

STEEL VOICE



UNITED STEELWORKERS LOCAL 1999

Volume 3, Issue 3.

Indianapolis, IN

July 30, 2010

The GOP Plot to Screw the Economy and the Middle Class

By Bob Cesca at Huffington Post

We're only three months away from the midterm election when a shockingly large number of American voters will inexplicably vote for Republican candidates. I have no idea if this will mean a Republican takeover of the House or Senate or both, but there will definitely be enough voter support for Republicans to significantly reduce the Democratic majorities in the House and Senate.

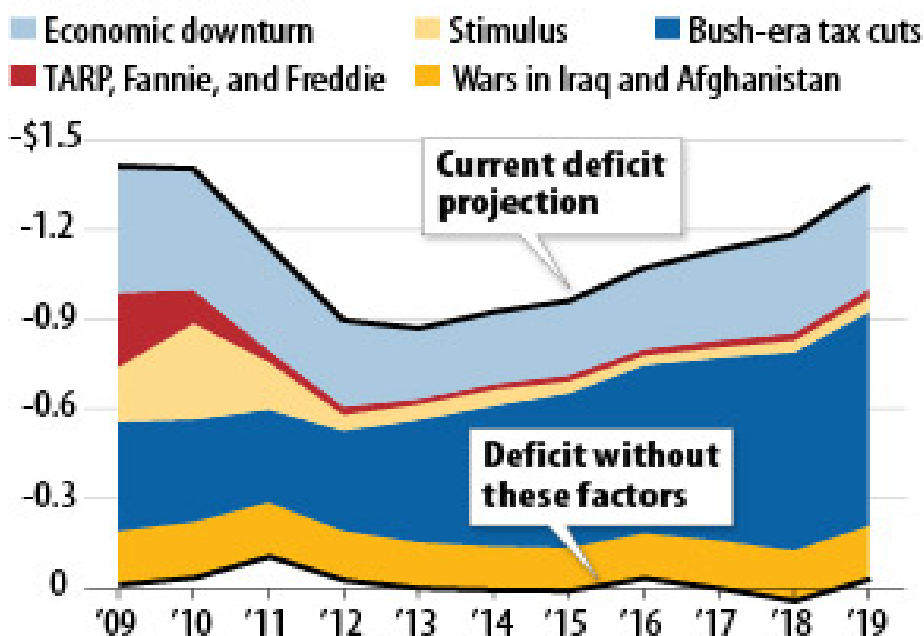
Why? Because too many voters tend to be low-information, knee-



Bob Cesca is a featured contributor to the Huffington Post.

Economic Downturn, Financial Rescues, and Legacy of Bush Policies Drive Record Deficits

Deficit, in trillions



Source: CBPP analysis based on Congressional Budget Office estimates.

cbpp.org

jerk Springfield-from-The-Simpsons economic conditions facing a vast majority of Americans, many of whom lashed their crazy trains to this new wave of inchoate roid-rage to help in November. According to Michael Snyder of the Business Insider: seats.

Here are a few of the ongoing eco-

See Plot Page 3.

My View

Bruce Reed, Local Union Representative



Brothers and Sisters:

I hope everyone is enjoying their vacation time and the hot summer weather. As our summer winds down we turn our focus to the upcoming elections in November. Many offices and seats in the area of our work lives and our homes will be up for election, it is very important we understand what the election can mean to us.

If we elect people that do not support what we as working men and women believe we can hurt ourselves and our families. Many of the benefits and issues we bargain can be affected, and even compromised by a government that does not believe in the working class, as we seen in past years. We will, as the election gets nearer, notify all of our members using the newsletter who the candidates we endorse are, and the reason we believe they will represent us and our beliefs.

We have a member of our Local

Union running for the state house as a State House Representative in District 92. Brett Voorhies is a member of Local 1999, he started working at Rexnord and quickly became an avid activist in the political arena and supporter of the working men and women of our Union.

Brett was awarded and completed the Steelworkers Political Action/Rapid Response Internship in Pittsburgh and was eventually offered and accepted a Staff Representative Job with the International Union. Brett's current assignment is the Rapid Response Coordinator for District 7.

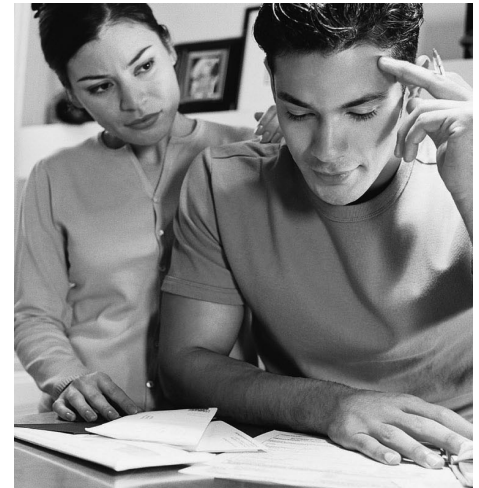
The Local Union has already endorsed Brett and believe the things he stands for and the work he does on our behalf to help working men and women demonstrates he will represent our interests well in the State House.

Brett's record as a worker speaks for itself and his position on the many issues such as unemployment benefits, right to work, workers compensation and other worker issues will be one of a working man. We cannot afford to allow the State House to return to an attitude of disregard for the working class; we need representatives like Brett to vote the interests of our families and coworkers for a better future.

District 92 is in the speedway area, for more information or if you will donate some time to help get Brett elected please contact the Union hall or let me know and I will make sure Brett gets the message.

Please take time to study the candidates, I believe if you do, you will agree with the candidates we as a

Local Union endorse and give them your vote. Brett Voorhies will be a candidate you will feel good about sending to be your voice, please help make sure he gets the opportunity to speak for us. ☐



Falling behind financially?

Union SAFE may be able to help.

If you're having trouble making ends meet in this economy, Union SAFE may be able to help. We offer valuable benefits for members who participate in Union Plus programs including Union Plus Credit Card, Mortgage and Union Plus Insurance and who are facing economic hardship.



Security. Assistance. Financial Education.

To find out how Union SAFE may be able to help, visit:
UnionPlus.org/UnionSAFE



Plot From Page 1.

- 61 percent of Americans “always or usually” live paycheck to paycheck, which was up from 49 percent in 2008 and 43 percent in 2007.
- 66 percent of the income growth between 2001 and 2007 went to the top 1 percent of all Americans.
- Over 1.4 million Americans filed for personal bankruptcy in 2009, which represented a 32 percent increase over 2008.
- The bottom 50 percent of income earners in the United States now collectively own less than 1 percent of the nation’s wealth.
- In America today, the average time needed to find a job has risen to a record 35.2 weeks.
- More than 40 percent of Americans who actually are employed are now working in service jobs, which are often very low paying.
- Despite the financial crisis, the number of millionaires in the United States rose a whopping 16 percent to 7.8 million in 2009.

Oh, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that wages for the highest 20 percent of earners rose by nearly 300 percent since 1979, while wages for the bottom and middle 20 percent increased only by 41 percent — combined. Plotted on a graph, middle and working class wages have flatlined for 30 years. Roll all of these tragic figures into a slow growth recovery and here we are. Most of us in the middle class are screwed.

And thanks to an alliance between

the Republicans (which includes the tea party), the increasingly dominant far-right media, a traditional “old media” that panders to the far-right, and right-of-center “conservadems” who pander to the Republicans, too many voters have decided that the Republican Party might be better suited to turn all of this around.

The big lie here is that if Congress stops spending, cuts the deficit and makes permanent the Bush tax cuts, especially the tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, our problems will be solved — even though these concepts are in direct conflict with each other. Not surprising given the ever-lengthening Republican syllabus of contradictions.

Here’s how this new batch of contradictions plays out.

According to Republicans and their conservadem enablers, we have to cut the deficit and pay for every program Congress passes or else we’re all doomed. We’re stealing from our children, they say. This has manifested itself in Republican filibusters of both unemployment benefits (\$34 billion) and a new jobs bill (\$33 billion over ten years). A Republican filibuster killed the jobs bill, and, after many failed cloture votes, the filibuster of the unemployment benefits was finally defeated and the Senate Democrats passed the extensions. Throughout the past year and a half, it’s been the same story. Any effort made by the Democrats to stimulate the economy has been filibustered by the Republicans. They say it’s because of the deficit and debt.

And yet they want to make the Bush tax cuts permanent, which would add \$678 billion dollars to the defi-

cit — and that’s just the cost of the tax cuts going to the top two percent of earners. In other words, the Republicans want to spend \$678 billion in further giveaways for the wealthiest two percent, and they don’t care whether it increases the deficit.

By the way, the Republicans also recently voted against and defeated an amendment to strip Big Oil of its \$35 billion in subsidies. Just thought I’d pass that along. Put another way, \$678 billion in tax cuts for the wealthy? No problem. Deficit-shmeficit! But \$34 billion in unemployment benefits for an out-of-work middle class at a time when companies aren’t hiring (say nothing of the aforementioned bullet-points)? Evil! Instead, the Republicans want to give \$35 billion to Big Oil in the form of corporate welfare during the worst oil spill in American history while telling unemployed middle class families to piss off.

Do we have a clear picture in terms of who and what the Republicans care about?

It surely isn’t fiscal discipline or the deficit. And it surely isn’t the middle class. The Bush tax cuts, if extended, would add \$2 trillion to debt, so it’s not that either. Throw in another policy started by the Republicans — the war spending (more of which was passed yesterday without any worries about CBO scoring or making sure it’s deficit neutral) — and there’s the vast majority of your deficit and debt for the next ten years. Not the stimulus or the bailouts. The long term budget impact of the wars and the Bush tax cuts literally dwarf

See **GOP** page 4.

GOP From Page 3.

the stimulus. Here's the CBPP evidence in colorful graph form: (*See Graph on Page 1.*)

That big blue chunk represents the Bush tax cut portion of the deficit. The yellow represents the wars. The light blue is the tax revenue lost to the recession. And those really narrow tan and red strata are TARP and the stimulus. Clearly we need to elect more Republicans so they can make permanent the big thick deficit hogs and kill that thin section for the stimulus.

Now, if you're a Republican, you might be clinging to the idea that extending the Bush tax cuts would have a stimulative effect on the economy (somehow) even though this hasn't been the case for the last ten years other than for the wealthiest Americans who have once again disproved the trickle-down theories at the heart of Reaganomics by pocketing their share of the trickle instead of reinvesting in jobs and wages for the middle class.

The Bush tax cuts will not stimulate the economy.

According to Moody's Analytics (hardly a left-wing apparatchik), for every dollar of government money spent on extending the Bush tax cuts, there's only a 32-cent return on investment in terms of economic stimulus. Not a solid investment. How about cutting the corporate tax rate? Also a 32-cent return in economic stimulus. Capital gains tax cuts? 37-cents. And, lumped together, there's your Republican plan for growing the economy. Dumb investments. Goldman Sachs would short these policies. I'm not sure

they haven't, actually.

But what about the Democratic spending? For every dollar spent on unemployment benefits, there's a \$1.61 return in economic stimulus. Good investment! How about infrastructure spending? \$1.57 return. Aid to the states? \$1.41. Temporary increase in food stamps? \$1.74. Even the Obama tax credits for the middle class, \$288 billion of the Recovery Act, account for up to \$1.30.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration is working with a deficit commission which will focus on trimming the deficit after (we hope) the economy and jobs are back on track. The Republicans, of course, voted against forming a deficit commission.

Given the choice between deficit spending that significantly stimulates economic growth or deficit spending that barely makes a dent, which choice are the Republicans trying to sell? The really stupid deficit spending for the wealthy that barely makes a dent in the recovery. That's the Republican plan.

Also, contrary to popular far-right myths, it's worth noting that the Democrats and the White House have no intention of allowing the tax cuts for families earning less than \$250,000 to expire. Those tax cuts will be renewed this year. As for the top tax brackets, you find me a multi-millionaire who pays the actual marginal rate every April and I'll show you a very rich moron. Most of these guys, after deductions and loopholes, pay an effective tax rate that's much lower than the middle class tax brackets. So don't tell me that millionaire Glenn Beck and millionaire Paris Hilton will be fi-

nancially burdened by a 2.6 percent bump in their margin tax rate next year. Sorry, no. They won't be. And why do middle class Republican voters give a rip about Paris Hilton's tax rate? Because they believe they'll be as wealthy as Paris some day. But read those bullet-points again. It's not happening.

Unless there's some sort of mass epiphany, or unless the Democrats actually speak up and take the discourse by the horns and fight, middle class American voters in November will augment the number of Republicans (and conservadems) in Congress mostly because they've been suckered into endorsing these insane Republican economic policies. Subsequently, the Republicans will balloon the deficit and undermine the economic recovery in order to give more handouts to the super rich. And the middle class will continue to be an accomplice in its own slow-roasted homicide. ☐

Union Plus interstate moving discount

Moving?

Your first move should be to check out the
Union Plus Moving Discount program.

**Allied and North
American Van Lines**

Get a free estimate and special discounts for
your moving day. Call **1-800-234-1159**
today to speak to a knowledgeable
representative.



www.UnionPlus.org/Moving

Web 10/08

Downtown Hyatt Workers Protest Treatment

Hyatt workers are fighting for the right to unionize and they're going to extraordinary lengths to make sure their voices are heard. They staged a protest outside the downtown Indianapolis hotel Thursday and 41 were arrested.



Hyatt workers say the hotel sub-contracts much of the work, such as housekeeping services.

Hyatt employees claim the so-called temporary housekeepers work for Hyatt for years, earning minimum wage and no benefits.

Workers say the practice then drives down the wages for permanent employees and they believe the protection afforded by a union will bring change.

On Thursday evening, workers chanted, "Hyatt, Hyatt, enough is enough," as they protested outside the downtown hotel.

The red arch trademark of the Hyatt hotel took on new meaning on the signs of protesters who chanted in

front of the downtown property.

That arch-adorned Hyatt name became the focal point of a frowning caricature - a symbol, protesters say, of a corporate giant that systematically puts profit over people.

"For me, being a single person, that I am unable to have health insurance and pay for parking and pay my rent," said Hyatt employee Chalice Starling.

She says she works full-time at the hotel making \$10 an hour. And the hotel does not pick up the tab for employee parking.

"We do pay to park here, and its \$80 to park here. It comes out of our paycheck," said Starling.

She says that leaves little health insurance coverage.

So, in an act of civil disobedience, protesters blocked the sidewalk and were arrested in hopes of forcing Hyatt to allow employees to form a union.

Hyatt general manager Brian Comes would speak to us neither by phone nor on camera, but he did send us an email stating, "Hyatt supports its employees' right to choose whether they want to be represented by a union in a Democratic secret-ballot process." But Joanne Sanders, a Democratic city-county councilor, argued, "The secret ballot can cause more intimidation from the employer to insure that those employees

don't get representation."

Sanders was one of the protesters arrested on Thursday. She says instead of a secret vote to form a union, she and union organizers want a public one -- signatures on a card where a simple majority determines the winner.

Workers argue a union can bring about fairness worth fighting for.

"I have to stand up and represent what is right," said Hyatt employee Karl Frederiksen.

Although Hyatt workers attended the rally, no one was arrested.

Corporate leaders told them that arrest would mean they could be fired, so supporters agreed to be arrested in their place. □



Retired Steelworker Garland Stovall was arrested at the Hyatt protest.

The Middle Class In America Is Radically Shrinking.

Here Are The Stats To Prove It

By Michael Snyder, Editor of theeconomiccollapseblog.com

The 22 statistics detailed here prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the middle class is being systematically wiped out of existence in America.

The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer at a staggering rate. Once upon a time, the United States had the largest and most prosperous middle class in the history of the world, but now that is changing at a blinding pace.

So why are we witnessing such fundamental changes? Well, the globalism and "free trade" that our politicians and business leaders insisted would be so good for us have had some rather nasty side effects. It turns out that they didn't tell us that the "global economy" would mean that middle class American workers would eventually have to directly compete for jobs with people on the other side of the world where there is no minimum wage and very few regulations. The big global corporations have greatly benefited by exploiting third world labor pools over the last several decades, but middle class American workers have increasingly found things to be very tough.

Here are the statistics to prove it:

- 83 percent of all U.S. stocks are in the hands of 1 percent of the people.
- 61 percent of Americans "always or usually" live paycheck to paycheck, which was up from 49 percent in 2008 and 43 percent in 2007.
- 66 percent of the income growth between 2001 and 2007 went to the

top 1% of all Americans.

- 36 percent of Americans say that they don't contribute anything to retirement savings.
- A staggering 43 percent of Americans have less than \$10,000 saved up for retirement.
- 24 percent of American workers say that they have postponed their planned retirement age in the past year.
- Over 1.4 million Americans filed for personal bankruptcy in 2009, which represented a 32 percent increase over 2008.
- Only the top 5 percent of U.S. households have earned enough additional income to match the rise in housing costs since 1975.
- For the first time in U.S. history, banks own a greater share of residential housing net worth in the United States than all individual Americans put together.
- In 1950, the ratio of the average executive's paycheck to the average worker's paycheck was about 30 to 1. Since the year 2000, that ratio has exploded to between 300 to 500 to one.
- As of 2007, the bottom 80 percent of American households held about 7% of the liquid financial assets.
- The bottom 50 percent of income earners in the United States now collectively own less than 1 percent of the nation's wealth.
- Average Wall Street bonuses for 2009 were up 17 percent when compared with 2008.
- In the United States, the average federal worker now earns 60% MORE than the average worker in the private sector.

- The top 1 percent of U.S. households own nearly twice as much of America's corporate wealth as they did just 15 years ago.
- In America today, the average time needed to find a job has risen to a record 35.2 weeks.
- More than 40 percent of Americans who actually are employed are now working in service jobs, which are often very low paying.
- Or the first time in U.S. history, more than 40 million Americans are on food stamps, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture projects that number will go up to 43 million Americans in 2011.
- This is what American workers now must compete against: in China a garment worker makes approximately 86 cents an hour and in Cambodia a garment worker makes approximately 22 cents an hour.
- Approximately 21 percent of all children in the United States are living below the poverty line in 2010 - the highest rate in 20 years.
- Despite the financial crisis, the number of millionaires in the United States rose a whopping 16 percent to 7.8 million in 2009.
- The top 10 percent of Americans now earn around 50 percent of our national income.

Giant Sucking Sound

The reality is that no matter how smart, how strong, how educated or how hard working American workers are, they just cannot compete with people who are desperate to put in 10 to 12 hour days at less than

See **Middle Class** Page 7.

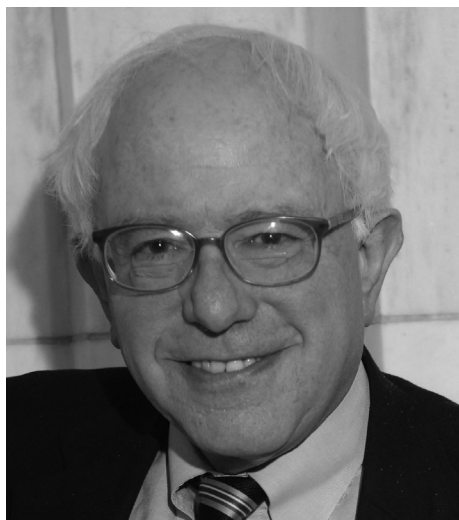
No to Oligarchy

By Bernie Sanders

The American people are hurting. As a result of the greed, recklessness and illegal behavior on Wall Street, millions of Americans have lost their jobs, homes, life savings and their ability to get a higher education. Today, some 22 percent of our children live in poverty, and millions more have become dependent on food stamps for their food.

And while the Great Wall Street Recession has devastated the middle class, the truth is that working families have been experiencing a decline for decades. During the Bush years alone, from 2000-2008, median family income dropped by nearly \$2,200 and millions lost their health insurance. Today, because of stagnating wages and higher costs for basic necessities, the average two-wage-earner fam-

ily has less disposable income than a one-wage-earner family did a generation ago. The average American today is underpaid, overworked and stressed out as to what the future will bring for his or her children. For many, the American



Bernie Sanders, Independent U.S. Senator from Vermont.

dream has become a nightmare.

But, not everybody is hurting. While the middle class disappears and poverty increases the wealthiest people in our country are not only doing extremely well, they are using their wealth and political power to protect and expand their very privileged status at the expense of everyone else. This upper-crust of extremely wealthy families are hell-bent on destroying the democratic vision of a strong middle-class which has made the United States the envy of the world. In its place they are determined to create an oligarchy in which a small number of families control the economic and political life of our country.

See **Rich** Page 9.

Middle Class From Page 6.

a dollar an hour on the other side of the world. After all, what corporation in their right mind is going to pay an American worker 10 times more (plus benefits) to do the same job? The world is fundamentally changing. Wealth and power are rapidly becoming concentrated at the top and the big global corporations are making massive amounts of money. Meanwhile, the American middle class is being systematically wiped out of existence as U.S. workers are slowly being merged into the new "global" labor pool.

What do most Americans have to offer in the marketplace other than their labor? Not much. The truth is that most Americans are absolutely dependent on someone else giving

them a job. But today, U.S. workers are "less attractive" than ever. Compared to the rest of the world, American workers are extremely expensive, and the government keeps passing more rules and regulations seemingly on a monthly basis that makes it even more difficult to conduct business in the United States.

So corporations are moving operations out of the U.S. at breathtaking speed. Since the U.S. government does not penalize them for doing so, there really is no incentive for them to stay.

What has developed is a situation where the people at the top are doing quite well, while most Americans are finding it increasingly difficult to make it. There are now about six unemployed Americans for ev-

ery new job opening in the United States, and the number of "chronically unemployed" is absolutely soaring. There simply are not nearly enough jobs for everyone.

Many of those who are able to get jobs are finding that they are making less money than they used to. In fact, an increasingly large percentage of Americans are working at low wage retail and service jobs.

But you can't raise a family on what you make flipping burgers at McDonald's or on what you bring in from greeting customers down at the local Wal-Mart.

The truth is that the middle class in America is dying -- and once it is gone it will be incredibly difficult to rebuild. □

OSHA To Publicly Shame Job Safety Violators

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

PITTSBURGH (PAI)--The Occupational Safety and Health Administration will use not just our normal inspection system, but regulation by shaming against notorious job safety and health violators, its administrator says.

In a June 15 telephone press conference/emergency meeting in Pittsburgh on the issue with Steelworkers President Leo Gerard and Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts, OSHA Administrator Dr. David Michaels added that the targets of the shaming would be those companies that aren't playing by the rules on worker safety and health.

We have every right to call the CEO of any company and tell them what we want, and we will, Michaels added. And he urged workers to report violations.

Gerard, Roberts and Michaels spoke at an emergency safety conference of oil workers USW called in Pittsburgh, after a string of fatal oil refinery accidents -- even before the deep-sea well blew up -- and after deaths of 37 coal miners so far this year.

Michaels said he has already called the oil companies lobby on the carpet to justify its practices, after the catastrophic Deepwater Horizon oil well fire, explosion and sinking in the Gulf of Mexico almost two months ago. The blast at the mile-deep well killed 11 workers and has spewed millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf in the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history.

Oil and mine disasters show the need for stronger job safety laws, and stronger enforcement, both union leaders said. There's got to be an equal consequence for companies when their laxity or refusal to protect workers costs lives, Gerard said.

Harkening back to the 1989 Pittston coal strike, where UMW was fined \$64 million for a peaceful protest that blocked a road, Roberts said what corporate CEOs go through when their firms kill people is vastly different than what hit his union.

Their fines are not adequate. We need stronger laws, bigger penalties and criminal penalties for executives who commit these acts, Roberts added.

Both unions are leading labors fight for the Protect American Workers Act (PAWA), a measure to strengthen the 40-year-old Occupational Safety and Health Act.

It would increase fines, let OSHA impose separate fines for each violation, and change violations that kill workers from criminal misdemeanors that carry maximum 6-month jail sentences to felonies that carry 10-year and 15-year terms, among other things.

The Obama administration OSHA, led by Michaels, also endorses PAWA, but the measure is marooned in Congress, victim of a jammed schedule. Business and congressional Republicans also strongly oppose the legislation. The oil majors also don't want to do anything about safety, citing money, says Steelworkers Vice President Gary Beevers, who is in charge of bargaining with the oil firms.

His statements were backed up, the same day, by documents released by congressional committees investigating the Gulf of Mexico disaster. They show BP, which buys the oil from Deepwater Horizon, stunted on safety. But the documents also showed the other oil majors also have large safety problems and lack plans for them.

In the last round of oil company bargaining, following the fatal 2005 blast at BPs Texas City, Texas refinery, USW pushed strongly for including safety standards -- notably process safety, covering entire refin-



Rich From Page 7.

The 400 richest families in America, who saw their wealth increase by some \$400 billion during the Bush years, have now accumulated \$1.27 trillion in wealth. Four hundred families! During the last 15 years, while these enormously rich people became much richer their effective tax rates were slashed almost in half. While the highest paid 400 Americans had an average income of \$345 million in 2007, as a result of Bush tax policy they now pay an effective tax rate of 16.6 percent, the lowest on record. Last year, the top 25 hedge fund managers made a combined \$25 billion but because of tax policy their lobbyists helped write, they pay a lower effective tax rate than many teachers, nurses, and police officers. As a result of tax havens in the Cayman Islands, Bermuda and elsewhere, the wealthy and large corporations are evading some \$100 billion a year in U.S. taxes. Warren Buffett, one of the richest people on earth, has often commented that he pays a lower effective tax rate than his secretary.

But it's not just wealthy individuals who grotesquely manipulate the system for their benefit. It's the multinational corporations they own and control. In 2009, Exxon Mobil, the most profitable corporation in history made \$19 billion in profits and not only paid no federal income tax — they actually received a \$156 million refund from the government. In 2005, one out of every four large corporations in the United States paid no federal income taxes while earning \$1.1 trillion in revenue.

But, perhaps the most outrageous tax break given to multi-millionaires

and billionaires happened this January when the estate tax, established in 1916, was repealed for one year as a result of President Bush's 2001 tax legislation. This tax applies only to the wealthiest three-tenths of 1 percent of our population. This is what Teddy Roosevelt, a leading proponent of the estate tax, said in 1910. "The absence of effective state, and, especially, national restraint upon unfair money-getting has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power. The prime need is to change the conditions which enable these men to accumulate power which is not for the general welfare that they should hold or exercise.... Therefore, I believe in a ... graduated inheritance tax on big fortunes, properly safeguarded against evasion and increasing rapidly in amount with the size of the estate." And that's what we've had for the last 95 years — until 2010.

Today, not content with huge tax breaks on their income; not content with massive corporate tax loopholes; not content with trade laws enabling them to outsource the jobs of millions of American workers to low-wage countries and not content with tax havens around the world, the ruling elite and their lobbyists are working feverishly to either eliminate the estate tax or substantially lower it. If they are successful at wiping out the estate tax, as they came close to doing in 2006 with every Republican but two voting to do, it would increase the national debt by over \$1 trillion during a 10-year period. At a time when we already have a \$13 trillion debt, enormous unmet needs and the highest level of wealth inequality in the industrialized world, it is simply ob-

scene to provide more tax breaks to multi-millionaires and billionaires. That is why I have introduced the Responsible Estate Tax Act (S.3533). This legislation would raise \$318 billion over the next decade by establishing a graduated inheritance tax on estates over \$3.5 million retroactive to this year. This bill ensures that the wealthiest 0.3 percent of Americans pays their fair share of estate taxes, while making sure that 99.7 percent of Americans never have to pay a dime when they lose a loved one. It also makes certain that the overwhelming majority of family farmers and small businesses never have to pay an estate tax.

This legislation must be passed because, with a \$13 trillion national debt and huge unmet needs, we cannot afford more tax breaks for millionaire and billionaire families. But even more importantly, it must be passed because the United States must not become an oligarchy in which a handful of wealthy and powerful families control the destiny of our nation. Too many people, from the inception of this country, have struggled and died to maintain our democratic vision. We owe it to them and to our children to maintain it. □

Bernie Sanders was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2006 after serving 16 years in the House of Representatives. He is the longest serving independent member of Congress in American history.

He has focused on the shrinking middle class and widening income gap in America that is greater than at any time since the Great Depression. Other priorities include reversing global warming, universal health care, fair trade policies, supporting veterans and preserving family farms.

Unit 00 Rexnord

Rexnord at this time is still booming, we continue to get more orders than expected. If you know of anyone with grinding experience on machines that are related to O.D., I.D., and centerless grinding, or anyone who can set up and operate Acme Gridley screw machines let Chuck or I know.

Our contract negotiations begin August 11th.

Everyone needs to follow their FMLA guidelines to avoid potential stumbling blocks. I have found over the years of being your Union Rep. that honesty is the best policy. I am not only preaching it, I am trying to live it myself.

I ask for your prayers that as your President that my decisions are the right ones. In this position you make decisions daily that make someone happy, but upset someone else. I do not find it difficult to make those decisions just as long as I can look myself in the mirror and know I tried to do the right thing. Once again pray along with me that I am granted the wisdom to do the right thing with all the issues that effect the members!

Thank you for your support and if you have any issues contact me.

In Solidarity,
Brian Bousom
Unit 00 President

Unit 09 Quemetco

Business is still good here at Quemetco. We have steady work with plenty of overtime. The Price of lead seems to be holding steady.

The grievance load has been light. We have been able to settle some grievances at the first and second step. We have no grievances appealed to arbitration at this time.

We were one month shy of going 12 months with no lost time accidents in June when were unfortunate enough to have one. I hope that we can go that long again and then some.

The newly reorganized safety committee has been very active meeting twice a month. The committee began a new program called Spotlight on Safety earlier this year. For this program the committee tours a selected department of the plant looking for safety as well as environmental issues. A report is generated and then all issues are addressed.

The company picnic will be held at Indy's Incredible Pizza Company in Greenwood on August 22. All employees and their families are invited to this event. The Incredible Pizza Company will be closed to the public for this event.

As of the writing of this I have been released by International to work on the Labor 2010 political program. I have been assigned as the AFL-CIO state political director. Andy Engle will be acting Unit President in my absence. My assignment will last for about 3 months, through the

November election. I will be asking for volunteers from time to time to come out and phone bank and to do labor walks. It is imperative that we protect our statehouse in November.

In Solidarity,
Kelly Ray Hugunin
Unit 09 President

Unit 10 Sumco

Approximately one year ago our facility went through some major changes. We negotiated a plant closure and a plant opening within hours of one another under the new name of Duexfreres Inc. Out of 120 union employees the new company only rehired 52. We were lucky that the new owners wanted to keep the "bones" of the former contract but most of the "meat" was stripped away. The contract negotiated was only for six months due to insurance issues and no clear prognosis for the economy.

Move forward six months to December 2009. We went through another contract negotiation. This resulted in another name change to Sumco, LLC. The Major sticking point during the negotiations were health insurance, pay rates, and job classifications. We negotiated a two year agreement during which pay was frozen, we ultimately had to pay less weekly for insurance, added a health savings plan, but were unable to reinstitute the former position of "Group Leader".

Move ahead another six months to today. During this time we have

See **Sumco** Page 11.

Sumco From Page 10

added five new union employees and the new owners of the business are drawing up plans to purchase the facility and land from the former owners of the business. We currently have steady work weeks with no less than 40 hours of work and steady overtime for those who choose to take it on all three shifts.

Over this time the union officers in the facility have been faced with stressful matters navigating the language of the new contract. It has been a learning curve for all involved, both union and company dealing with vacation issues, attendance policy issues, etc.

If you had proposed in June 2009 the state our facility is currently in, almost anyone involved would have thought you crazy. Through the dedicated teamwork by the union employees, the future of Sumco, LLC is looking promising.

In Solidarity,
Leo Hedden
Unit 10 President

Unit 13 Diamond Chain

Business is picking up at Diamond Chain. We are getting a lot of people called back from layoff. Our grievance load has been pretty light at the first of the year. But, with the new language in the contract, the load is starting to pick up. We have two arbitrations scheduled for the month of July. One is over T.A. pay/job duties, the other is over time and one half after 8 hours.

I was sorry to see that our government couldn't get unemployment benefits extended again. I continue to have hope for the employees who are still on layoff, that business will continue to improve over the next few weeks. There is a lot of overtime being worked in all departments. I would gladly give some of that up to see another employee brought back from layoff.

In Solidarity,
Mike Hensley
Unit 13 President

Editor's Note: Mike Hensley's article was submitted prior to the Senate passage of the unemployment benefits extension.

Unit 17 Mid America Extrusions

Our work here has been steady, keeping up two shifts of 40 hours. We have recently hired two people and one person has served the 120 days probation and welcomed into the union.

We shipped 759,270 pounds of aluminum in April, 675,699 pounds in May, and 565,081 pounds in June.

On June 18th we had our cookout for safety. The cookout was attended by three guests: Chuck Jones, Linda Bennington, and Bruce Reed. We ate and a good time was had by all.

How about all of you other units? We are your union brothers and sisters and your friends and would

like to hear what is going on in your plants.

In Solidarity,
Howard W. Davis
Unit 17 President

Unit 28 Vertellus

Vertellus at this time has no one laid off. Most of the employees are working overtime in order to keep up with demand.

Our Contract ends in September and we have scheduled several dates between now and then to meet with the company to negotiate a new one. We have a good negotiating committee and we appreciate all the support we are and have been receiving from Chuck Jones, Bruce Reed, Jim Adcock and Randy McKay. We believe, (with the support from the USW) we will be successful in reaching a new agreement we all can live with.

That's it for now, Please Work Smart and Work Safe!

In Solidarity
Carl Thompson Sr.
Unit 27 President

Leave It To The Experts

- Save on car and truck repairs and maintenance
- 5% off all Goodyear tires, including car tires, snow tires, all-terrain and more
- 10% service - including sale prices

Save now! Call:
1-877-436-4641 or visit
UnionPlus.org/Goodyear



Steelworkers, Wind Energy Group Agree To Pact To Develop Industry, U.S. Jobs

WASHINGTON (PAI)--The Steelworkers and the American Wind Energy Association have signed an agreement on working together to develop the wind power industry, emphasizing the need for alternative energy devices -- wind mills and wind turbines generating electricity -- produced by U.S. workers in U.S. factories.

Key parts of the pact include lobbying for a national standard ordering U.S. utilities to purchase a set percentage of their power from renewable sources -- wind, solar, hydro, etc. -- and for tax incentives to ensure the parts for the wind turbines and associated power plants and transmission lines are manufactured here, not overseas.

We expect this framework will help advance the promise of green jobs being key to our future. The nation cannot continue to fall behind other countries on clean energy manufacturing, said Steelworkers President Leo Gerard.

If we do not act quickly on this opportunity through federal leadership and industry commitment, we will have done a disservice to our citizens. The agreement is designed to create a partnership for progress that doesn't accept second place, and instead, puts the U.S. at the leading



edge in clean energy, he added.

We're really excited. This will allow us to diversify our electrical power to a renewable power portfolio, Gerard told a telephone press conference.

The Steelworkers have led the way

in the union movement in arguing for building factories to manufacture green products, such as wind generators and turbines, solar panels and hybrid car batteries. Not only would doing so revitalize U.S. manufacturing, they contend, but it would also produce high-paying jobs.

They cite the example of Gema-sa, a Spanish wind-turbine manufacturer that bought a former steel mill in the Pittsburgh area, converted it to making wind turbines and now employs several hundred Steelworkers doing so.

But wind power and other alternative energies have yet to get off the ground due to lack of investment. That's because federal tax credits for such alternative energy investment expire every several years, making financial institutions reluctant to commit money. AWEA adds that banks don't lend because

See **Wind** Page 13.

OSHA From Page 8.

eries, not just specific machinery -- in its contracts with the oil companies, Beevers said. The firms turned that down flat.

Since then, he added, the oil majors remained intransigent. The independent investigatory federal Chemical Safety Board identified huge safety violations at Texas City and declared the industry as a whole was negligent. Beevers said the oil lobby then offered to share informa-

tion, refinery by refinery -- but only if USW would sign a confidentiality agreement, confining the data to each specific refinery's workforce.

The one thing we know is that we have a fight at every refinery over money to be spent on safety and health, he added. As Dr. Michaels said, it's not just BP. OSHA's own survey showed 70% of the nation's refineries had the same conditions as at Texas City where a large leak produced fumes that were then ignited, killing 15 and injuring more than 100.

Gerard reminded listeners that inattention to job safety and health costs lives. He said one committee, chaired by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., has held hearings this year on the string of refinery blasts. Murray acted after one blast in Tesoro, Wash., near her home, killed six Steelworkers and a former unionist promoted to a supervisors job. Don't just have hearings about the oil leak in the Gulf. Have hearings about the 11 families whose lives were destroyed. You don't hear about them anymore, he said. □

Brighten Someone's Day With A Bouquet

Celebrating a special day, an event or milestone or just want to brighten someone's day? Union Plus Flower Service can help you send flowers and other gifts from Teleflora for every occasion anywhere in the world! Union members save 20% off retail prices. Order flowers 24 hours a day. Same day delivery is available.



Teleflora's
FLOWER CLUB

Union
Plus®

To order call **1-888-667-7779**
or visit: **UnionPlus.org/Flowers**

Wind From Page 12.

many of the wind energy firms are too small, to quote the groups chairman. Gerard also noted construction of some alternative energy plants, though not necessarily wind power plants, can take a decade.

We have a lot of challenges due to that lack of a long-term commitment. We only have a short-term tax policy, he said. So financing is lacking, he pointed out.

A stable and secure financial climate allowing AWEA members to plan for the future, while getting the capital to achieve those plans, is a necessary ingredient to expanded utilization of domestic supply chains. Steelworkers, and all Americans, want to know that we will take every step necessary to create a plan for long-term economic growth,

Gerard added.

Denise Bode, the CEO of the 2,300-member wind energy group, said the pact with USW ensures that sector is the first major player in the energy industry to clearly show its commitment to utilizing domestically located sources of supply.

Job creation and long-term growth in this sector require a comprehensive public policy agenda. That agenda will require some federal resources, but most importantly, it will require the national commitment to clean and green energy essential to the future of the industry. Our partnership will help achieve these goals, Bode added.

The agreement drew immediate support from Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio. He said wind energy plants already bring new jobs to his

economically depressed state. He also stressed the need to rebuild the nations factory base.

Thirty years ago, 30% of our GDP was in manufacturing and 11%-12% was in finance. Today that's almost flipped -- and we know where that's taken us, he said, referring to the current Great Recession caused by financial excesses and speculation. So this is a big step the wind industry has taken, with our encouragement. Brown did not say what the chances are of approving a long-term tax credit for alternative energy.

But there are 8,000 parts needed to produce a wind turbine. I have people -- tool and die makers, machine shops, auto parts dealers -- coming to me and saying I want to be part of the supply chain for wind power, he added. □

Minnesotans Stage Largest Nurses Strike In U.S. History

By Barb Kucera, Workday Minnesota editor, and Press Associates

MINNEAPOLIS (PAI)--The largest nurses' strike in U.S. history got under way on June 10, with members of the Minnesota Nurses Association walking picket lines at 14 Twin Cities hospitals.

The walkout by 12,000 nurses started at 7 a.m. at facilities owned by six hospital systems: Health East, Allina, Methodist, Children's, North Memorial and Fairview. It was scheduled to last one day, concluding at 7 a.m. June 11.

A planned 1-day sympathy strike on the same day, by 12,000 California Nurses Association members against the University of California hospital system -- and over the same short-staffing issue -- was stopped by a court order on June 8, two days before.

Minnesota hospital administrators claimed they kept their facilities operating with the help of replacement nurses hired through national agencies that specialize in provid-

transferred patients around the Twin Cities" to non-struck hospitals, he added. "I know they've canceled a lot of procedures and surgeries.

"This is not business as usual for the hospital, no matter what they have to say about that," Danielson added of hospital management.

The atmosphere on the Mercy Hospital picket line was exuberant, even festive, as hundreds of MNA members wearing red union shirts strolled a picket line stretching from one end of the hospital grounds to the other. Some brought their dogs. Others had lawn chairs to sit in when they needed a break. At least one brought her baby.

Felix, a Jack Russell terrier owned by RN Becky Hallstrom, sported a Minnesota Vikings collar and a red T-shirt with the words, "I love my nurse," eliciting smiles from other strikers. Mounds of food and drink were available at several way stations, which the strikers soon nicknamed after their work units -- "ICU" and "3West." Extra picket signs were piled next to cases of bottled water.

Members of other unions showed up in solidarity. The Service Employees, which organized a vigil on the night of June 9 in support of the nurses, had staff and members at all 14 picket lines.

And Jim Monroe, executive director of the 12,000-member Minnesota Association of Professional Employees, a state workers union, added that "Hospitals should listen



Nurses from several hospitals picket outside Abbott Northwestern Hospital Thursday, June 10, 2010 in Minneapolis as more than 12,000 nurses staged a one-day strike of 14 hospitals in the Twin Cities metro area.

"One, two, three, four -- more nurses needed on the floor!" strikers chanted as they picketed outside Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids. The nurses seek the guaranteed staffing levels they say are necessary to ensure patient safety and quality of care.

ing staff during strikes. But RN Jim Danielson had his doubts.

"They've closed down numerous floors," said Danielson, who has worked for 13 years in the hospital's mental health unit. "They've

See **Strike** Page 15.

Panel Discusses Independent Contractor Abuses

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

NEW YORK (PAI)--When Senegalese immigrant Faty Ansoumana picked up his weekly paychecks as a delivery driver for upscale Gristedes grocery in Manhattan, after working seven days a week and 10-12 hours daily, he got an unpleasant surprise each time: The checks averaged \$90, far below the U.S. minimum wage.

Then he found out why: Gristedes had arbitrarily classified Ansoumana, his fellow delivery drivers and 1,000 workers overall as independent contractors, a growing class of workers who are not covered by minimum wage laws, overtime pay laws, workers comp, unemploy-

ment insurance or even Medicare and Social Security.

The National Employment Law Project went to bat for Ansoumana and the other Gristedes workers



who were similarly misclassified. The store blamed labor brokers, whom it said brought many of the

low-wage workers to its attention, but that didn't wash. NELP sued and won \$6 million in back pay for the workers.

Unfortunately, Gristedes is not alone. Some 7.3% of all U.S. workers -- one of every 14 -- are independent contractors, not covered by any of the nations labor laws, federal figures show. And hundreds of thousands of those shouldn't be.

The misclassified workers -- construction workers, home health care aides, janitors, day laborers, child care workers, meat process

See **Abuses** Page 16.

Strike from Page 14.

to their nurses. On a daily basis, nurses are on the front line providing medical care that prevents pneumonia, deaths due to falls, infections, medication errors and other complications that lead to extended stays and death. When a loved one is sick, people need to know there is a nurse available to watch over their family member.

"When nurses request lower patient loads, it is not a union scare tactic," he said.

Patients also joined the strikers. Don Laufenberg of Blaine, Minn., who had just been at Mercy the week before for surgery on his leg, walked up with several boxes of doughnuts, prompting cheers from the nurses. "I can't say why they're on strike," Laufenberg acknowledged. "All I know, as a former patient, is that I want the best care for

the money I'm paying...The nurses I've met here are very good."

The scene was similar at Unity Hospital in Fridley, where Laurie Olmon walked the picket line with nurses, carrying a sign that read, "30+ years: Cared for by Minnesota nurses." Elmon, who has epilepsy, explained that "I've been in and out of the ER and hospital for years. The people who have taken care of me the most are the nurses... They took care of me and I'm here to take care of them."

The union, citing little progress in negotiations that began in March, called the 1-day strike to put pressure on management to put patient-staff ratios in hospital contracts. Currently, understaffing or inappropriate staffing makes it difficult if not impossible to provide good patient care, the nurses said. MNA is compiling stories on its website to illustrate the effects of unsafe staff-

ing.

Management wants ultimate flexibility in staffing, assigning nurses across units and even across hospitals. Other issues in the strike include management's demand to slash the nurses' pension fund by one-third, moving it back to 1968 economic levels.

The hospitals claim they cannot afford to increase staffing to the level sought by the nurses. But as a group, Twin Cities hospitals made nearly \$700 million in profits during 2009. Meanwhile, on the Mercy picket line, strikers chanted the question: "Hey, hey, ho, ho -- Where does all the money go?"

This strike surpassed the walkout of 1984, when 6,000 RNs across Minnesota walked off the job for 38 days. That was the largest RN strike in U.S. history until now. □

Abuses From Page 15.

ing workers, truck drivers, even a restaurant dishwasher in Madison, Wis. -- have that tag arbitrarily applied to them by employers whose prime motive is to save money, witnesses told Congress on June 17.

The fate of the misclassified workers landed before the Senate Labor Committee, in its hearing on legislation (S 3254) by Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, to cut down on the independent contractor dodge. Similar legislation has been introduced in the House.



Browns bill has strong support from the building trades, Change To Win, the Teamsters and other major unions. It would order employers to classify workers as employees -- covered by labor law -- or independent contractors before hiring them, using specific criteria, and to tell the workers why. If the worker objected, the two would try to work it out. If that failed, the worker could call the Labor Department.

Right now, the decision to classify a worker as an independent contractor is up to the employer, who does not need to keep any paperwork showing why -- or what the impact, in terms of wages and hours, would be. DOL has no enforcement pow-

er, though if the IRS finds an employer misclassified a worker, it can hit the employer with seven years of back unemployment insurance taxes. IRS estimates that at least 15% of independent contractors are misclassified, Deputy Labor Secretary Seth Harris said.

Witness after witness, including Harris, New York State Labor Commissioner Colleen Gardner, employment law project co-director Catherine Ruckelshaus and Maryland construction contractor Frank Battaglini, testified how the independent contractor dodge hurts workers -- and honest employers, too. All of them backed Browns bill. The one dissenter, GOP-recruited nurse registry owner Gary Uber of Florida, said present law is strong enough to go after erring companies.

After describing how the dishwasher, Alvaro, in Madison was denied overtime, Harris asked senators: Suppose he had gotten hurt, scalding his hand in the hot water of the restaurant's high-pressure high-powered machines? Alvaro -- no last name given -- would have been unable to get workers comp, Harris testified.

Honest employers also lose out, Battaglini pointed out. Federal figures show up to 30% of construction contractors arbitrarily misclassify employees as independents. The unscrupulous employers can save 30% on labor costs and underbid honest contractors, such as himself. And it's not a union vs. non-union issue, Battaglini told Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., the top foe of Browns bill.

Enzi charged the measure was special interest legislation.

With their discounts for labor costs, I'm getting beat, said Battaglini, who spoke not only for his own firm -- with 55 workers -- but for several pro-union construction employer associations. Even after taking out other factors, such as those employers use of apprentices on jobs, I could only conclude that the only way they could be that low with bids 20% below his own is because they're cheating.

Change To Win strongly backed Browns bill when he unveiled it on April 22. When unscrupulous companies cut corners and misclassify employees as independent contractors, workers are cheated out of important benefits and legal protections. Responsible employers who play by the rules are undercut by unfair competition, said CTW Chair Anna Burger.

This is not primarily a problem of shady fly-by-nights or unsophisticated mom-and-pop small businesses. Major multinational corporations, and sometimes significant segments of entire industries, use misclassification as a business model to cut corners, gain a competitive edge, and maximize profits, she added.

Harris said that even if Congress doesn't approve Browns bill, the Labor Department is moving ahead with its crackdown on the independent contractor dodge. That includes \$25 million for enforcement in its budget, and a proposed rule requiring firms to provide written justifications for workers status, either as employees covered by labor law, or independent contractors, who are not. □

Get out the Vote in 2010!

Who is allowed to vote in Indiana?

Anyone who is:

- Both a U.S. citizen and a resident of Indiana; and
- At least 18 years of age on or before the next General or Municipal Election, and
- Not currently in prison after being convicted of a crime (convicted felons can vote if not in prison); and
- Living in the precinct where you vote for at least 30 days prior to the election; and
- Registered to vote.

Who can vote absentee in Indiana?

- All registered voters in Indiana are eligible to vote absentee-in-person at the county election board office beginning 29 days before Election Day.
- In order to vote absentee-by-mail, one of the following must apply:
 1. You have a specific, reasonable expectation that you will be absent from the county on Election Day during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open (6 am until 6 pm).
 2. You have a disability.
 3. You are at least 65 years of age.
 4. You will have official election duties outside of your voting precinct.
 5. You are scheduled to work at your regular place of employment during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
 6. You will be confined due to illness or injury or you will be caring for an individual confined due to illness or injury during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
 7. You are prevented from voting because of a religious discipline or religious holiday during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
 8. You are a participant in the state's address confidentiality program.
 9. You are a member of the military or a public safety officer.

Note: Voters voting absentee-by-mail are NOT required to show photo ID.

Important dates for the 2010 Election in Indiana.

- May 18, 2010: Voter Registration Opens for the 2010 General Election
- October 4, 2010: Voter Registration Closes for the 2010 General Election
- October 4, 2010: First day a voter may vote an absentee-in-person at the county clerks office for the 2010 General Election.
- October 25, 2010: Deadline for absentee-by-mail applications for the General Election
- November 2, 2010: General Election Day
- December 1, 2010: Voter Registration Opens for 2011 Municipal Primary Election

Mail-in voter registration applications must be postmarked on or before the above registration deadlines.

Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications are available at the Union Hall or online at uswlocal1999.org.



STEEL VOICE

Kelly Ray Hugunin
Editor

USW Local 1999
218 South Addison
Street
Indianapolis, Indiana
46222

Phone: 317-639-1479
Fax: 317-639-1138
E-Mail:
local1999usw@att.net

STEEL VOICE is an official
publication of the United
Steelworkers, Local 1999,
AFL-CIO, CLC.



Proud member of the
United Steelworkers
Press Association

Submissions from members
are always welcome.

To submit
Mail to: 218 South Addison
St. Indianapolis, IN 46222
Phone: 317-639-1479
Email: hugunin@tds.net



MEET BRETT VOORHIES

Brett Voorhies is running for State House in District 92. Brett is a fellow Steelworker who started at the Rexnord bearing plant. He is a dues paying member of Local 1999. He knows the issues that affect working families in Central Indiana.

Brett was raised in Speedway. His first job was working at Charlie Brown's restaurant while he was in high school. Brett went on to attend IUPUI and is now raising his family on the west side. Brett lives just outside of Speedway with his wife Angie, son Hayden, 13, and daughter Kennedy, 4.



Brett was instilled with a passion for public service from a very early age. His father, Bob Voorhies, who served as President of the central Indiana AFL-CIO labor council for over 20 years, brought him to his first phone bank when he was just five years old. Brett has put those values into action and fought hard for working families for 17 years as the Legislative and Political Coordinator for the United Steelworkers International Union.

For more information visit Brett's website at: www.brettvoorhies.com

