

Governor, Senate Democrats Stand Up For Ohio's Working Families

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

With Ohio facing an \$851 million biennial budget shortfall, Gov. Ted Strickland proposed and the Democratic-controlled House passed a measure (HB318) that balances the budget by delaying the state income tax cut for 2010. Upon initial proposal, Republican leadership cried their normal, although inaccurate, response, "We will not support a tax hike!"

"The Republicans are going to try and portray this as the Democrats raising taxes. But maybe it is just me, but temporarily delaying a tax cut is a far cry from raising taxes. My view is a raise in taxes means you pay more than you paid before. This delay does not do that," said House Speaker Pro Tempore Matt Szollosi in November at the Ohio AFL-CIO Labor Lobbyists meeting.

After weeks of indecision and partisan maneuvers, Senate Republicans are still preventing the General Assembly from finalizing a budget bill and are now seeking to include anti-worker provisions that have not been properly vetted, such as: 1) Reforms to construction competitive bidding, 2) Studies to privatize the Bureau of Workers Compensation and restructure State Government, and 3) Prison sentencing.

"The Senate Democrats have showed tremendous resolve and strength to not give into these anti-worker amendments that are being proposed by Senate Republican leadership," said Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff Tim Burga. "These proposals of the Republicans are just another attempt to attack labor and working Ohioans rather than focusing on the need to fund basic services and programs for Ohioans. Governor Strickland and the Democrats need to be commended for again standing up for Ohio's working families."

Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafaro, D-Hubbard, and Sen. Fred Strahorn, D-Dayton, said the entire Senate Democratic caucus have concerns with putting



Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafaro and Tim Burga led a discussion in June of this year with dozens of labor lobbyists to ensure labor's interests were being heard by the Senate Democrats.

construction reform in the bill to fix the budget. "It seems to me that the funding for education is being held hostage to somebody's desire to have construction reform," Cafaro said in a *Columbus Dispatch* article.

Speaker of the House Armond Budish put what the Strickland Administration has already done to help balance the budget into very succinct language. "Gov. Ted Strickland and the legislature have already shrunk state government by \$4 billion and have reduced the state work force by almost 5,000 employees. These cuts have reduced a variety of programs and services that you might utilize. State government is now at a size not seen since the Reagan years," Budish said in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* column earlier this year.

"We sent over a clean bill, and I would like to see a clean bill come out. Issues like construction reform and some of the other things that have been talked about are important. Construction reform has not been vetted and has not gone through the legislative process. To throw it in at the last minute in an unrelated bill would not be the right approach to take," Budish said in a recent *Columbus Dispatch* article.

At the time of publication, no resolve has been reached.

The Ohio AFL-CIO Recognizes Members and Their Family Members Who Serve In Our Military

The Ohio AFL-CIO is proud to honor our union Brothers and Sisters whom have loved ones serving in the United States military. Beginning with this month's edition we will recognize family members who sacrifice every day for our freedom in this great country. If you should have someone that you would like to honor, please submit a brief article (word document) and a picture of your honoree to Jeanette Mauk @ jmauk@ohafclcio.org

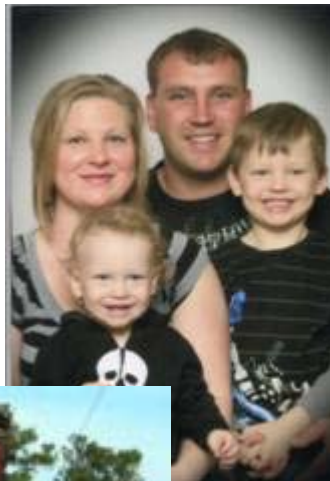
Staff Sergeant Joshua M. Kelley
2D MEB (COMM CO)
UNIT 73010
FPO AE 09510-3010

SSGT Kelley is a graduate of Elyria High School, was a 'poolie' during senior year and enlisted 1998. He is married to Chassidy Kelley, September 10th, 2001, the day before September 11th. Joshua is the father to Zeplyn Michael Kelley, 06/08/04, and Xander Andru Kelley, 01/29/08 and son of Michael W. Kelley (CWA Local 4302 - AT&T Brecksville), Ohio and Nancy Spirek, Havelock, North Carolina. SSGT Kelley is brother to Rachel D. Kelley, Westlake, Ohio, and Deborah A. Kelley, Havelock, North Carolina.

Josh has served two tours in Iraq and one special assignment while on one of two 'floats'. Obtained Staff Sergeant rank in December, 2007. He is currently serving as SNCOIC (Senior Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge) for 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, Brigade Headquarters Group, Communications Detachment (COMM DET, BHG, 2nd MEB), Helmand Province, Afghanistan. MOS is Radio Chief.



SSGT Joshua Kelley and his unit saying thank you to AT&T Brecksville for their Support Our Troops program. 9 boxes of donated items were sent to Josh's unit. Josh is the first on the right of the sign, on his right knee.



Questions About Veterans Bonuses? Here's Some Answers

Submitted by: James Kaster, Ohio Attorney Generals Office

With the passing of Issue 1 this past November, Attorney Richard Cordray wanted to make sure members and their families had the answers to the most common questions about the Veterans Bonus Amendment.

Who is eligible for these benefits?

Ohio veterans who served on active duty during the Persian Gulf War or during current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are eligible if they were residents of Ohio when they went on active duty and are residents when they file for the bonus.

What will the service bonus pay?

Veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan or the Persian Gulf will receive \$100 for each month of service up to a total of \$1,000. Veterans who served elsewhere during those conflicts will receive \$50 a month up to a total of \$500. Family members of those killed in action will receive \$5,000. These figures are in line with bonuses offered to veterans after World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam.

How much will the compensation cost?

The amendment authorizes \$200 million in bonds, and the estimated cost is \$106 million spread over 15 years.

Will service members who served in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti be eligible for the bonus?

No, the amendment is specific to the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

Will service members who served on ships, aircraft carriers, submarines etc. during the Afghanistan, Gulf or Iraq wars and in any of the countries listed above be eligible?

Any service member who has received the Southwest Asia Service Medal and any service member that the Department of Defense classifies as being deployed in Iraq and

Afghanistan would be eligible. But, those deployed on ships or elsewhere during Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti still would be ineligible for the bonus.

Do other states have similar programs?

Eight states have programs that are substantially similar to this amendment to the Ohio Constitution; Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Illinois, South Dakota, Minnesota (only for veterans of the first Gulf War), and North Dakota (only for members of the National Guard and Reserves).

Will all of the \$200 million in bonds go to veterans for bonuses or does that figure include administrative costs?

Administrative costs, as it was with all other bonuses, will be paid for through the bond funds. Unlike previous bonuses, however, the bond program will utilize current Department of Veterans Services HR, Legal, and IT staff, rather than hire all new staff. This will result in cost savings from previous bonuses.

What dates constitute Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq conflict service?

The Persian Gulf time period is any time between Aug. 2, 1990 and March 3, 1991. The Afghanistan time period is any time between Oct. 7, 2001 and the date determined by the president as the end of U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan. The Iraq time period is any time between March 19, 2003 and the date determined by the president as the end of U.S. military involvement in Iraq.

What if a veteran already received a bonus from another state?

That person is not eligible for a bonus payment in Ohio.

For more information about this Amendment or other issues regarding the Ohio Attorney General's office, please visit www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov or call (800) 282-0515.

Union Vets Join Together To Mobilize And Lead

Submitted by: Jeanette Mauk

In July 2008, the National AFL-CIO launched the Union Veterans Council and announced plans for state Union Veterans Councils in Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Virginia and West Virginia. Union activists in Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Oregon and Arizona are also interested in forming state councils or are planning union veteran-led events.

The Union Veterans Council Labor 2008 activities brought union veterans together on issues that matter most to veterans, our families and working men and women to make the Council a permanent fixture in the labor movement beyond the elections.

The Union Veterans Council includes representatives from 20 unions and labor organizations. It is chaired by Mark Ayers, President of the Building and Construction Trades Department and U.S. Navy veteran during the Vietnam War. American Federation of Government Employees Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox, and United American Nurses President Ann Converso serve as Co-Vice Chairs of the Council. Cox and Converso combined have over 50 years of service in the Veterans Administration.

Over 2 million union members are military veterans. Hundreds of thousands of retirees are veterans, and countless union families have relatives currently serving or

recently returned from military duty. The voices of union veterans and their families are powerful. When veterans speak, veterans and other union members listen.

Through our website, www.unionveterans.org, we have already identified over 4,600 e-activists who want to keep informed of Union Veterans Council events, and over 400 volunteer union veteran spokespeople.

Elements of the Union Veterans Council efforts include:

- Bringing together top union leaders who are also veterans to strategize and mobilize union veterans at all levels of the union movement.
- A television ad featuring Jim Wasser, Vietnam veteran and IBEW union member discussing how John McCain's agenda was wrong for working people;
- New Union Vets Council website with written and video testimony from union veterans;
- Building veteran-focused communications materials on the Working Families Toolkit;
- Union veterans leading walks, worksite visits and roundtable discussions talking to union members about key issues;
- Launching an e-activism campaign to union veterans;
- Letters to the editor campaigns.

On any given day, as many as 250,000 veterans (male and female) are living on the streets or in shelters, and perhaps twice as many experience homelessness at some point during the course of a year.

-- Department of Veterans Affairs

To learn more about the Union Veterans Council and how to participate in the Ohio Union Veterans Council, Contact Jeanette Mauk, Field Director, Ohio AFL-CIO at jmauk@ohafclcio.org or 614-224-8271 ext. 7144.

Delegates Get Trained To Keep Workers Safe On The Job

Submitted by: Amanda Sabol

Over 100 union delegates from all employment sectors gathered in Columbus for the Ohio AFL-CIO Safety Conference on November 17th and 18th. The two-day event covered topics ranging from Occupational Safety and Health Agency practices to H1N1 prevention.

Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff, Tim Burga welcomed the delegates and began the conference with a policy action item by having all of the delegates sign a thank you letter to House Commerce and Labor Chairman, Kenny Yuko, for introducing HR 58 that urges state agencies to use Project Labor Agreements in public construction projects. Burga also talked about HR 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, and stressed the importance of

union members submitting editorials to their local newspapers thanking their Congressperson for supporting the bill.

A panel made up of Bill Crooks, USW District 1 Health and Safety Advisor, Howie Eberts, OSHA Safety Expert, and Mark Adams, Workers' Compensation/ Personal Injury attorney went into detail discussing workplace injuries, violations, safety rules/regulations, inspections, enforcement and response. The Bureau of Workers' Compensation was well represented at the Conference and offered information about procedures involved in injured worker claims and disputes. Additionally, the value of

Conference

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community services was highlighted by a presentation from Tammy Simindinger and Jane Wiehe from the Cincinnati Red Cross.

During the panel discussion a question came from the floor by Greg Falstick, National Association of Letter Carriers member. Brother Falstick asked if OSHA ever inspected the postal service for violations. Eberts explained that yes, OSHA does inspect the postal service and that data on all worksite inspections are available online at www.osha.gov.

Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola offered key-note remarks at the Conference and started by saying, "as a son of a deep coal miner, I know the importance of safety." President Rugola told a personal story of his uncle who had been trapped in a southwest Pennsylvania mine and paralleled the story into not only the importance of safety regulations, but the importance of political engagement.

"We no longer have a coal company CEO at the helm of the federal Mine Safety Administration but a former coal miner. We are now seeing a

greater priority given to mine safety and OSHA and these needed improvements are made possible because of political change and by electing Barack Obama as President" Rugola said.

A special thanks to the Communications Workers of America and Peggy Griffith, Secretary, CWA 4302 for unwavering support and assistance in putting on the Conference.



Activists Picket in Front of Wendy's Corporate Headquarters

Submitted by: Amanda Sabol

After enjoying a positive working relationship with Wendy's for nearly three decades, BCTGM Local 57 New Bakery workers are fighting for everything they have bargained in the past with the new owners, the Wendy's/Arby's Group. Local 57 members in Zanesville, Ohio have produced the buns that are used in Wendy's restaurants across the United States.

Negotiators for Wendy's/Arby's Group are demanding unconscionable concessions that would render the union contract virtually meaningless. The concessions include: elimination of decent and affordable health care coverage, the elimination of the defined benefit pension plan, and the elimination of seniority rights. The company further proposes to eliminate five paid holidays and a week of vacation from the workers.

Despite the current economic downturn, the Wendy's/Arby's Group is very profitable company, with \$12 billion in system-wide sales, yet management is no longer honoring their workers' loyal years of service, hard work and outstanding performance record.

In front of the Wendy's corporate headquarters in Dublin, Ohio many trade unionists, including Walt Workman, Executive

Secretary of the Central Ohio CLC, and Pat Manzi, President, Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades joined with dozens of members of Baker's Local 57 at a demonstration in support of the local's fight for a fair contract.



State Representative Dan Stewart (L) joins the Grinch and picketers to demand justice for Wendy's employees.

"The Ohio AFL-CIO and workers across Ohio will unite in support of the bakery workers and this informational picket is the first step in reaching out to the public and consumers about the unfair treatment Wendy's is engaged in," said Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola in a press statement in support of the labor action.

Speakers included BCTGM Local 57 Business Manager Vester Newsome, Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff Tim Burga, and State Representative Dan Stewart (D-Col). Stewart rallied the crowd by

saying, "You remember the old Wendy's commercials that asked, 'Where's the beef?' Well, I'll tell you where the beef is. Wendy's is trying to take away your health care, they're trying to take away your pension, and they're trying to take away your seniority... I see that as a triple beef that we have with Wendy's!"

Burga added, "Restaurants like Wendy's are not hurting during this economic downturn, this is just another example of greed gone wild and what's wrong with corporate America. Organized labor in Ohio will not rest until Wendy's offers Local 57 the fair contract they deserve."

Senate Republicans Continue to Play Politics with State Budget

Submitted by: Tim Burga

Unless you're a Senate Republican the business of adopting a state budget is a serious matter. The Governor and the House of Representatives are taking the high road and putting the importance of balancing the state budget and continuing the vital services and programs that working families are entitled to ahead of politics. The House has adopted Governor Strickland's recommendation to freeze the fifth and final year of a state income tax decrease, which in effect will not raise anyone's taxes. This measure as contained in HB318 is the right approach to take and even business groups and Ohio's major newspapers are supporting this approach.



On the day the Senate Republicans had marked to pass its version of a bill, not only did they not show conviction to do the right thing by supporting HB318, they couldn't even come up with any agreed to proposal amongst themselves. So, what Ohioans are getting is more of the same blame game from Republicans and no leadership.

Senate Democrats, on the other hand have urged the Republicans to quit playing politics. Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafarro was very clear this week about what should happen in the Senate when she stated, "We remain united in support of HB318 as passed by the Ohio House of Representatives."

Senate Republicans are now saying they are going on Thanksgiving break and will take the issue up again sometime in December. On a matter such as this, where the right course of action is plain to see, Republicans in the Statehouse are going to have to accept the criticism they are getting for putting partisan politics ahead of the business of the people.

Township Firefighters Collective Bargaining Bill Clears Hurdle

Rep. Kenny Yuko, Chairman of the House Commerce and Labor Committee presided over a packed hearing room as a bill (HB271) to fix a loophole in the collective bargaining law for Township Firefighters was successfully voted out. Representatives Matt Patten (D-Strongsville) and Dan Stewart (D-Columbus), the primary sponsors of the bill, along with Chairman Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Heights), vowed to take action and move the bill to the full House before the end of the year.

Jim Carney, a full-time firefighter and paramedic with the Plain Township Fire Department and the director of

government affairs for the Ohio Association of Professional Firefighters (OAPFF), testified in support of the legislation. Brother Carney pointed to a loophole in current law which defines townships as public employers only when the township has an unincorporated population of greater than 5,000 according to the last federal census. He said that presumably, it was intended to allow small townships to opt out of collective bargaining, but it is now being used to deny collective bargaining rights to "relatively large townships" across the state. HB271 would correct this problem by looking at population served rather than unincorporated of the township.

Several other firefighters testified in support of the bill including Brian Gatley, president of the Norwich Township Professional Firefighters Local 1723 in Hilliard, who stated, "We are simply asking for the same rights that the majority of our counterparts currently have."

Speaking in favor of the bill and voting yes were Reps. Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Hts.), Matt Patten (D-Strongsville), Robert Hagan (D-Youngstown), Mark Schneider (D-Mentor), Dan Stewart (D-Columbus) and Edna Brown (D-Toledo). All of the Republicans on Committee voted no.

OAPFF President Mark Sanders offered special thanks to the Ohio AFL-CIO for their assistance and to Speaker Armond Budish and the Democratic caucus "for their continued support and for the first time passing out of Committee a stand alone pro firefighter collective bargaining bill."

Committee Urges State to Use Project Labor Agreements

House Resolution 58 sponsored by Kenny Yuko (D-Richmond Hts.) to encourage the state to use Project Labor Agreements on public building projects was successfully passed by the House Commerce and Labor Committee. A Project Labor Agreement (PLA) is a negotiated pre-hire contract for public or private sector construction projects. A PLA generally includes mutually agreed-to work and wage rules for the duration of the project, including deadlines, wages, costs, production incentives, and hiring.

The Ohio AFL-CIO detailed the advantages of using PLAs and urged support for the Resolution in a letter to the Committee that was included in the hearing record (link to letter). Rep. Mark Schneider (D-Mentor) moved to adopt the Resolution, which was seconded by Robert Hagan (D-Youngstown) and was supported by all six Democrats. All four of the Republicans on Committee voted against it and

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it's worth noting that Rep. Lynn Wachtmann (R-Napoleon) who voted "no" on the measure said this in another "job killing, anti-business legislation."

The Resolution is expected to go to the full House for a vote before the end of the year. The Ohio AFL-CIO would like to thank Chairman Yuko for sponsoring the measure and the Democrats on Committee who voted for it.

Senate Republicans Look at Privatizing the BWC

Senator Fred Strahorn (D- Dayton) said all that needed to be said about a Republican Resolution (SR85) to create a Task Force to look at privatizing the Bureau of Workers Compensation when he said, "this is an answer looking for a problem." The Senate Insurance, Commerce and Labor Committee, chaired by Steve Buehrer (R-Delta) ignored the logic in Senator Strahorn's remark and moved to pass the bill out of Committee. All four Democrats on Committee — Joe Schiavoni (D- Youngstown), Fred Strahorn, Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati) and Nina Turner (D- Cleveland) voted against the measure. Senator Jim Hughes (R- Columbus) was the lone Republican to vote against the measure. The Resolution passed 7-5 and is expected to head to the full Senate for a vote.

Labor Joins Community Groups To Rally For Healthcare Reform

Submitted by: Kellie Knott & Kenny Woolum

The Dayton AFL-CIO Labor Council and labor leaders joined forces with Doctors for America on Wednesday November 11, 2009 to fight against the anti-reformers, tea baggers and company, that held an event "Free Market Health Care Reform" at the Dayton Convention Center at 7 pm. The rally against this event began at 6pm at the Montgomery County Democratic Party Headquarters where community leaders gave inspiring words before the march to the convention center with their signs, posters, candles and flashlights.

Rally Speakers included: Dayton AFL-CIO Executive Director Wesley Wells, Rev. Dr. Charles S. Brown of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Montgomery County Commissioner Dan Foley, Organizing for America Volunteer Kriss Gang, Rev. Dr. Earl G. Harris of the Greater Allen AME Church, Doctors for America Drs. Gary LeRoy & Alonzo Patterson, Rev. Dr. Daryl Ward of Omega Baptist Church and more.

"We just don't have enough gas in the tank at the local level to help the people who are uninsured," said

When looking at the facts it is clear that some Republicans are more interested in sticking it to organized labor and public workers at the expense of the injured worker system. The business community at large is not pressing this issue and study after study has reported the overwhelming advantage of having a state-run, non-profit bureau.

Results of the most recent study published in the October 2009 Insurance Journal found "state funds, typically operating in a single state and driven less by the need to show a profit, also are effective at preventing losses, improving safety and workplaces and contributing to economic development in their state. The report was issued by Conning Research and Consulting.

Steve Mindzak, testified on behalf of the United Auto Workers in opposition to the resolution. He said improvements are ongoing at the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, including permanent reductions in premiums, as opposed to the periodic rebates given out under previous administrations. He said BWC had just begun to work on implementing recommendations of the Deloitte study, and said what the Ohio AFL-CIO has been saying, that it makes no sense to launch into another study without first allowing this most recent major state study to be digested.



Montgomery County Commissioner Dan Foley. "That is why we need a national system."

After the rally in front of the Convention Center, many of the attendees returned to the Democratic Party Headquarters to phone bank for health care reform.

Some of the sponsors of the Free Market Health Care Reform, were the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association, the Greater Dayton Chamber of Commerce, and the Montgomery County Medical Society presented a forum about how to solve the health care dilemma using community resources and free market principles.

Northwest Building Trades Boycotts Area Home Depot Stores

TOLEDO – The Northwest Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council, which represents over 10,000 construction trades workers in NW Ohio and SE Michigan, has instituted a BOYCOTT of all area Home Depot Stores. The dispute centers on the use of out of state, non-union workers on the 650,000 square foot Home Depot Distribution Center that is currently being built in Findlay, Ohio.



There are over 10,000 members of the Northwest Ohio Building Trades. We are carpenters, electricians, plumbers, sheet metal workers, roofers, cement masons, bricklayers, laborers, insulators, pipe fitters, iron workers, pretty much your main target demographic. The majority of trades have a four or five year apprenticeship, OSHA 10 training, and a drug test program. We take a lot of pride in doing quality jobs such as the Walgreens Distribution Center in Perrysburg, Ohio, on time and on budget. Collectively, our organizations own millions of Home Depot Stock in our pension plans. Unfortunately, our current unemployment is around thirty percent. It is our understanding that Home Depot received a forty-five percent tax credit from the State of Ohio and a sixty percent tax abatement from Allen Township and Hancock County. We are extremely disappointed that the construction for the new distribution center is going to mostly out of state workers. We live here, work here, pay taxes here, and shop here. I sincerely hope that Home Depot reconsiders their approach on this project.

“Home Depot has slapped our members in the face with this decision” said Mike Haupricht, Executive Secretary of the Building Trades. “Home Depot takes all the tax breaks and incentives and then refuses to reinvest in the community’s workforce. It is shameful.”

Haupricht stated that all crafts of the Building Trades have asked their members, retirees and contractors not to shop at Home Depot for their professional or personal needs. “It’s a two-way street. We will support businesses that support our members,” said Haupricht.

The Building Trades selected Black Friday as the beginning of the boycott and a notice has been sent to the local management and corporate offices of the Home Depot. The group plans to notify the public through the use of large banners in front of the area stores, as well as the distribution of handbills asking people not shop at Home Depot.

In a Letter to Chairman and CEO of the Home Depot, Frank Blake, Electrician Mark Ehrenfried made his case for the boycott:

According to Haupricht, the boycott will continue “...as long as necessary. Due to the economy, hundreds of local construction workers are laid off. It’s unfortunate that Home Depot has chosen to take this road, but we are a resilient group,” concluded Haupricht. Please advise your friends, family, and membership to avoid patronizing the Home Depot stores in Northwest Ohio until this situation is resolved.

Sen. Voinovich Hears From Workers Who Want Healthcare for America Now!

Submitted by: Laura Harrison

On Tuesday, November 10th over one hundred working men and women gathered at Senator Voinovich’s office to express their support for Health Care Reform. The rally was meant to encourage the Senator to listen to his constituents and vote for quality, affordable health care. The rally was put on by the UFCW, but was attended by the Carpenters, NALC, the Boilermakers, CWA, Jobs with Justice and the Plumbers and Pipefitters. Their signs read “American Workers for Health Care” and “Insurance profits are bad for my health.” The UFCW pointed out that real health care reform includes the choice of a public option that is supported by 72% of Americans.

The AFL-CIO has endorsed H.R. 3962-the Affordable Health Care for America Act – historic health care reform bill that includes a public health insurance option, guarantees that employers pay their fair share and does not tax benefits. You may recall that the bill passed in the

House of Representatives on Saturday, November 7th. Now the bill is being discussed in the Senate. Keep in mind that according to a *Campaign Money* study, insurance companies are spending more money than ever on lobbying against reform. Just last quarter, the 13 largest insurers and the Health Insurance Industry Association spent more than \$8 million lobbying Congress so keep fighting against the big insurers and fight for real Americans. Together we can make a difference!



UFCW hosted a health care rally at Senator Voinovich’s office in Toledo (photo by John Boellner)

Re-energizing Labor on the River One Step At A Time

Submitted by: Bryon Bell

After a few years of dormancy, the Jefferson County Trades and Labor Assembly is gearing up for a come back.

On Monday November 16th, leaders from labor organizations in the three-county region served by this Central Labor Council gathered for the third meeting at the Electrical Workers Local 246 hall in Steubenville.

Those in attendance heard from Bill Thompson, Southeast Regional Field Representative for the Ohio AFL-CIO / Workforce Development Rapid Response Program, and Lou Gentile, former Assistant Director for the Governor's Office of Appalachia. Gentile recently announced his candidacy for the 95th District Ohio House of Representatives.

Kathy Derheimer, Secretary-Treasurer for the CLC said, "The Jefferson County Trades and Labor Assembly has been in existence for over 40 years, and we feel strongly that it's important to continue its existence."

The organization, which represents working families in Jefferson, Carroll, and Harrison counties, has experienced a decline in participation in recent years, but the drive to bring it back to prominence remains strong.

Derheimer, who also serves as President of OCSEA Chapter 4100, expresses a heart-felt desire to see labor in the Valley continue to pull together, "We look forward to working with the labor organizations in the area to rebuild a strong Central Labor Council that can fight for the interests of working families in the Ohio River valley."

The efforts in the Jefferson County area have attracted strong support from labor leaders throughout the region.

JoAnn Pizzino, President of United Steelworkers Local 4195 said, "It's a good idea to get the CLC back together. It's interesting to see lots of different locals involved."

In addition to representatives of labor organizations from within the Council's jurisdiction, the meeting was also attended by Babe Erdos, International



(L to R) Bill Padisak, President of the Mahoning Trumbull Central Labor Council, Dave Gasser of IBEW Local 246, and Jim Conrad, Business Agent of Carpenters Local 186 listen as Bill Thompson, Southeast Regional Field Representative for the Ohio AFL-CIO / Workforce Development Rapid Response Program discusses the services available to displaced workers at a re-organizational meeting of the Jefferson County Trades and Labor Assembly.

Representative for the United Mine Workers Association (UMWA), and the Presidents of two neighboring Central Labor Councils, Ed Good of the Belmont-Monroe Central Labor Council and Bill Padisak of the Mahoning-Trumbull Central Labor Council. "I'm encouraged by the increasing attendance at each meeting," Padisak said. "The union leaders in this area have a great tradition of incredible work at election time. I'm hoping the reorganization of this CLC is successful."

Kyle Brown, Business Manager of IBEW Local 246 has also been a champion of the CLC's reorganization. His local has provided meeting space to the Labor Council, and will be donating a door prize to encourage attendance at the next meeting, which will be held Wednesday, January 13th at 6 PM at the Local 246 Hall at 626 North Fourth Street in Steubenville.

Leaders and representatives from any local union serving members who live or work in Jefferson, Carroll, or Harrison counties are encouraged to attend. The Labor Council is looking for activists and volunteers interested in holding office and leading a strong labor council moving forward.

For more info on how you can become involved with the Jefferson County Central Labor Council, contact Bryon Bell at 330-979-0017 or Jeanette Mauk, Ohio AFL-CIO Field Director, at 614-224-8271.

Shopping This Holiday Season Can Be Sweat Free & Supportive of The American Worker

Submitted by: Karen Hansen

We are now at that time of year when many people move into full consumer mode. Regardless of our religious affiliations, most Americans participate in gift-exchanging rituals as the late December holidays and the end-of-year approach. It can be a stressful time, especially at economically challenging times like this when we all know people who are under-employed or unemployed, or facing financial hardships and uncertainties.

So how does one go about shopping in a more socially responsible way?

Probably most critical is to support companies that pay a living wage and uphold real labor standards. In the U.S., this usually means "union-made." With very few exceptions, union made goods ensure a living wage and safe working conditions, and probably access to healthcare for workers. Locally produced products from family farmers or from independent artisans are also important to support for the sake of our communities. For products from other countries, socially responsible production may also include worker-owned and community cooperatives or "fair trade" designations.

Remember even USA-made products can contain materials that are sourced from other countries, or produced in an unsafe or environmentally harmful way. And we are not yet totally free of sweatshop conditions in the U.S. So it is still necessary to read labels, ask questions and do your homework.

So where can you find information on socially responsible products?

- SweatFree Communities, www.sweatfree.org, has a great, current shopping guide, the "2009 Shop With a Conscience Guide", available for downloading, with great information on finding apparel, footwear, and sports balls. (Both the Ohio AFL-CIO and Ohio Conference on Fair Trade, along with over 40 other Ohio organizations have joined with SweatFree Communities to bring about the Sweatfree Ohio Campaign, so this is an organization we know and trust!)
- **Find US Made** website, www.findusmade.com/, and use the "Union Made in the USA" link to find some great gifts.
- **Still Made in USA**, www.stillmadeinusa.com/, has a wide variety of great U.S. products.
- **New American Dream Marketplace**, (www.newdream.org/marketplace/), has a wide variety of eco-friendly products, information and ideas.
- The website **All USA Clothing**, (<http://allusaclothing.com/>), has a wide variety of work clothing available online and is offering 10% off everything until Dec. 25th.

- Many USA-made toys can be found online. Visit:
 - 1.) "My American Toys," (www.myamericantoy.com/),
 - 2.) "Not Made in China," (<http://www.nmctoys.com/>)
 - 3.) USA and EU toys at <http://www.squidoo.com/>.
- If you are buying board games, only a few are still made in the USA. One of those is the Scrabble game. So read the label!
- Consider putting together a basket of local food items and support our local farmers! Check out the <http://www.ec-ohio.com/ohiofoods> website for some great ideas!

We are fortunate to have Fair Trade stores in Ohio that sell socially responsible imports. These shops go to great lengths to ensure that the artisans supplying their items are paid a living wage and are able to work in safe and sweatfree conditions. Many of these retail stores are non-profit and they are fulfilling a great need by providing markets to the world's poorest so that they can make their way out of poverty in a self-sufficient and sustainable way.

- In Columbus, we have [Global Gallery](#) in the Short North, at Easton, and in Clintonville. There is also one in Delaware. They carry wonderful gifts from around the world, including coffee, tea and chocolate, and everything they carry is "fair trade!"
- [Ten Thousand Villages](#) shops are basically the same as [Global Gallery](#) and can be found in Bluffton, in Cincinnati, at Grailville in Loveland, in Columbiana, in Hartville, in Rocky River, and in Walnut Creek.
- Similar stores can be found in Archbold ([Care & Share Gift and Thrift](#)), in Kirdon ([World Crafts](#)), in Akron ([The Market Path](#)), in Maumee ([Georgette's Grounds & Gifts](#)), and in Port Clinton ([Wide World Shop](#)).
- In Cleveland, we have [Revive](#) shops, in Lyndhurst and Legacy Village, which specialize in real fair trade products.
- In Bedford, there is [Village Markets of Africa](#). They also have a great website at www.villagemarketsof africa.org where you can order online.

Thanks to the growing awareness of these issues, it is now possible to go into a Toys 'R Us store and request a list of USA-produced items. That's big! When we can go into a WalMart and request a Union-Produced list of items or a Fair Trade list, we will really know we are making progress! But all these things start with initial small steps. Perhaps you will consider taking some of these steps by buying in a socially responsible way this holiday season!

Karen is the state coordinator for the Ohio Conference on Fair Trade (OCFT). OCFT is a statewide coalition of Faith, Labor, Environmental, Family Farm, Community and Social Justice organizations, all working together to promote social, economic and environmental justice by addressing U.S. trade and globalization policies.

ARA Continues Efforts To Support Retirees

Submitted by: Norm Wernet

Cleveland Health Care Reform Update Event Planned for February 2010

Senior Voice! and the Cleveland AFL-CIO Retirees' Council are in putting together an informational event tentatively scheduled for February 2010. The half-day convocation will focus on the outcome of the health care reform legislative campaign of 2009. Speaker invitations are being extended to Senator Sherrod Brown and Congressman Dennis Kucinich to address the issues of specific concern to the retiree and senior community.

Medicare and Advantage Reform - A Short Take Commentary

Ohio US Senator George Voinovich was the only senator not to vote on debating health care reform. He used the week to reiterate his desire for an "entitlements commission" to present the Congress with ways to limit expenditures on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. Senator Voinovich was honest about his preference to stop spending on the health of children, retirees and seniors.

The debate about Medicare savings and real ways to stop fraud and abuse as proposed in the health reform bills in the House and Senate has been turned on its head by the likes of Senator McCain. We are hearing the pitchmen for the wasteful expenditures of "Advantage" supplements to profitable insurance corporations and wasteful separate procedure payments to health care providers that encourage over billing and fraud. As taxpayers, we are at least getting some money back with interest from the banks.

Medicare "advantage" is nothing more than a rework of Medicare + Choice, and Medicare HMO plans that went out of business because retirees and seniors got sick, used the plans and were not profitable enough. We woke up to headlines proclaiming the insurance corporations just stopped the 'choice' and HMO plan leaving us to scramble to get coverage again.

The practical proposals the ARA supports do not put "advantage" plans out of business. The proposals limit the amount the insurers and providers take from the Medicare Trust fund and taxpayers. Insurance corporations, not Medicare, will make any decisions to limit or cut benefits.

Closure of the Medicare D Rx drug donut hole, reduction or elimination of the subsidies to the insurance industry in Medicare "advantage" plans, extension of the Medicare Trust Fund out to 2022, coverage for preventative screenings by Medicare without having to purchase a private supplemental policy, access to health insurance for



early retirees and older workers are all essential to promoting health in those of us who are aging. In addition, both sets of legislation bring focus and a practical regulated way to finance long-term care in this country through the CLASS (Community Living Assistance Services and Supports) Act.

National ARA Convention Bally's Las Vegas, Nevada April 5-8, 2010

The Alliance's National 2010 Convention will kick-off our efforts to build the grassroots organizing power of retirees for the 2010 elections. Voters across the country will be deciding who will represent them in Congress and state capitols, and we must make the retiree voice a mighty roar on Election Day.

Please join us for workshops and training sessions to strengthen our organizing and advocacy skills. We will also hear from leading experts in public policy, health care, aging, and the media.

For more information, please follow the links for 2010 Convention in the left hand column on ARA National Website www.retiredamericans.org .

ARA Conventions scheduled April 13 and September 14

The Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans has scheduled two conventions for 2010. The April meeting will review the legislative agenda and progress of coordinated affiliate efforts around the state. The September convention will be held in conjunction with the Ohio AFLCIO convention and includes the elections of the OARA executive officers and board. The convention will preview the issues and those seeking office that guide policy and administer programs that affect retirees and seniors.

Ohio ARA Endorses Ohio Campaign for Better Care

The Ohio ARA has endorsed and partnered with UHCAN-Ohio on the Campaign for Better Care. This goal of the initiative is to enhance the health, well-being, and economic security of vulnerable older adults and their families by reforming the health care system to provide high-quality, comprehensive, coordinated care. Learn more about the campaign at <http://www.campaignforbettercare.org/> .

Teachers Avert Strike At Last Minute in Shadyside

Submitted by: Kathleen Green

A strike vote scheduled for November 13 was averted on November 10 as representatives of the Shadyside Education Association (SEA) and the Shadyside Board of Education met for more than three hours under the direction of a federal mediator. A tentative agreement was reached at approximately 2:30pm.



happy that there will be no interruption in our ability to do the work we love, teaching the children who attend Shadyside schools.”

The SEA Celebration Rally was attended by officials from across the state. Some of those who spoke were: OEA President Patricia Frost-Brooks; Petee Talley, Ohio AFL-CIO

Secretary-Treasurer; Eric Carpenter USW 9419 Vice-President; Rita Walters, OEA Board of Directors; Mike Dossie EOEA President and Tal Hutchins, Shadyside’s Past OEA-LRC.

A rally scheduled for the same day @ 6:30pm turned into a celebration. SEA President Linda Tomer commented, “We are happy to have an agreement that will bring labor peace to Shadyside schools. We hope to put this conflict behind us and work in partnership with the Board for the good of Shadyside students. We are very appreciative of the Shadyside school community for the support that they have given us over the past several months. We also offer thanks to our brothers and sisters in the labor unions and OEA affiliates throughout the Ohio Valley who stood by us during these tough negotiations. We are

“Shadyside teachers approved a contract that will provide modest salary increases,” said SEA Chief Negotiator Jeff Mamone. “The agreement also includes an SEA proposal that will create a labor management committee. This should improve communications between the parties and allow us to keep little problems from becoming big problems.”

Meigs County Power Plant Project Scrapped For Now

Submitted by: Kathleen Green

Plans to construct a new three billion dollar power plant in Meigs County have been scrapped. Construction of the new plant was scheduled to begin in April, 2010 and would have meant thousands of construction jobs for all crafts in the building trades.

Speaking on behalf of the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades Council, Business Manager Bill Hutchinson stated, “We are extremely disappointed that the power plant won’t be built. Work in all crafts of the building trades in this area has been and remains very slow and this project would have put a lot of our members back to work for at least the next four years. News that the power plant would not be constructed is especially devastating considering the tough economic times our members are currently facing.”

There has been talk of still using the site to construct a natural gas plant versus a coal plant, but no official decision has yet to be made.

Although AMP Ohio hasn’t confirmed that a natural gas-fired plant will replace the planned Meigs facility, state Rep. Debbie Phillips, D-Athens, hopes the company will pursue that project.

“Despite the unexpected change of plans, I am encouraged by AMP Ohio’s commitment to Meigs County and southeast Ohio,” Phillips said in a statement issued earlier this week. “We must keep seeking ways to ensure that southeastern Ohio is a part of the ongoing development of 21st-century industries. I hope that AMP Ohio will continue to be a partner in that,” she said.

In November, the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades Council and other union members worked tirelessly to pass the Marietta City School Bond issue which included a Project Labor Agreement. Although the issue failed this time around, labor’s efforts using the Ohio AFL-CIO Predictive Dialer and boots on the ground helped close the gap the initial polls were showing, giving hope the issue will pass in 2010 and put many union members to work.

Trumka Leading the Efforts to Put Americans Back To Work

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

Newly-elected AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka is wasting little time in progressing an agenda that will help millions of working families. Aside from major initiatives such as healthcare and the Employee Free Choice Act that the AFL-CIO has been leading for year, Trumka is speaking wherever he can about the importance not just of economic recovery, but more importantly, of job creation for the American worker.

On The Ed Show on MSNBC, Trumka spoke about the White House Jobs Summit and how receptive President Barak Obama and his administration has been to putting American back to work.

Trumka told host Ed Schultz that in the discussions among President Obama, administration officials, economists and business leaders, there was a broad consensus that we need to fix an economy that has shed millions of jobs.

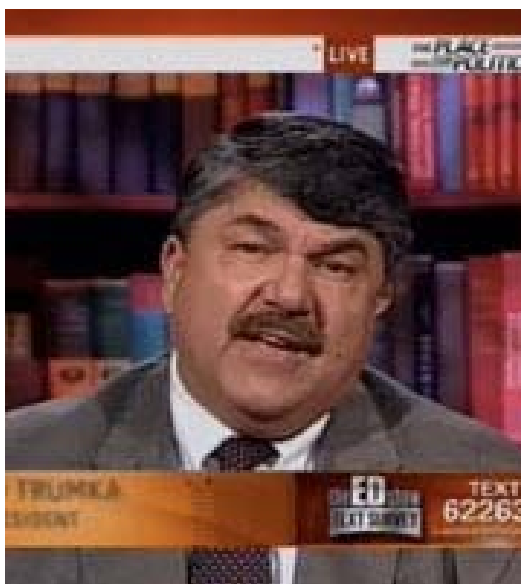
"I think it worked really well. The president really does understand the urgency of job creation," Trumka said to Schultz. "(Obama) said it on numerous occasions: jobs, jobs, jobs. I think his staff and Cabinet understand the importance of job creation. A lot of good ideas came out today that are usable. If we turn them around real quick, we can start putting Americans back to work in weeks"

The AFL-CIO has launched a campaign called America Needs Jobs Now. Wall Street has gotten its bailouts. Now it's time for Main Street to get some immediate help. The AFL-CIO is calling on Congress and the Obama administration to take five steps now to care for the jobless and put America back to work.

1. Extend the lifeline for jobless workers. Unless Congress acts now, supplemental unemployment benefits, additional food assistance and expansion of COBRA health care benefits will expire at the end of the year. They must be extended for another 12 months to prevent working families from bankruptcy,

home foreclosure and loss of health care. Extending benefits also will boost personal spending and create jobs throughout the economy.

2. Rebuild America's schools, roads and energy systems. America still has at least \$2.2 trillion in unmet infrastructure needs. We should put people to work to fix our nation's broken-down school buildings and invest in transportation, green technology, energy efficiency and more.



3. Increase aid to state and local governments to maintain vital services. State and local governments and school districts have a \$178 billion budget shortfall this year alone—while the recession creates greater need for their services. States and communities must get help to maintain critical frontline services, prevent massive job cuts and avoid deep damage to education just when our children need it most.

4. Put people to work doing work that needs to be done. If the private sector can't or won't

provide the needed jobs, the government should step up to the plate, putting people who need jobs together with work that needs to be done. These should never be replacements for existing public jobs. They must pay competitive wages and should target distressed communities.

5. Put TARP funds to work for Main Street. The bank bailout helped Wall Street, not Main Street. We should put some of the billions of dollars in leftover Troubled Asset Relief Program funds to work creating jobs by enabling community banks to lend money to small- and medium-size businesses. If small businesses can get credit, they will create jobs.

America's jobs situation would be even more dire without the economic stimulus program President Obama and Congress enacted, which has saved or created 1 million jobs. But the depth of this crisis demands that we do more—and that we do it now, before more people lose their jobs, their homes, their health care and their hope.