

Ohio Jobs March Hits At "Wall Street Greed"

Submitted by: Bruce Bostick & Jason Perlman

"Hey, hey, ho, ho, Wall St. greed's gotta go," "People's needs, not Wall St. greed," & "We need JOBS, now," echoed off buildings in downtown Columbus, as hundreds braved the latest snowstorm to march to the Ohio State Capital building, calling for jobs and relief for working families. Activists and concerned Ohioans formed at the corner of Main Street and High Street in the bitter cold, high winds and snow to show America's middle class is getting the short end of the stick as Wall Street continues to get fat.



From left to right: Joe Clark (Working America), Tim Burga (Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff), Joe Rugola (Ohio AFL-CIO President) and State Representative Dan Stewart (D-25)

"It's a great day to fight for working families," thundered Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola, to the cheers of hundreds at the March for Jobs in Columbus, Ohio on Thursday. "It's snowing here and they're sitting up there in Wall Street nice and warm. But I'll tell you, it's going to get a whole lot hotter there, as we organize and fight for jobs and security for working families here in America!"

Mary Young, an unemployed sheet metal worker joined the rally because she knows the time is now to help restore America, one middle class family at a time.

"I came to the march to fight for jobs, for me, but especially for our families," said Young. "I've worked four months in the last two years, and had to go to Tennessee to even get part time work. It's ridiculous!

These billionaires just take more and more and more from working folks."

The Columbus March for Jobs is expected to be just the first of many, according to Working America State of Ohio Director, Dan Heck.

"We're working with others, building committees to work for jobs," Heck said, but we felt we just had to begin to go public. "People are mad, and they should be but we need to remind them who is at fault. We just felt like we'd start the ball rolling."

The jobs march was sponsored by Working America, AFL-CIO bodies, Progress Ohio, SOAR and Jobs with Justice. These groups are part of the core forces that are setting up a Jobs for America Now Organizing Committee in Columbus.

"Don't believe them when they tell you it's about government spending, its not. It is about corporate greed, plain & simple," shouted State Representative Dan Stewart (D-25), to loud cheers. "We have millions out of work, people are suffering, but CEOs now are averaging over 400 times the pay of workers. Billionaires are bailed out, but our people starve! The five biggest insurance companies made \$12 billion in profits this year. They didn't make that providing health care to people, they did it my denying health care to people, throwing people off of

March

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health care coverage. This must end! We need good jobs & health care for our people again!"

Marie Feters is a township trustee from rural Wayne County, but drove through the snow to participate in the march at the state capital. "Wayne County is farm country," she said, "but we're not immune. They just closed the DHC plant, throwing hundreds out of work. We need jobs, too."

Tim Burga, Operations Director of the Ohio AFL-CIO, was introduced as "Our local celebrity," after right-wing talk show jock Rush Limbaugh had recently attacked him as a "Union thug" on his national program.

"Rush certainly appears to be worried about what we're doing here, and he damned well ought to be. It's the corporate thieves that pay his way that we're going after," Burga said, to the cheers of the crowd. "They're getting richer and our people are without work or aid. We're here to demand Good Jobs Now!"

Two men were dressed in suits, sunglasses and cigars playing the role of Lehman Brothers and other Wall Street big shots. The carried Monopoly games and passed out fake money because it seems those that are rich have the money to throw around while the workers in Ohio and across this nation continue to struggle to keep their heads above water.

"We just felt like it's Monopoly money to the big CEOs," said Stan Osei-Bonsu. "We've lost over a quarter of all manufacturing jobs in our entire nation, but the CEO of Lehman Brothers takes home \$484 million. Man, that's obscene! That's Monopoly money!"

While we continue to hear why we don't have jobs, such as proper education and training, we continue to see the jobs we do have get sent overseas so corporations can make record profits. Some people say about those jobs going overseas and companies getting rich that, "It is the American Way." But when did the American way become un-American? While



From Left to right: Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola, Ohio AFL-CIO Comptroller Theresa Willis and Ohio AFL-CIO Field Director Jeanette Mauk

we continue to worry about terror attacks from across the sea, American workers are being assaulted every day right here at home as CEO after CEO cut their jobs for nothing more than more money.



"We need real jobs, not make believe money and make believe jobs," Jihad Seifullah chimed in. "They keep talking about education, training, like that is supposed to bring in jobs. I'm trained! I'm educated," he said, "but we need real jobs."

As the election of 2010 rolls closer, it becomes even more important to remember who and where we need to focus our frustration. Republican candidate for Governor John Kasich worked and profited heavily with Lehman Brothers and made money hand over fist while he watched Ohioans lose jobs, homes and families.

Senate candidate Rob Portman said he would vote against the HIRE Act, which current Senator George Voinovich voted for, which would directly help small business and provide jobs. Portman says "No" to Ohio's workers and small business, but he is happy to accept over \$160,000 in Wall Street contributions. According to campaign finance records, Portman has accepted \$160,850 in campaign contributions from the PACs and employees of Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, J.P. Morgan Chase, UBS, AIG, Wells Fargo, Morgan Stanley, U.S. Bancorp, Capital One, Bank of New York Mellon and Wachovia.

Thousands Gather To Support Whirlpool Workers, Middle Class

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

For several decades the American workers has been getting knocked down as corporation after corporation claim poverty and move good, middle class jobs overseas. Yet reality shows these same companies that claim poor are reaching record profit. Even Ohio Gubernatorial candidate John Kasich profited while he worked at Lehman



Brothers and thousands of Ohio families were left stranded.

Despite that, the Whirlpool workers at the Evansville, Indiana plant, along with over 5,000 other working Americans, stood up and decided they don't want to be knocked down anymore.

A rally hosted by the IUE-CWA and led by

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka took place Friday, Feb. 26 with a simple message: The American Middle Class is being eroded by corporate greed. Newspaper reports credit a rebound in Whirlpool's stock price late last summer to federal rebates offered to purchasers of energy efficient appliances. Now a second round of rebates that would go directly to manufacturers is being debated in connection with climate change legislation.

"Whirlpool is a bad corporate citizen who is twisting this country's desire to reduce energy usage and using it to export jobs. We are pushing hard to ensure that good intentions on going green don't help fund the loss of good manufacturing jobs," said IUE-CWA President Jim Clark.

Whirlpool had revenues of more than \$4.8 billion in the past quarter alone. The company also recently received \$19 million as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Yet, the company

is spending \$110 million to build a new plant in Mexico. Yet it is willing to put over 1,000 workers on the street.



"If there was ever any doubt in anyone's mind how Whirlpool feels about the people that work for them, this should relieve that now," said Darrell Collins, local union president in a statement to members. "It is clear that all they care about is the money. These 1,100 hourly people, the 400 salary people, and the community should take comfort in the fact that you are expendable to make a dollar."

Trumka, along with dozens of union members, delivered thousands of petition signatures from people across the country that are tired of seeing companies claim patriotism on television ads and then turn around and destroy American communities the next day.

"We just tried to deliver the petitions but nobody was home. But we have known that for a while," said Trumka. "These are our jobs and we intend to claim them."



Although the petitions may not change the decision of Whirlpool to

destroy thousands of families in Evansville, the 5000-plus rally goes hope it will make an impact on other companies thinking of doing the same.

"We drove over five hours from Portsmouth, Ohio to be here and support the workers of Whirlpool. But this is about something bigger as well. We, as Americans, cannot sit idly by while companies take

Whirlpool

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our hard-earned tax dollars and use them to destroy our lives, our families and our neighborhoods. It is time we said enough is enough and this turnout shows me the American worker is getting tired of being treated like trash," said Shawnee Central Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Austin Keyser.

According to investors.whirlpoolcorp.com, 2009 fourth quarter net earnings for Whirlpool rose 111 percent to \$95 million compared to the fourth quarter of 2008. Sales of merchandise also increased. They were \$4.9 billion, a 13 percent increase compared to the fourth quarter of 2008. When factoring in costs and foreign exchange changeover fourth quarter sales in 2009 were still 5 percent greater compared to 2008.

"It's not wrong to make a profit, but let's not turn our backs on the people who made it for us," said Tony Lee, an 18-year plant employee who joined Friday's protest.

With their jobs and livelihoods on the line, workers from the Whirlpool plant received a letter from plant executive Paul Coburn telling them that taking part in the peaceful demonstration could cost them employment opportunity once they are laid off. To think a company, who for no other reason than pure greed, would want to take away the last vestige of hope of the same employees that made the company as profitable as it is, is almost unthinkable.

"This particular closing takes things to a whole new level," Trumka said. "Whirlpool not only wants to take



IUE-CWA President Jim Clark (L) and Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola (C) talk in Evansville about the closing of the Whirlpool plant.



Dayton/Miami Valley CLC rally for good American jobs in Evansville, IN at the Whirlpool plant that announced it was moving to Mexico. The Painters (IUPAT) took a bus from Cincinnati to be at the event as well.

jobs and send them to Mexico, they want to take their first amendment rights, their right to free speech." Not only that, they are taking the dignity and respect from the hardworking women and men.

"I had a brother who worked down there 37 years," rally participant Roger Myers said. "My father died on a picket line out here in 1983 ... Corporate gets bigger and bigger and they're killing us."

The rally began with chants of, "U-S-A, U-S-A," "Keep it made in America," and "Save our jobs" and ended with President Trumka addressing the crowd with a bullhorn and thousands of protesters keeping quiet to hear his words. From there, a peaceful march was made back to union hall where Trumka addressed the crowd more formally.

"Eleven million jobs have gone with the great recession. Nothing, nothing, is more important here at this moment," Trumka told a packed room at the Local 808 chapter of the IUE-CWA, which represents many of the workers at Whirlpool's Evansville plant.

Trumka went on to say national leaders have too often let jobs slip away with their policies and now it's up to them to undo the harm with a jobs program "to rebuild the foundation of our society and restore our middle class."

Whirlpool's move to abandon these workers during tough economic times is subsidized by taxpayer dollars as the company's stock and sales are buoyed by consumer rebates and proposed rebates to manufacturers of energy-efficient appliances.

Nurses Lobby To Help Prevent Violence On The Job

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

Ohio nurses and nursing students went to the statehouse en masse as the Ohio Nurses Association sponsored a Lobby Day for nurses to talk to legislators not just about the shortage of staff, but the danger of their jobs as well.

Assaulting a nurse in Ohio - and in 17 other states - is a first-degree misdemeanor. Assaulting a police officer, firefighter or emergency medical worker in Ohio is a felony.

A bill introduced in the Ohio House last week by Rep. Denise Driehaus, a Cincinnati Democrat, would raise the penalty for assaulting a nurse to a fourth-degree felony, punishable by as much as 18 months in jail and a fine of as much as \$5,000.

A national study by the Emergency Nurses Association found that more than half of emergency-room nurses experienced physical violence on the job during a three-year period. About 25 percent of the 3,465 nurses surveyed said they were attacked more than 20 times during the three years. Over 85 percent of nurses say they were attacked at least once in the past three years and nearly a third of all Emergency Room nurses say they have thought about leaving their job because of the threat of violence.

Paula Anderson, President of the Ohio Nurses Association say there are two places in particular where the threats are very high: ERs and psychiatric units. "A lot of times people who come into the emergency rooms are high on some kind of drug and they lash out at anyone. Sometimes it is just someone who is visibly upset and verbally or physically attack the nurse.

Although making the attack of a nurse a felony versus a misdemeanor will not prevent the

attacks from happening, Anderson and others want all nurses to know that attacks on nurses needs to be taken seriously.

"It's a daily occurrence that there was a threat of (assault)," said Nancie Bechtel, president of the Ohio State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association, told The Columbus Dispatch

Peggy Halter, now an associate professor of nursing at the University of Akron, was a young nurse at a state mental hospital in 1987 when a patient grabbed her and carried her down a hall before security stopped him. "It seemed to go on for an eternity," Halter told NPR radio. "Here I was trying to reason with this guy. He glared at me and told me what he planned to do to me and it wasn't pretty and I am not going to say it." Although security was able to respond quickly, Halter turned in her two weeks notice almost immediately and for those two weeks she, "hid out at the nurses' station."

Fifty-five year nurse veteran Jeri Millstead believes the situation is only getting worse. "It's frightening and it does drive people out of nursing or at least out of certain types of nursing.

Whether it's violent patients or workplace harassment, nurses say their own well being is often the last thing they worry about. Many say they are so focused on caring for patients that they don't always protect themselves.

Natalie Karn has only been a nurse for two years, but has already been assaulted 20 times. "I've been punched. I've been hit with call lights. I've been kicked, I've been a victim of sexual assault as well. Males especially, smacking on the bottom, comments, things of that nature."

For more information about HB 450 visit www.ohnurses.org

Bipartisan Support

Democrats

John Domenick, District 95, Smithfield
Kenny Yuko, District 7, Richmond Heights
Nancy Garland, District 20, Gahanna
Matt Patten, District 18, Strongsville
Kathleen Chandler, District 68, Kent
Roland Winburn, District 40, Dayton
Tom Letson, District 64, Warren

Republicans

Scott Oelslager, District 51, North Canton
Randy Gardner, District 6, Bowling Green

Columbus Rally Demands "Health Insurance Reform Now!"

Submitted by: Bruce Bostock

"I'm tired of rallies—I want to FIGHT! So said Tim Burga, Chief of Staff of the Ohio AFL-CIO, addressing the hundreds who'd braved the cold, this past Saturday(2/20/10), to attend a "Pass It Now" rally for health care reform at the SEIU District 1199 hall in Columbus, Ohio.

There was a sense of real urgency in the hall, as speaker after speaker pounded on the point that, as Brian Rothenberg of Progress Ohio stated, "We now have six weeks to win the fight our people have been fighting since the Truman administration—Health Care for all!"

Becky Williams, President of SEIU/1199, was interrupted by loud cheers as she led off the rally, telling the crowd, "We have three things to tell the administration and the majority in congress: One, we worked for and voted for change last year. That means actually changing what was there when you got there. Two, we need for you to lead with courage, not be intimidated by Fox News and Teabaggers, and three, don't be fooled by lies! If you do these things we'll be with you, and the 66% of Americans who, according to polls are demanding that Health Care Reform be passed, will be with you."

Williams went on to point out that, "Pundits are talking about bipartisanship, but over 40% of that 66% supporting reform are Republicans. While the national media talks, 44,000 Americans lost health care last week and that many will be dropped next week, and every week until we win this fight," Williams said. "Four hundred and twenty one of our friends, neighbors and family died last week for not having access to health care, and that will continue, as well."

Speakers included Ohio House Representatives Mary Harris and Ted Celeste (D-24), and in a show of unity both Democratic Senatorial candidates, Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner and Lt. Governor Lee Fisher.

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown addressed the rally by video from D.C., stating, "We are fighting now at a time of great crisis. 800,000 Californians are facing massive rate increases this week from the profit-bloated insurance industry. Thousands of Americans are,

literally, dying each year due to the continued inhuman rationing of Health Care in our nation. We can't give up and let others die because the fight is tough," Brown said. "If we keep up the fight, we'll win!"

Tim Burga also slammed the insurance industry, stating that the health care system today is, "Corporate socialism!" "Instead of public monies going for the common good, this is socialism for the rich. Our tax

money is going to support these wealthy companies, in the form of tax breaks, public aid for research and development, all the while our people are starved. They just have no shame!"

"We've been horribly frustrated," said retired steelworker and SOAR member

Ron Wharton. "But we have to push to win some type of health care reform or else it'll just get put off another 15-20 years. We can't let that happen. That's why we attended the rally."

That same point was made by Cathy Levine (UHCAN & Ohio Consumers for Health Care), as she told the crowd, "Don't believe those that tell you that it's all okay and we'll just go back to the beginning and get a better bill if this one is defeated. It is just not true! If we don't win now, it may very well be a long time before another congress has the courage to take this on!"

Rev. Tim Ahrens, highly respected pastor of 1st Congregational Church in Columbus, closed the event with an emotional appeal to, "Stand together and don't give up the struggle." He spoke of now being the time of Lent, and how that is a time of renewal, for springtime and a better new time coming.

Rev. Ahrens closed with the following quote from Anne Frank, "I can feel the suffering of millions. Yet, if I look to the heavens, I think that it will all come out right, that the cruelty, too, will end and that peace, justice and tranquility will return again. In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I can carry them out."



Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff gets Rush Limbaugh's attention at a health care rally in Columbus, Ohio.

Governor Signs Bill Extending mini-COBRA Coverage

Submitted by: Tim Burga, Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff

Gov. Ted Strickland signed HB300, extending Ohio's mini-COBRA coverage so that Ohioans who lose their jobs are able take full advantage of the federal subsidies available to help pay for the cost of health care coverage. If an Ohio employer has fewer than 20 employees, those employees receive continuation coverage under Ohio's "Mini-COBRA" law rather than the federal law.

"This extension helps Ohioans who are struggling with the effects of this recession to continue receiving the health care they need to maintain healthy and productive lives," said Governor Strickland.

Armond Budish, Ohio Speaker of the House, urged quick passage of the bill as the state's "mini-COBRA" provisions were set to expire on Sunday, Feb. 28. This provision temporarily extends the time after employment during which a person can keep the person's health insurance coverage from 12 months to up to 15 months, dependent on whether federal subsidies are available for the continuation coverage premiums.

Ohio insurance consumers with questions about Mini-COBRA can call the Department of Insurance's consumer hotline at 1-800-686-1526. Information can also be obtained at www.insurance.ohio.gov. Questions about federal COBRA can be directed to the U.S. Department of Labor at 1-866-444-3272.

Supreme Court, AG Back Prevailing Wage Enforcement

Submitted by: Tim Burga, Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff

On March 2nd, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that in an employee-initiated action to enforce the prevailing wage law the penalties set forth in the Ohio Revised Code are mandatory and must be imposed against the violating employer. This case involves a private lawsuit pursued by masonry workers who were employed on a prevailing wage construction project at Miami University. The Court's 5-2 majority decision reversed a ruling by the 12th District Court of Appeals. Executive Secretary of the Ohio State Building and Construction Trades, Dennis Duffey, said he is pleased under the ruling "that workers will be treated as the law intended."

In the decision, Justice Cupp wrote, "The general rule of the prevailing-wage law is that an employer shall not violate the wage provisions of R.C. Chapter 4115 or require an employee to work for less than the 'rate of wages so fixed.' ... If the employer violates this proscription and pays an employee less than the prevailing wage, the employee has several options to recoup his underpayment. The employee can institute an enforcement action under R.C. 4155.10(A) or assign to the director of commerce the right to institute an enforcement action under R.C. 4115.10(B). ... For the employee-initiated

enforcement action under R.C. 4115.10(A), the remedy for the underpayment of wages is plainly set forth: the employee is entitled to 'the difference between the fixed rate of wages and the amount paid to the employee and in addition thereto a sum equal to twenty-five per cent of that difference.' In addition, the underpaying employer 'also shall pay a penalty to the director of seventy-five per cent of the difference between the fixed rate of wages and the amount paid to the employee.'



*Ohio Attorney General
Richard Cordray*

"Ohio's hourly workers are struggling to make ends meet in these tough financial times. Our small businesses are fighting to survive and must have a level playing field in the marketplace," said Attorney General Richard Cordray. "The Ohio Supreme Court has concluded that employers who fail to pay prevailing wage as required on public improvement projects

in Ohio must pay the penalties outlined in our state law. This decision underscores the importance of prevailing-wage laws to construction workers across Ohio and will assist the efforts of the state to continue to protect the wages of these hard-working Ohioans."

Ohio AFL-CIO, AGs Office to Hold Veterans Event

Submitted by: Jeanette Mauk, Ohio AFL-CIO Field Director

The Ohio AFL-CIO will be holding a very important event for Veterans at The Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 189 Hall in Columbus on April 14, 2010.

Our Special guest speakers will be Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola, Attorney General Rich Cordray and Jim Wasser, Retired IBEW, AFL-CIO Union



Veterans Council Spokesperson. Also, joining us will be James D. Kaster, Veterans Affairs Liaison for the Attorney Generals Office and Bill Hartnett, Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services, and several other veterans based organizations.

This will be a very informative event for all Veterans. If you would like a registration form and more information, Please go to our website, www.ohaflicio.org or contact Jeanette Mauk, Field Director at 614-224-8271.

Greed, Not Need, Drives Health Insurance Costs Up

Submitted by: James Parks, AFL-CIO

As members of Congress continue to debate health care reform, a new report shows insurance companies have nearly doubled the cost of premiums over the past eight years. That's twice the rate of medical inflation and more than three times faster than wages in the same time period.

The report from Health Care for America Now (HCAN) sets the record straight on insurance industry claims that huge increases in premiums are the result of rising health care costs driven by doctors and hospitals. HCAN is a national grassroots campaign of more than 1,000 organizations in 46 states representing 30 million people dedicated to winning quality, affordable health care.

Richard Kirsch, HCAN's national campaign director, said during a press conference call that insurance premiums went up 97 percent for families and 90 percent for individuals from 2000 to 2008. Underlying medical inflation, calculated from the Consumer Price Index, went up only 39%.

Over the past eight years, premiums almost doubled, but medical inflation went up only 39 percent. Premiums rose two times faster than medical costs and more than three times faster than wages, which only rose 29 percent in the same time period.

Yet, companies like WellPoint are raising premiums by as much as 39 percent in California and by double digits in at least 11 states. So while doctors and

hospitals are making more profit than they used to, insurance companies are raising their rates much faster than even that—more than 20 percent faster than the amount they are paying doctors.

No wonder insurance companies are making record profits. Gaining control over rising and irrational costs is one of the

main goals of the AFL-CIO health care reform effort. Click here to read more about our health care goals.

Where does all the money go? Not to care for the policyholders. Last year, the five largest insurance companies had 2.7 million fewer policyholders and still made record profits. The money, HCAN says, goes to salaries and perks. In fact, according to the report, from 2000 to 2008 insurance companies spent \$716.4 billion of premium dollars on administrative costs, CEO salaries and investor profit, almost enough to pay for the entire health reform bill.

This is just one more reason why it is important to get health care reform right.

“The underlying cost of medical care is not driving insurance rate hikes. Greed is the singular driving factor at work,” says HCAN.



Why Rob Portman Cannot Become Ohio's Next Senator

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

Prompted by Republican U.S. Senate candidate Rob Portman's speech at a fundraiser for the controversial Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending and Taxes (COAST) this evening, Representatives Mike Foley of Cleveland, Ronald Gerberry of Austintown, Steve Slesnick of Canton, and Kenny Yuko of Richmond Heights called on the former Bush budget director and U.S. Trade Representative to sever ties with the Cincinnati-based group infamous for its inflammatory rhetoric.

The official COAST website calls Ohio public officials "Nazis" in reference to state legislators' successful passage of important campaign financial disclosure laws that promote transparency and better inform the public about who is behind campaign spending. The state legislators announced today on a conference call that they are sending Portman a letter urging him to terminate his relationship with the organization and commit to upholding honest and respectful public discourse.

"In light of COAST's repeated pattern of troubling and incendiary comments directed toward Ohio's and the nation's public servants, we respectfully ask that you sever your ties with this group which has shown itself to be more interested in hateful rhetoric than solving the challenges facing Ohioans," they state in the letter. The full letter is available below.

The state legislators expressed grave disappointment for Portman's decision to raise money for the organization.

COAST charged \$75 per person to attend the event headlined by Portman today.

"Rob Portman's decision to raise money for a divisive organization that thrives on incendiary ridicule is a slap in the face to Ohioans struggling during this global recession," Rep. Gerberry said. "COAST's comments should have no place in public discourse, much less the support of someone hoping to represent Ohio in the U.S. Senate."

"Ohio has too much at stake to waste time on this kind of outrageous name-calling," Rep. Yuko said. "This is not how to get things done at any level of government. Rob Portman needs to end his affiliation with this organization, and he needs to do it now."

In addition to referring to Ohio legislators as "Nazis," COAST has also made disparaging comments about the late U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy, calling him a "shovel ready project," while referring to Congressman Steve Driehaus as a "chicken (expletive) liberal." COAST's leader Chris Finney also said that restaurant owners should have the right to kick out gay and lesbian couples from their restaurants and landlords should have the right to evict them from their homes. COAST referred to Hamilton County Sheriff Simon Leis and County Engineer Bill Brayshaw, two longtime Republican leaders, as "fossils" who should retire.

Upon the recent death of Pennsylvania Congressman John Murtha, a decorated Vietnam War veteran and Portman's former colleague in Congress, COAST's Twitter account read, "John Murtha dead at 77. Good riddance bad egg."

DON'T MISS OUR SPECIAL MEETING ON JOBS CRISIS

**We bailed out Wall Street. It's past time to help Main Street climb out of the jobs crisis.
Come to our special meeting to learn more about the AFL-CIO's five-point plan to save and create jobs—and how you can make a difference.**

WHO: The Ross-Highland Labor Council

WHAT: Meeting on the jobs crisis

WHEN: Thursday March 11, 2010 @ 6:00pm

**WHERE: United Steelworkers Hall
170 South Hickory St.
Chillicothe, OH 45601**

For more information please contact Sarah Smith at 614-441-6162 or by e-mail at centralohioalf@gmail.com

IBEW Hall Hosts Bigger, Better Labor Pantry

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

Labor has always stood tall to help the communities in which we live and work, and another prime example came from Dayton as the IBEW Local 82 Hall allowed the Labor Food Pantry to move in as the United Way closed offices, including the space that housed the food pantry.

Nick Comstock, Business Agent for IBEW Local 82, and Jim Taylor, President of Local 82, were more than supportive in allowing the pantry to take over a very large area of their hall and will allow the pantry to serve even more families.

“The IBEW has been great in allowing us to use this space,” said Kristie McElfresh, United Way Labor Liaison and Community Service Representative, said. “We are able to do so much more because of their generosity.”

The Dayton/Miami Valley Central Labor Council hosted an open house and press event on Wednesday, March 3 and Joe Rugola, Ohio AFL-CIO President, attended and was very proud of the work labor is doing in the Dayton area.

“Whenever I go to events, I always stress these three things. One, we need to bring back a strong manufacturing base to this country and Dayton is a prime example of why we need to have a strong manufacturing sector in this country. Two, we need to protect prevailing wage jobs and even the Ohio Supreme Court ruled in favor of protecting those prevailing wages just this week. And three, when times are tough like these we need labor to stand strong and support our communities and that is exactly what I am seeing here and it makes me very proud,” said Rugola.



Wes Wells (L) and Joe Rugola (R) speak to the press about the Labor Food Pantry.

The AFL-CIO moved their food pantry to Vandalia on Poe Avenue. At the formal opening of the food pantry, labor leaders documented the growing need for the pantry, saying the slumping economy is still hurting local families. The new facility is bigger and brighter and able to help more people.

“They should not be reluctant to ask for help. We want them to be open and come to us because we can help,” said Wes Wells, Executive Director of the Dayton/Miami Valley CLC.

Rugola was so taken with the new resources provided that he felt the need to help and got resounding applause for his announcement. “In these times, it is more important than ever that we stand up to help each other. That is why I am committing to donate \$1,000 from my home union, OAPSE (AFSCME). I have had the privilege to live in Dayton twice in my 30-plus years of working at OAPSE. This is a great city with great history and I am more than honored to help in any way.”



The pantry has the basics and more, including soups of all kind and healthy and simple meals like pasta and vegetables. “Unfortunately, we are seeing the need grow at historic rates, and chances are if you need food, more than likely you need other services as well, which feeds into all of the other partner agencies and connections we are able to provide through the United Way,” said McElfresh.

Ohio Alliance For Retired Americans: February Retirement Advocacy Issues



Submitted by: Norm Wernet, State Director

Pensions and Health Insurance are at the top of the agenda for **Delphi retirees** in NE and SW Ohio. On February 4 the **Alliance for Senior Action** held a public forum to update retirees and the community on the current campaign for fair and equal treatment in the resolution of the corporate bankruptcy. Health insurance reform legislation would encourage companies to keep health insurance in place for pre-Medicare retirees and workers. Workers retired because of the bankruptcy are now scrambling to get and keep coverage. Both national reform and extended COBRA would help but a few in Congress obstruct good legislation for the many in our communities. The Delphi retirees got the attention of both Congressmen Charlie Wilson and Tim Ryan and political party officials. Ohio US Senator Sherrod Brown has introduced the Protecting Employees and Retirees in Business Bankruptcies Act in response to the behavior of Delphi, GM and many companies in the steel industry.

The Presidential Deficits Commission brings no end of consternation for retirees and those near to putting work aside.



The Alliance for Retired Americans is concerned about the process and the people engaged in finding the facts and presenting conclusions for action. Here **Ohio ARA Secretary Sam Burnett** urges roundtable members in the Toledo area to use the ARA Fact Sheet on Social Security and the deficit. Sam has a post card campaign going from the National

Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

The United Retirees of America the labor retirees' coalition in the Akron area invited Congresswoman Betty Sutton to speak with them about the issues of retirement security, health care reform, and Social Security.

Representative Sutton attended the Monday morning meeting before returning to Congress following the Presidents Day recess. She was outspoken in her support for closure of the Rx Donut Hole, restructuring of the Medicare "advantage" plans, expansion of low income supports, and keeping access affordable and available for pre-



Medicare workers and retirees. She went further in describing the injustices done to workers on

corporate bankruptcies and the need for law to change to protect worker assets. Having been a labor attorney and being married to a firefighter, Representative Sutton is passionate about justice for workers and retirees.

What you can do? Contact your Congressman and both Senators Brown and Voinovich now by phone or email, to urge that all the elements that improved Medicare for retirees and seniors and address long-term care issues are still included. If you need contact information for your member of Congress see <http://www.ohafcio.org/GovernmentInfo/FindLegislator.html>

AFL-CIO Executive Council Approves Action to Create New, Good Jobs

Submitted by: James Parks, AFL-CIO

Saying “We will be in the street wherever the fight for jobs is being fought,” members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council today issued a call to action for the entire union and progressive movement to put America back to work and ensure those whose reckless acts created this jobs crisis pay a price.

At its meeting in Orlando, Fla., the AFL-CIO Executive Council approved a statement saying in part:

Mass unemployment is intolerable. Action is required. The AFL-CIO calls upon the entire labor movement—our affiliated unions, our state and local labor councils, the millions of members of Working America and our allies in communities and progressive movements across this country—to come together in a great effort to create and protect good jobs. This campaign for jobs must be carried out at every level—in Washington, D.C., in state capitols and city halls, in boardrooms and workplaces and in living rooms across this country.

The council outlined an ambitious plan that targets politicians who vote to deny aid for the unemployed and against action to create jobs. It also calls for strong actions against Wall Street firms that pay bonuses but won't pay taxes and against corporations that take the public's money and use it to downsize and outsource jobs.

Saying that to date, neither Congress nor the Obama administration has proposed a jobs bill on the scale that is needed to close our jobs gap, the council urges enactment of the AFL-CIO's five-point plan for good jobs now. The five-point plan calls for:

- Extending current federal supplemental unemployment benefits programs to prevent a downward spiral as families fall into bankruptcy and lose their health care and their homes to foreclosure.
- Investing the money to meet the \$2.2 trillion in unmet infrastructure needs, while including prevailing wage protections and strong Buy America provisions.

- Helping state and local governments meet pressing needs to overcome an estimated \$180 billion shortfall in the fiscal year 2011 and \$588 billion over the next four years.

- Putting people back to work doing work that needs to be done by preserving good public jobs that provide vital services and capacity for building strong communities. In addition, expansion of vital services in targeted areas can reduce unemployment and provide infrastructure for economic growth.

- Easing the credit crunch for small- and medium-sized businesses by establishing a fund to lend TARP money to small- and medium-sized businesses at commercial rates, managed by the community banks left out of the Wall Street bailout, with the banks taking first-dollar risk.

It is only fair to ask Wall Street to pay for repairing the economy, the council said. The union leaders support a four-part package of measures to ensure the government has the funds to pay back what we have to spend to

create jobs. These measures include imposing fees on Wall Street banks to pay back the cost of the bank bailout and a special levy on Wall Street bonuses.

The council also says it supports taxing the income of hedge fund and private equity managers at ordinary income rates, by closing the carried interest loophole.

The AFL-CIO also joins the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in supporting a financial speculation tax and calls on the Obama administration to support the proposals for an internationally coordinated adoption of such a tax by the world's major financial market countries.

In addition, the council adopted a plan for mobilizing union members, communities and allies. The council called for all parts of the labor movement to act as one to restore good jobs for all Americans and to seek bold action from Washington, from state capitols and from local government, holding elected officials and the private sector accountable for what they do or don't do.

