



the Workers' Voice

Findlay Chamber Sabotages "Buy American" Event

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

According to the Chamber of Commerce in Findlay, named GreaterFindayInc., business owners would rather not support American workers if that means working with unions to show off the quality manufactured goods the American worker produces.

The United Steelworkers, along with several other unions and Ohio businesses, were working with the mayor of Findlay, Pete Sehnert to put together a day-long celebration of American and Ohio manufacturing with a parade, an American-made auto show and other events to lift the spirits of the Findlay community, who along with so many other Ohio cities have been hit hard with the continued shipping of American jobs overseas and the current recession.

"This was going to be a great, positive event showcasing the goods made here in Findlay and all across Ohio. It also worked out that Menard's hardware was also doing a big advertising push that week on items they sell that were made in America," said USW Rapid Response coordinator Rob Greer. "We were planning this for months, had both Republican and Democratic speakers coming from Washington, D.C. and locally. We really want to show the pride of the American worker, whether union or non-union."

But just days before the event was to take place, president and CEO of GreaterFindayInc., Ray De Winkle, forced the mayor's hand into taking the venue away, leaving the dozen or so speakers, the event organizers and all who were going to attend in a lurch.

"This had nothing to do with the event, this had everything to do with unions being involved in the planning of this showcase of the American worker," said Donnie Blatt, Rapid Response coordinator for USW District 1. "We told the mayor: 'We don't want this to be a union event. We want this to be a celebration of American manufacturing, a celebration of American workers. We want this to be a community

celebration highlighting the need to keep good jobs in the U.S. and in Ohio.' The mayor came back repeatedly and said GreaterFindayInc. is raising hell with him because they said this is a union event. The only reason this is a union event is that they're making it a union event. "

What happened in Findlay is just a microcosm of what is happening nationwide. Business groups and their lackies time and again are exposed as being anti-worker and not interested in the well-being of the community.

"At a time when our state and our nation are facing the worst economic crisis in decades, it is unfortunate that the local Chamber of Commerce and the mayor rejected working families who want

to celebrate the good that unions and management can accomplish when we come together. We will continue to reach out to the business community as we work to highlight American made products and fight to bring quality jobs back to our state."



From Left: USW Rapid Response coordinator Rob Greer for USW Local 270L, Donnie Blatt, Rapid Response coordinator for USW District 1 and Rod Nelson, president of USW Local 207L.

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Mayor Sehnert even spoke about how political the decision to hinder the event actually was. “Basically, Findlay’s a non-union, Republican area and mostly what we had were Democratic speakers and union people,” Sehnert said of the event. “It’s not what I had in mind.” The mayor said this comment after months of being involved in the planning and after a few closed-door meeting with Ray De Winkle of GreaterFindlayInc.

GreaterFindlayInc claims on their website its mission is, “Helping the Greater Findlay region to grow and prosper.” But that is hard to believe when it cancels an event showcasing the good and services made in Findlay and Ohio for the sole reason unions were involved in the planning.

“There is already talk of holding this exact same event next year, but without the unions being involved in the planning and promotion,” said Rod Nelson, president of USW Local 207L of the Cooper Tire plant located in Findlay. “But whether they want unions involved or not, we will be there.”

The event was to be held in Findlay partly because of its nickname, The Flag City. Findlay got the name because of the number of American flags the community prides itself in putting out not just in their yards, but in public parks and in business windows.

Ohio Labor Supports Health Insurance Reform

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

Around the state, labor leaders, members and affiliates have been working hard to get past the false claims and hidden agendas of the “teabaggers” to spread the correct message about health insurance reform.

The work of many in cities like Cincinnati, Youngstown, Dayton, Canton and elsewhere led to the culmination of an event in Columbus where over 2,000 people came to rally for real health insurance reform that adopts the core principles the labor movement has been stressing since President Barak Obama took office. Those core principles are:

- A Public Health Care Option to Compete with Private Insurance

“We thought, what better place to hold an event to celebrate what the American worker can produce than in a city that prides itself on supporting America,” said Nelson. “The people of Findlay were behind us and looking forward to being able to lift their spirits up even if for just one day. This was really a community event in celebration of the Ohio community.”

Blatt, Nelson, and Greer met weekly with the mayor over two months, constantly reiterating that they did not want the Heart of Commerce and Community Celebration to be solely a “union event” but sought participation by the local business community. The goal from the start was to ensure that local business played a key role in the event, where they could display “made in Ohio” products to offer consumers locally made options.

“There is something wrong when an association supposedly dedicated to promoting the companies based in its jurisdiction works to sabotage an event to promote those same businesses based on one person’s belief that unions are bad,” said Blatt. “We will not bring a strong manufacturing base and good jobs back to Americans if people like De Winkle want to put their personal beliefs over the betterment of the entire community. Those in Findlay should shame De Winkle for not standing up for the great workers in Findlay and all of Ohio because he wants to toe a party line. After all, we all do better when there is a strong manufacturing middle class.”

- Requirements for Businesses to Pay Its Fair Share for Health Care Coverage
- Exempt Taxation of Health Care Benefits for Middle Class Working Families

The efforts in Ohio have been happening for awhile to reform health insurance in America, but on July 28, labor across Ohio ramped up its efforts with the Health Care Action Network (HCAN) National Call In Day. Ohio took the lead with member-to-member conversations to get calls placed to the Ohio Congressional delegation. The Ohio AFL-CIO Predictive Dialer was used to reach out to thousands of members across the state and over

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Health Care

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Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola speaks at the Ted Kennedy Tribute in Columbus.

5,000 members took advantage of the system by being directly transferred to their legislator.

Ohio labor did not stop pressing as events during the Congressional recess proved. Labor took the lead as events were held around the state in support of President Obama's Health Insurance Reform and as events

Cincinnati hosted the AFSCME Highway to Health Care Bus and Betty Thomas, an AFSCME member said, "We've got to get this in America. We have to encourage everybody to please talk to your family, talk to your grandchildren or your nieces, nephews or neighbors. Talk at the pubs, bowling alleys or wherever you go and tell them how important a public option is for our health insurance reform. We need to do this. We have been fighting for 50 years and if we don't do it now, then when? We have to do this."

Members also turned out at the town hall meetings held around the state to curb the efforts of the "teabaggers" who wanted to do nothing more than disrupt a meeting rather than offer an alternative view. As happened in town halls

around Ohio, opponents spread fear with words and threats of a revolution and government takeovers but when labor made their presence felt, those who attended those meetings could actually hear and have meaningful dialogue.

But even with all those hurdles, labor and other Ohioans calling for real health insurance reform met in Columbus as a bus with Senator Sherrod Brown, Columbus Mayor Mike Coleman, Ohio AFL-CIO President Joe Rugola, Congresswoman Mary Jo



Kilroy and others rolled in to rally to help the over 40 million uninsured Americans and millions more who are underinsured.

"People will overcome fear, will overcome fear mongering, will overcome anger and will overcome division because we will finally have health care for all," said Coleman before introducing Rugola.



The event was one of the largest in the country and came just days after the death of Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass) who has spent decades trying to insure every American.

"It is time for all 700,000 members of the Ohio AFL-CIO, all working Ohioans, all progressive thinking Ohioans to turn up the heat on anyone who stands in the way of real health insurance reform," said Rugola. "Now is the time to write the next chapter in the greatness of America by giving security, hope and piece of mind to every American through health care reform now. But for all of our greatness, all of our compassion and for all the hope and opportunity that this country

offers I woke up this morning knowing that somewhere in the land, a loving and devoted couple who have promised themselves to each other for all of their lives were forced to disavow that promise and divorce because health care costs drove them apart after a lifetime of commitment. This is wrong and it must stop."

Just a day prior to the large Columbus tribute to Kennedy, a health care event was held in Cleveland. About 200 people attended a rally Thursday in Cleveland in support of health-care reform. State Sen. Nina Turner whipped up the fervor of the crowd at Labors' Union Local 310 hall by harking back to the Great Depression when President Franklin Roosevelt got Americans to embrace the New Deal.

"Today is our time for a new deal, and that new deal is health-care reform," Turner said to enthusiastic applause.

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 and their 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

MASTER SERGEANT JOHN W. WELLS **G6 Plans Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC)** **Of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at** **Fort Campbell, Kentucky**

Master Sergeant John W. Wells is the son of the Dayton Miami Valley Regional Labor Council Executive Director, Wesley Wells. Wes is extremely proud of his son John who entered the United States Army in July 1987 at Cincinnati, Ohio. John trained as a Quartermaster Chemical Repairer at Aberdeen, Maryland. In November 1990, he attended the Radio Operator/Maintainer School at Fort Gordon, Georgia and graduated as a Telecommunication Operator/Maintainer.

Master Sergeant (MSG) Wells has served in the following duty positions and organizations: Quarter Master/Chemical Operator in A Company 372nd Combat Engineering Battalion in Middletown, Ohio. He was a Team Chief for a communications team in A Company 44th Signal Battalion in Karlsruhe, Germany. He was a Team Chief for a communications team in A Company, 10th Signal Battalion in Fort Drum, New York. He was a Section Sergeant in an Extension Node Platoon in Camp Carroll, Korea. He was a Team Chief for a communications team in A Company 123rd Signal Battalion, in Fort Stewart, Georgia. He was an Observer Controller Trainer before becoming a Platoon Sergeant of a training team in 2-383rd Regiment 75th Division in Fort Riley, Kansas. He is presently the G6 Plans Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.



Failure to Enforce Trade Rules Hurts U.S. Workers and Consumers

Submitted by: Union Label & Service Trades Dept., AFL-CIO

Here's an idea for America: make a policy, and revise the way trade deals are crafted. A commitment to "Buy American" (or domestic sourcing) is a good place to start, according to USW President Leo Gerard and Scott Paul, executive director of the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM).

Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown (D) shares that sentiment, especially as it relates to America's trade posture with China. "Some people believe that actively enforcing trade rules is protectionism. I believe that not enforcing those rules is defeatism.

If our nation's leaders stand down as China stacks the deck against American business, the downward trade spiral will continue," Brown said recently in comments he released along with an analysis of U.S.-China Trade relations. "It's time for actions that benefit American workers and businesses and that protect consumers," Brown noted.

In an article on the AAM's blog, Gerard and Paul assert that, "Buy American has served as an effective jobs generator and a smart economic policy for decades."

They point out that construction of the U.S. interstate highway system in the 1950s applied Buy American rules and that "some sort of domestic sourcing requirement has applied to most major infrastructure expenditures passed by Congress since World War II."



The 550 UAW-represented workers at the Maytag factory in Newton, Iowa lost their jobs when Whirlpool purchased Maytag and shut down the Newton plant two years ago. They are among the millions of former manufacturing workers who have lost health care, pensions and middle-class wages as the U.S. manufacturing sector collapsed.

Domestic sourcing requirements create about one-third more manufacturing jobs than would otherwise be the case, Gerard and Paul assert, buttressing that claim with a study by economists at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Gerard and Paul say Buy American rules are "fully consistent with fair international trade rules," however America must continue to "insist that countries like China honor the commitments they made to gain access to our market, and stop their cheating," if global trade is to succeed for America's workers.

Brown (D-OH) has been on a crusade to link manufacturing policy and fair trade. He makes a compelling case for a U.S. comeback in manufacturing if the U.S. policy can emphasize the kind of products the world needs and begin manufacturing them on a large scale.

"Robust manufacturing capacity is not only essential if we are to achieve energy independence and sustain the independent ability to equip our military, it is the key to global competitiveness in emerging markets. Our nation's global competitiveness depends on our nation's manufacturing sector," Brown said. "The federal government has a strategy to assist communities hit by a natural disaster. We must follow the same protocol when a community is devastated by a major plant closing." Brown wrote.

Brown has introduced three separate measures that would pump new life into the nation's manufacturing sector:

- The IMPACT (Investments for Manufacturing Progress and Clean Technology) Act, to allocate \$30 billion for a revolving loan fund to help manufacturers that currently make components for automobiles to expand into the emerging clean energy industry.
- The SECTORS (Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success) Act to enable businesses, workforce development boards, unions and community colleges to determine workforce community needs and to organize training around emerging industry clusters.
- The TRADE (Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment) Act to create a level playing field for U.S. manufacturing in all trade agreements.

AG, Private Task Force Scrutinize Indy Contractors, "Misclassified Workers"

The Ohio Department of Commerce (ODC) has asked the state's top attorney to settle the debate over whether independent contractors "working on either prevailing- or non-prevailing wage jobs and as union or non-union employees" should be regulated under state licensing laws in R.C. 4740.01(C), or whether they may operate legally under the lead contractor's license, even though they are not "employees" and do not receive required contributions for payroll taxes, Social Security, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and other employer obligations.

The question, submitted by Commerce Director Kimberly Zurz, goes to the heart of private discussions conducted by the Ohio Attorney General's Office, the Internal Revenue Service, the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and ODC since February of this year, when Attorney General Richard Cordray launched an interagency "task force" based on new warnings in a report on "misclassified workers."

The AG's office confirmed Thursday that the task

force or "client working group" governed as it is by attorney-client privilege "has identified to date over 90 cases of possible violations in which an Ohio employer in construction and other industries is paying workers as independent contractors under IRS Form 1099, when it is believed or alleged that the employer should be matching and withholding all appropriate contributions for the workers as regular employees.

The AG report describes an "underground economy" in which the federal government loses billions and the state hundreds of millions of dollars every year in taxes, unemployment contributions, and the like.

"This misclassification problem represents a kind of "black market" that operates, as it often is consciously intended, to defeat government regulation and taxation," Cordray said. "The worker misclassification problem also creates an uneven playing field within

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Contractor

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many industries, with all law-abiding businesses being left at a competitive disadvantage by their very compliance with the law. Not only does this lead to general disrespect for the law, but also it creates perverse incentives for businesses facing vigorous competition to cheat in order to meet the artificially low prices of their dishonest counterparts."

Not only do state and local authorities fail to receive the employer's share, he said, the worker often neglects to make up the difference.

"In Ohio, some of our municipalities have considered ordinances that attempt to ensure fair economic competition and their ability to collect all proper tax revenues within their borders," Cordray said. "Yet it is clear that smaller jurisdictions such as municipalities typically lack the power and the funding to act as effective law enforcers in this regard."

Cordray said whereas a number of states have conducted systematic studies on revenue loss to misclassified workers, Ohio had yet to undertake such a project. "There are reasons to think that would be a helpful approach, perhaps in conjunction with one or more colleges or universities, regional planning commissions, and associations of public officials at



*Ohio Attorney General
Richard Cordray*

both the state and local level."

The Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council (OSBCTC) was quick to commend the many "legitimate" independent contractors, while acknowledging the problem of misclassified workers is real. "From my experience in the construction industry over 35 years," OSBCTC President John Kilbane told Hannah News, "the state is being cheated out of a lot of money."

"Unfortunately, some contractors utilize independent contractors (even within their own work forces) as a means to avoid payment of prevailing wage, taxes, workers' compensation, unemployment benefits, etc.," said Andrea Ashley, director of public affairs and government relations for AGC. "Some organizations may try to make this a union/nonunion issue, but it really is an industry-wide issue. Most construction companies that play by the rules don't want to be put at a competitive disadvantage by those that don't, regardless of any union affiliation." She said the question of prevailing wage goes not only to who pays, but whether it is paid at all.

Tri-State Building Trades group donates time to build playgrounds

"This is just a token of our appreciation to the South Point schools for allowing us to build the buildings in their system."

That quote, from Tri-State Building Trades union representative Steve Burton, was in reference to the free work many local union workers recently provided en route to erecting playground equipment at the new South Point and Burlington elementary schools.



Tri-State Building Trades, which is located in Ashland, represents 14 different trade unions in the local area. "We represent construction workers in 33 counties in West Virginia, Kentucky and Ohio," Burton said, adding that the organization has been in place for 35 years.

Those trade unions include IBEW 317, Ironworkers Local 769, Bricklayers Local 7, Sheetmetal Workers Local 24, Laborers Local 1445, Asbestos Workers Local 80 and Carpenter's Local 437 among others.

"Those are just some of the locals that participated in installing the playground equipment," Burton said, noting that some of the workers volunteered on their days off while others are temporarily laid off and showed up every day to help.

"They needed playground equipment installed and we volunteered to do it," Burton said matter-of-factly. "We saw a need and told Mr. (Superintendent Ken) Cook we would help him."

"Some of these workers had absolutely no reason to be here other than just to jump in and help. They are just doing their part as members of the local community."

AFGE Members Meet With Latourette To Discuss Gov. Waste

Submitted by: Darlene Tinsley

AFGE, the American Federation of Government Employees, has taken a proactive role in trying to eliminate government waste when it comes to subcontracting out work to private companies who reap profits off of our tax dollars and have little to no regard for dedicated public service as an actual government employee would have.

Darlene Tinsley SSA3448 arranged for a meeting with Congressman Steve Latourette on Aug. 4th. AFGE Locals 3448(Social Security), L615 (TSA), and L31 (VA) met to discuss the importance of the CLEAN UP Act (to eliminate government waste and fraud through contracting out reform), as well as their individual local's concerns. Unlike many Republicans, Latourette has had an open door to labor and works well when it comes to issues concerning the middle class.

U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) introduced the *Correction of Longstanding Errors in Agencies Unsustainable Procurements (CLEAN UP) Act*, legislation that will reduce waste, fraud and abuse in the federal contracting out process. Under the Bush administration, federal spending on contracting out skyrocketed from \$222 billion in 2001 to \$532 billion in 2008.



Back row, left to right: David Sheagley SSA3448, Dale Dziak TSA615, Cong. Latourette, Willie Haywood VA31, Hewlett Hall Jr. VA31
Front left to right: Karen Budik TSA615, Darlene Tinsley SSA3448, Darlene Estell VA31, Terry Duncan SSA3448. Not pictured, Bob Mechan, National AFGE

“Federal employees deserve to be treated fairly. This bill will be a major step towards cleaning up the contracting abuses of the last eight years and bringing jobs that were wrongly awarded to private contractors back to where they belong – with our first-rate federal employees,” Senator Mikulski said.

In meeting with Latourette, AFGE members discussed issues of importance to federal workers and the public they serve. The Congressman was very supportive of the issues that were presented.

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown was also a sponsor of this legislation.

Workplace Safety Conference Scheduled



The Ohio AFL-CIO will hold a Safety Conference on November 17-18, 2009 at the Renaissance Hotel in Columbus, OH. The conference will stress the importance of safety committees at the

workplace, the relationship between workers' compensation and safety, and address concerns of safety committee members. Speakers include representatives from the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Safety and Hygiene Division, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, as well as local union safety experts. At this point the agenda is still being formulated, so if you have any suggestions for topics to be discussed, please email them to Amanda Sabol at asabol@ohafclcio.org.

Registration details will be mailed to all affiliated local unions and CLCs in the next couple of weeks.

Submitted by: Amanda Sabol

Dozens Attend APWU Informational Picket

Submitted by: Jason Perlman

Dozens of postal workers, veteran and community members concerned about good, public jobs held an informational picket at the main post office located in Columbus, Ohio.

The Postal Service is looking to privatize 54 truck-driving jobs in Central Ohio. This is just another example of a public service outsourcing quality work to help the private sector profiteer millions off our tax dollars. Not only will this take away good paying jobs for postal workers, but it perpetuates the cycle of private companies profiting by paying low wages and little to no benefits and using our tax money to do so. Not to mention, safety for drivers on the roads is compromised when these companies come in because the bottom line takes place of safety.

Another large problem is that almost half of the jobs being replaced are held by veterans who have served our country honorably in times of war and conflict. Although there is a law to help protect veterans in cases like this, the Postal Service is looking to circumvent this law (5 CFR 351) and displace these great women and men who served their time to keep our country safe.

“We need to make sure we take care of our veterans and all of our great public workers who have done everything the Postal Service has ever asked of them,” said Terry Grant, President, Ohio Postal Workers Union (OPWU). “It is time we put a stop to the privatization of public services and allowing a few to use our tax money for profit while holding the American worker and veteran down. In their quest to cut costs, the Postal Service is purposely violating the legal rights of its military veteran employees. That is just wrong.”

Along with OPWU members, picketing were the Alliance for Retired Americans, Working America, IATSE (Stagehand’s Union), the Ohio



Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff Tim Burga rallies the picketers in front of the main post office in Columbus, OH.

AFL-CIO, the IBEW, UA, State Representative Dan Stewart, Jobs with Justice and others concerned about how their tax dollars are being spent.

“It is great to see people taking to the streets when there is an injustice happening to workers and our veterans. The Ohio AFL-CIO and its affiliates are behind this effort and will be there arm in arm with postal workers. In this economic crisis, we need to make sure we protect good, middle class jobs and not allow our tax dollars to go and pad the pockets of the rich while the worker takes it on the chin,” said Tim Burga, Ohio AFL-CIO Chief of Staff.

The picket was also shedding light on the possible closures of three branches, mainly in lower income areas of Columbus.

“(The closures) are in communities where the public actually needs them,” the OPWUs Local 232 President Michael Schmid told 10TV News. “They’re lower-income communities. They may not have access to the Internet. They may not have access to transportation to drive several miles to another post office.”

ARA Update: Two Lessons in Civility

By: Jessica Vernon, OARA Intern and Norm Wernet, State Director

In this time of serious public debate about whether all citizens of these United States can have access to



affordable, comprehensive, and timely medical care, some have chosen to demean the process and discussion. The Alliance for Retired

Americans affiliates in Columbus and Cleveland have found alternative ways to get the issues addressed and their questions answered in a civil, rational and dignified manner.

The Central Ohio Retirees Council picnic was the forum for Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy to talk one on one with retirees and seniors about health care reform. Faced with the prospect of the disruptive behavior that happened to Representative Steve Driehaus in Cincinnati earlier in the week, Congresswoman Kilroy



Congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy receives support from retirees in celebration of Medicare's 44th birthday.

spent two and half hours Saturday August 8 going table to table to answer questions and hear the individual concerns on health care reform.

The Central Ohio Retirees presented her with 4000 signatures asking for improvements in Medicare and a birthday card celebrating 44 years of public health

care insurance for retirees and seniors. The Alliance for Retired Americans affiliate coalition in central Ohio offered this unique opportunity as a way to communicate the real issues at stake for older Ohioans and create a genuine dialogue with the member of Congress.

The Alliance for Retired Americans Cleveland area affiliate Senior Voice! held a public forum Thursday August 13. The Seniors Speak Up! forum exemplifies a civil, informative meeting in which the public and candidates held discourse on issues.

During the forum three panelists, David Schiller, of Policy Matters Ohio, Ruby Nelson, a local Councilwoman, and Belle Likover of Senior Voice!



each discussed an issue relevant to seniors (retirement income security, housing, and healthcare

respectively), followed by a question to three attending U.S. Senatorial candidates, Democrat Jennifer Brunner, Republican Tom Ganley, and Independent Eric LaMont Gregory.

Following the presentations and responses to the panelists' questions the forum was opened to questions from the audience of 125 seniors and retirees. While tough questions about healthcare and Medicare reform dominated the discussion, the audience remained civil and respectful as the candidates addressed the questions, allowing the audience to get a sense of the candidates' positions on the issues. The forum was a success, providing meaningful and informative discussion on issues relevant to Ohio seniors.

The Toledo Alliance of Informed Citizens plans a health care reform update for retirees and seniors October 15. The Alliance for Retired Americans continues to look for educational opportunities to promote dialogue on the issues of retirement security.

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Help Now Available for Union Plus Credit Card Holders Facing Job Loss

Submitted by: Jennifer Wright Dorr

Unemployment in America is now the highest it's been since 1983. Millions of working families are cutting back to the bare necessities and trying to make ends meet. That's why Union Plus has created Job Loss Grants, as part of a \$3 million Union SAFE initiative designed to help union members struggling financially in today's economic crisis.

Union Plus Job Loss Grants are for Union Plus Credit Card holders. They do not need to be paid back and are put towards the member's credit card balance. So far 132 Union Plus Credit Card holders have received a total of \$32,000 in Job Loss Grants. To qualify for a grant, the job loss must have been in the previous six months and last at least 90 days.

When Paul Stevenson of Jamestown, NY, was unexpectedly laid off from a job he'd held for over 6 years, he received a \$250 Union Plus Job Loss Grant.

"I recommend this program to any union member who finds themselves hurt by the current economy," says Stevenson. Union Plus Credit Card holders can also take advantage of skip pays, a layoff helpline, member advocate and disaster grants.

Other Union SAFE programs include:

- **Disability Grants** of up to \$2,000 to help Union Plus Credit Card holders who have lost income due to a recent illness or disability



- **Hospital Care Grants** of \$1,000 to help union members with a Union Plus Credit Card, Mortgage or Insurance cope with large, unreimbursed hospital expenses.
- **Mortgage Assistance** to help Union Plus Mortgage holders who become unemployed, disabled or go on strike, to make their mortgage payments.

If you are a Union Plus Credit Card holder, visit UnionPlus.org/JobLoss for more information on job loss grants.

Even if you do not have a Union Plus Credit Card, you can still access help through Union SAFE including free budgeting help and credit counseling at 1-877-833-1745 or call the Save My Home Hotline at 1-866-490-5361.

How can you help? Become a Fan of Union Plus on Facebook and we'll donate \$100 to the union member hardship fund. See UnionPlus.org/SocialMedia

Hardship Help Contact Information:

- Free Credit Counseling and Budgeting: 1-877-833-1745, UnionPlus.org/CreditCounseling
- Prevent Foreclosure with the Save My Home Hotline: 1-866-490-5361, UnionPlus.org/SaveMyHome
- Unemployment resources from Working America: www.UnemploymentLifeline.com
- Union SAFE offers special grant programs: UnionPlus.org/UnionSAFE
- UnionDebtHelp.org includes advice, tools and calculators to help you cope with debt

Education Grants Now Available to ALL Union Members

\$500 Grants Help Members Save for College

Submitted by: Kathleen Kelly

More union members can now receive \$500 Union Plus College Savings Grants to help seed their savings for the future. Union Plus has extended the due date and expanded the availability of the grants—making them available to all union members and retirees.

You do NOT have to participate in a Union Plus program to apply for a grant.

All union members or retirees who open a new tax-free "529" college savings or prepaid tuition plan after January 1, 2009 and contribute \$1,000 to it, can apply for a grant.

For more information or to apply, please visit UnionPlus.org/CollegeSavings

Charter Schools Failing as Public Schools Pick Up Slack

Sourced by: Hannah News and OFT-AFT

Despite serving larger populations of historically lower performing students, traditional public schools in Ohio's eight largest urban districts eclipse charters in exceeding value-added expectations. The percentage of urban traditional public schools that exceeded value-added expectations more than doubled this year, according to state report card data released today by the Ohio Department of Education.

Urban traditional public school districts - where the vast majority of Ohio's charter school operations are located - serve significantly higher populations of economically

disadvantaged, special education and limited English proficient students - groups of students who, historically, tend to be lower performing. In fact, urban traditional public schools serve four times as many limited English proficient students, 10 percent more economically disadvantaged students and 4 percent more special education students.

This is the first year that the state's new value-added system effects state report card ratings. Value-added results show whether a district or school exceeds, meets or is below one year of growth for its students.

This may be the reason the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) announced that 16 charter schools are required to close in June 2010. Letters were sent to the schools' sponsors Tuesday, Aug. 25, ODE spokesman Scott Blake told Hannah News. He said that the state has approximately 330 charter schools.

The conditions laid out in the budget for closing charters are as follows:

- For schools that do not offer a grade higher than 3, requires closure if the school has been in academic emergency for three of the four most recent years, instead of four consecutive years.
- For schools that offer any of grades 4 to 8 but no grade higher than 9, requires closure if the school has been in academic emergency for two of the three most recent years, instead of three consecutive years, and has shown less than one year of academic growth in reading or math for at least two of the three most recent years.



Teachers lobby state legislators about supporting the state education plan.

The percentage of urban traditional public schools that exceeded the value-added expectations more than doubled this year from 21.4 percent to 54.3 percent - a 154 percent

rate of change. The rate at which charters in those districts exceeded value-added expectations increased by a far narrower margin, moving from 27.3 percent last year to 46.4 percent this year - a 70 percent rate of change.

"We are proud that Ohio's public schools statewide have earned higher marks. This reflects the hard work of teachers, students, parents and communities," said Barbara Shaner, chair of the Coalition for Public Education, a statewide alliance of education, parent and civic organizations seeking to improve public education for Ohio's children and increase accountability to taxpayers.

"It is important to note that overall public school districts continue to outperform charter schools and that the most challenged public school districts are making significantly higher gains in student achievement," Shaner said.