, visit [www.UnionPlus.org](http://www.UnionPlus.org).

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## Mortgage

Continued from page 5

was cut in half. A previous bout of financial troubles had left her with more than \$7,000 in attorney’s fees to pay. And now, despite all her efforts to stay current with her mortgage payments, she was worried they could be at risk of losing their home.

But one day she mentioned the situation to her local president Terry Kiser. Having been through a crisis of his own just a few years before, Kiser knew the toll it could take on a person’s finances and spirit. Kiser told her to call to the Union Plus Save My Home Hotline right away.

So Yaeger called. Hotline representatives listened closely to Yaeger as she explained her situation. They referred her to an organization that helped her restructure her loan, which reduced her mortgage payment by more than \$700 a month. “You have no idea how grateful and relieved I was to learn what they could do for me,” she says.

If you are worried about falling behind in your mortgage payments, or concerned that your adjusted rate mortgage payment will increase beyond your ability to pay it, call the Save My Home Hotline at **1-866-490-5361** any time day or night.

# Mansfield Postal Workers Union Members Protest Post Office Plan To Consolidate Jobs

**Submitted by: Terry Grant, President, Ohio Postal Workers Union**

For the past several months members from the Mansfield Local of the American Postal Workers Union has been active in their communities trying to rally support to keep the Postal Service from moving mail processing to Akron, Ohio. The proposed move is part of the USPS's plan to consolidate the sortation and transportation of mail into larger facilities.

Wendy Hammon, Mansfield president, feels the move would affect mail service to Mansfield and the sixty-three towns that currently receive their mail from the Mansfield plant. Under the proposal, called Area Mail Processing, mail from as far away as Sandusky, Fostoria, and Tiffin would be trucked to Mansfield, transferred, then trucked to Akron and processed. Then, that same mail would be transported back to Mansfield, transferred, and returned to those sixty-three towns. Postal Service management says this would provide a more efficient way to process the mail without affecting service or delivery standards.

The Local union has held informational pickets in Mansfield, Sandusky, Huron, Tiffin, Ashland and other communities. They have been able to gather more



*APWU members picket in Mansfield to stop consolidation of bulk mail.*

than 7200 names on petitions protesting the plan and more than a dozen cities councils have passed resolutions that support keeping the processing in Mansfield.

On April 7, 2009, a community meeting was held at Mansfield Senior High School. It is part of the Area Mail Processing Study that provides local residents the chance to voice their opinions about the proposal. Several hundred people attended the meeting and everyone that spoke opposes the plan to move the mail. Also, in attendance were aides from Congressman Jim Jordan, Robert Latta, and Senator Sherrod Brown. They all are calling for a Government Accounting Office investigation of this situation. The Mansfield Local has received support from other politicians including Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur and Congressman John Boccieri. Northern Ohio District Manager USPS, Don Marshall, said that the resident's comments would be given "proper consideration," however that is only part of the process.

The main concern of the members of the local union is the delay in service to all residents of the 448-49 zip code area. There is an expected job loss of 21 positions, but those workers would be relocated, not laid off. A final decision is expected by the end of April.



*APWU members picket in front of the Huron post office*

## Have A Story for the Newsletter?

Email your submissions and photos to Jeanette Mauk at [jmauk@ohafcio.org](mailto:jmauk@ohafcio.org) or call Jeanette at 614-224-8271. Stories can also be turned into the local ALF Coordinators.

# Rush Limbaugh does bosses' bidding on EFCA

*Submitted by: Rick Nagin*

CLEVELAND — As part of a growing grassroots movement, over 100 community and labor activists rallied for the Employee Free Choice Act in Cleveland Public Square March 30.

During the event, a flatbed truck with huge signs reading “Turn America Around 2009 – Employee Free Choice Act Equals Economic Recovery” circled the Square, a 20-foot high puppet of President Barack Obama, waved its arms in support of the bill. A street theater production exposed how union recognition elections conducted by the National Labor Relations Board are easily manipulated by companies to stop unionization.

The event, one of 44 “Resistance and Recovery” actions held nationwide by the Jobs With Justice coalition and its Student Action Labor Project during the week of March 27 – April 4, was also sponsored by the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor.

Support at the rally went beyond labor’s ranks as state officials, environmental and civil rights advocates and small business owners spoke about why they supported the worker rights bill.

“As someone who runs secret ballot elections for a living,” Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner said, “I can tell you we need the Employee Free Choice Act.” She denounced an editorial in the Columbus Dispatch that day falsely claiming the bill would take away the secret ballot. “Workers,” she said, “could still choose to have a secret ballot if the majority wants it, but employers could not make that decision for them.”

*The Columbus Dispatch* isn’t the only media outlet doing the corporate CEOs’ bidding. Right-wing extremist Rush Limbaugh on his radio show last month said if the bill passes, organizers would use “lead pipes” to coerce workers to sign union cards.

But unions play a key role in the economy and the environment, Mackenzie Bailey, regional representative of the Sierra Club, said. The environmental group strongly supports the bill because “workers are the first line of defense against pollution hazards and unsafe conditions. If workers

have union rights they won’t fear for their jobs if they call attention to these problems.”

She said the Employee Free Choice Act was a critical part of a “clean energy economy.”

Stanley Miller, president of the Cleveland NAACP and a former member of the communication workers union, said the NAACP “nationally and locally supports the Employee Free Choice Act” and “always finds itself fighting for workers’ rights.” He urged organized labor to work for maximum diversity in its membership.

The crowd cheered when it was announced the local NAACP would soon pass a resolution reaffirming support for the bill. Debbie Kline, director of Cleveland Jobs With Justice, announced the city councils of Cleveland and four suburbs had recently passed resolutions supporting the bill.



*“Obama” makes an appearance at the Employee Free Choice rally in Cleveland, OH. Photo courtesy of Cleveland Jobs with Justice.*