

America's Choice: Destruction or Construction

By Leo Gerard

From sea to shining sea, America is suffering.

She is, however, afflicted with an avoidable condition she brought on herself, like a hangover. Only this one's interminable and internationally contagious.

She did it by choosing over the past 30 years to establish an economy that worshiped avarice. That decision has destroyed her financial system and taken down with it much of the world's.

Now America must decide whether to be swayed by the greedy urging her to continue basing her economy on the destructive policies of deregulation, de-unionization, globalization and privatization or to construct a new financial system focused on industry and profit shared by the workers who produce it.

Over much of the 20th century, the nation created real wealth by manufacturing -- taking raw materials from the ground, using machines, energy and labor to convert them into products and selling those here and overseas. That process, to make steel or tires or washing machines, was the engine of the economy. In 1947, 32 percent of the workforce engaged in it belonged to unions, which meant workers received good wages and benefits. This enabled them to churn real money throughout the economy by buying homes and cars and television sets and to sending their children to college. And it enabled them to save 7.5 percent of their earnings.

Then, in the 1980s, a new narrative for the economy emerged. In this story, greed was good. Self-interest was supposed to lead to the best outcomes for business. To accommodate this concept, Government deregulated and, in fact, passed laws favoring big corporations and the nation's wealthiest citizens. The idea was that some of the prosperity they created as a result of the abolished protections for workers and the environment would trickle down.

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**Leo Gerard - USW International
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Local 1999, Unit 09

INFORMER

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Foreign Auto Plants Have Received \$3.6 Billion In Subsidies, Mostly from Southern States

Washington, DC—Responding to many queries, Good Jobs First released its summary of state and local subsidies given to foreign-owned auto assembly plants, totaling \$3.6 billion.

“As elected officials debate aid for the Big 3, taxpayers have the right to know the full extent of government involvement in America’s auto industry,” said Greg LeRoy, GJF’s executive director. “And while proposed federal aid to the Big 3 would take the form of a loan, the vast majority of subsidies to foreign auto plants were taxpayer gifts such as property and sales tax exemptions, income tax credits, infrastructure aid, land discounts, and training grants,” he said.

- Honda, Marysville OH, 1980, \$27 million*
- Nissan, Smyrna, TN, 1980, \$233 million**
- Toyota, Georgetown, KY, 1985, \$147 million
- Honda, Anna, OH, 1985, \$27 million*
- **Subaru, Lafayette, IN, 1986, \$94 million**
- Honda, East Liberty, OH, 1987, \$27 million*
- BMW, Spartanburg, SC, 1992\$, 150 million
- Mercedes-Benz, Vance, AL, 1993, \$258 million
- **Toyota, Princeton, IN, 1995, \$30 million**
- Nissan, Decherd, TN, 1995, \$200 million**
- Toyota, Buffalo, WV, 1996, more than \$15 million
- Honda, Lincoln, AL, 1999, \$248 million
- Nissan, Canton, MS, 2000, \$295 million
- Toyota, Huntsville, AL, 2001, \$30 million
- Hyundai, Montgomery, AL, 2002, \$252 million
- Toyota, San Antonio, TX, 2003, \$133 million
- Kia, West Point, GA, 2006, \$400 million
- **Honda, Greensburg, IN, 2006, \$141 million**
- Toyota, Blue Springs, MS, 2007, \$300 million
- Volkswagen, Chattanooga, TN, 2008, \$577 million

Total: more than \$3.58 billion

* total of direct subsidies to all Honda facilities in Ohio

** includes about \$200 million for expansions of Smyrna and Decherd plants

List does not include joint ventures with U.S. companies

This data, drawn primarily from contemporary media accounts, is very conservative. It do not account for inflation; some would be worth far more in today’s dollars. It does not include any estimate of subsidies granted to hundreds of foreign-owned auto supply companies that have located in the same areas, virtually all of which were also heavily subsidized. Finally, it does not reflect later news accounts, which often place higher subsidy values.

Good Jobs First is a non-profit, non-partisan research center promoting best practices in economic development and smart growth, based in Washington, DC, with offices in New York and Chicago.



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This was the new economy.

This was a scam to move wealth from the middle class to the affluent. And it worked. In 1976, the richest 10 percent in this country possessed 49 percent of the wealth. In 2007, it was 73 percent.

During this time of bowing to corporate demands, the government actually gave multinational corporations tax benefits to offshore their U.S. manufacturing facilities. Sometimes they shut down, throwing hundreds of Americans out of work, then packed the factory pieces into crates, numbered piece by numbered piece, and shipped them to China or Indonesia or whatever country would allow blatant violation of its own labor and environmental regulations. Sometimes they closed American factories and built brand new ones overseas with breaks from foreign governments. As U.S. companies closed, union membership dropped to below 12 percent. And America found herself importing toxic lead-coated toys, paper made from trees illegally harvested in Indonesian national forests and untested pharmaceuticals.

Companies that remained here threatened to leave if workers didn't accept wage and benefit concessions. American workers were vilified for seeking a living wage while CEOs pulled millions out of corporations in annual bonuses.

The American economy began to depend less on manufacturing and more on the "financial sector," where profit was made moving money around, betting on stock trades, and participating in asset bubbles. Remember the tech bubble? That was manufactured value -- not manufactured goods -- and that's why it disappeared when the bubble burst.

The same has now happened with the housing bubble. Those smart guys on Wall Street, among the brilliant ones who sold America on the idea that greed was good, bet on housing prices never falling. A decline in home values never entered their calculations.

Then they fell. And they took down with them a couple of Wall Street banks and the largest insurance company in the world and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, credit markets and then the economy of the nation and the world.

Now workers are really in trouble.

They were struggling before the crash as manufacturing jobs disappeared and wages stagnated. Personal savings declined so that the average family now owes \$8,000 to credit card companies. Without sufficient wage increases to sustain their lifestyle, families borrowed against their major asset, their homes. Now, because the housing bubble burst, a quarter of mortgage holders owe more than their homes are worth and 2.5 million have lost theirs to foreclosure. All of this is because America failed to give greed the wide berth warranted by one of the seven deadly sins.

Alan Greenspan, who served as steward over the rise of the culture of avarice for nearly two decades as chairman of the Federal Reserve, admitted to Congress in October that his opposition to federal regulation was a blunder:

"I made a mistake in presuming that the self-interests of organizations, specifically banks and others, were such that they were best capable of protecting their own shareholders and their equity in the firms."

In the song "America the Beautiful," from which the lines "from sea to shining sea, come, lyricist Katharine Lee Bates counseled in the second verse, "America! America! God mend thine every flaw." Clearly, this greed-based economy is a flaw. It was created by covetous humans. It must be mended by Americans of better grace, people Katharine Lee Bates described as those, "Who more than self their country loved."

America's workers must seize back control of their country and wrest back determination of its priorities. They must re-regulate the financial markets and remove the onerous restrictions placed on unions to prevent organization of new workplaces and bargaining of new contracts to raise worker salaries and benefits.

But, most immediately, America's workers must insist Congress immediately pass an economic renewal package that will reinvigorate Main Streets across the nation. This is essential to prevent a prolonged and excessively painful deep recession

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\$14B Auto Bailout Dies in Senate

By JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS and KEN THOMAS,

WASHINGTON – A bailout-weary Congress killed a \$14 billion package to aid struggling U.S. auto-makers Thursday night after a partisan dispute over union wage cuts derailed a last-ditch effort to revive the emergency aid before year's end.

Republicans, breaking sharply with President George W. Bush as his term draws to a close, refused to back federal aid for Detroit's beleaguered Big Three without a guarantee that the United Auto Workers would



agree by the end of next year to wage cuts to bring their pay into line with U.S. plants of Japanese car-makers. The UAW refused to do so before its current contract with the automakers expires in 2011.

The breakdown left the fate of the auto industry — and the 3 million jobs it touches — in limbo at a time of growing economic turmoil. General Motors Corp. and Chrysler LLC have said they could be weeks from collapse. Ford Motor Co. says it does not need federal help now, but its survival is far from certain. Democratic leaders called on Bush to immediately tap the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout fund for emergency aid to the auto industry.

Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., called the bill's collapse "a loss for the country," adding: "I dread looking at Wall Street tomorrow. It's not going to be a pleasant sight."

GM said in a statement it was "deeply disappointed" that the bipartisan agreement faltered. "We will assess all of our options to continue our restructuring and to obtain the means to weather the current economic crisis," the company said. Chrysler, too, said it "will continue to pursue a workable solution to help

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Choice from Page 4. **resulting from the housing bubble collapsing.**

This public investment has two purposes. It will stimulate the economy by providing jobs. In addition, it will strengthen America's manufacturing competitiveness in the international marketplace.

The Institute for America's Future and our union have developed a plan called A Main Street Recovery Program calling for investment of \$900 billion over two years.

The money would be targeted to areas that would create sustained, long-term, shared economic growth. This includes investing in green technologies to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil and the threat of global warming. Another focus is repair and modernization of the country's physical infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, and intellectual infra-

structure -- its education system. And finally, the third targeted area is assistance to workers most in need, which would include moves toward universal affordable health insurance, a middle class tax cut and expanded unemployment insurance.

More than 250 organizations and economists have endorsed this program. President-elect Barack Obama's recovery plan outlined last weekend includes many of its aspects. Its passage would signal the beginning of conversion to an economy that values production and workers, something the self-interested greed-mongers will oppose.

But let's work for realization of Katharine Lee Bates' final verses:

"America! America" God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain The banner of the free!"

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ensure the future viability of the company."

The White House said it was evaluating its options in light of the breakdown on Capitol Hill.

"It's disappointing that Congress failed to act tonight," Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto said in a statement. "We think the legislation we negotiated provided an opportunity to use funds already appropriated for automakers and presented the best chance to avoid a disorderly bankruptcy while ensuring taxpayer funds only go to firms whose stakeholders were prepared to make difficult decisions to become viable."

That bill — the product of a hard-fought negotiation between congressional Democrats and the Bush White House — was virtually dead on arrival in the Senate, where Republicans said it was too weak in its demands on the car companies and contained unacceptable environmental mandates for the Big Three.

Thursday's implosion followed yet another set of marathon negotiations at the Capitol — this time involving labor, the auto industry and lawmakers. The group came close to agreement, but it stalled over the UAW's refusal to agree to the wage concessions.

"We were about three words away from a deal," said Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, the GOP's point man in the negotiations, referring to any date in 2009 on which the UAW would accept wage cuts.

The Senate rejected the bailout 52-35 on a procedural vote — well short of the 60 required — after the talks fell apart. Just 10 Republicans joined 40 Democrats and two independents in backing it. Three Democrats sided with 31 Republicans in opposition. Reid also voted "no" for procedural reasons.

Congress is not scheduled to return for legislative work until early January.

Some Senate Democrats joined Republicans in turning against the House-passed bill — despite increasingly urgent expressions of support from the White House and President-elect Barack Obama for quick action to spare the economy the added pain of a potential automaker collapse.

"In the midst of already deep and troubling economic times, we are about to add to that by walking away," said Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., the Banking Committee chairman who led negotiations on the package.

Alan Reuther, the UAW's legislative director, declined comment to reporters as he left a meeting room during negotiations. The union had no immediate reaction to the bailout's defeat.



The stunning disintegration was eerily reminiscent of the defeat of the \$700 billion Wall Street bailout in the House, which sent the Dow tumbling and lawmakers back to the drawing board to draft a new agreement to rescue financial institutions and halt a broader economic meltdown. That measure ultimately passed and was signed by Bush.

It wasn't immediately clear, however, how the auto aid measure might be resurrected, with Congress now set to depart for the year.

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called Senate Republicans' refusal to support the White House-negotiated bill irresponsible and urged the Bush administration and the Federal Reserve to provide short-term relief for the automakers. "That is the only viable option available at this time," she said.

Congressional Republicans have been in open revolt against Bush over the auto bailout. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky joined other GOP lawmakers Thursday in announcing his opposition to the White House-backed bill, which passed

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the House on Wednesday. He and other Republicans insisted that the carmakers restructure their debt and bring wages and benefits in line with those paid by Toyota, Honda and Nissan in the United States.

Hourly wages for UAW workers at GM factories are about equal to those paid by Toyota Motor Corp. at its older U.S. factories, according to the companies. GM says the average UAW laborer makes \$29.78 per hour, while Toyota says it pays about \$30 per hour. But the unionized factories have far higher benefit costs.

GM says its total hourly labor costs are now \$69, including wages, pensions and health care for active workers, plus the pension and health care costs of more than 432,000 retirees and spouses. Toyota says its total costs are around \$48. The Japanese auto-maker has far fewer retirees and its pension and health care benefits are not as rich as those paid to UAW workers.

Republicans also bitterly opposed tougher environ-

mental rules carmakers would have to meet as part of the House-passed version of the rescue package, and the Senate dropped them from its plan.

The House-passed bill would have created a Bush-appointed overseer to dole out the money. At the same time, carmakers would have been compelled to return the aid if the "car czar" decided the carmakers hadn't done enough to restructure by spring.

The House approved its plan late Wednesday on a vote of 237-170.

A pair of polls released Thursday indicated that the public is dubious about the rescue plan.

Just 39 percent said it would be right to spend billions in loans to keep GM, Ford and Chrysler in business, according to a poll by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center. Just 45 percent of Democrats and 31 percent of Republicans supported the idea.

In a separate Marist College poll, 48 percent said they oppose federal loans for the struggling auto-makers while 41 percent approved.

False-Positive Triggers

Common medications and foods that might trigger false-positive in initial screening tests for controlled substances are:

Advil.....	Marijuana	Norflex	Methadone
Amoxicillin.....	Cocaine	Nuprin.....	Marijuana
Benadryl.....	Methadone	NyQuil.....	Amphetamines or Alcohol
Catac.....	Amphetamines or Alcohol	Phenergan.....	Methadone or Heroin
Diet Pills.....	Amphetamines	Poppy Seed Rolls	Heroin
Dilantin.....	Barbiturates	Rufen	Marijuana
Dristan.....	Alcohol	Soma.....	Methadone
Elavil	Methadone	Sudafed.....	Amphetamines
Mentholated Drops.....	Alcohol	Terinhydrate	Alcohol
Herbal Teas	Cocaine	Tonic Water	Cocaine or Heroin
Motrin.....	Marijuana	Vicks Inhaler.....	Amphetamines
Nasal Sprays.....	Amphetamines	Vicks Formula 44	Heroin

It is important to know that taking any of the above does not necessarily mean that you will have a false-positive test result. However, if you do take any of the above, you should keep a record of when you did and in what quantity. Likewise, you should maintain a record of-any prescription drugs your doctor has authorized you to take.

Chart courtesy of David L Lang, Chairman of the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, Local 6136

KELLY'S KOLUMN

Layoff Fears

With the current economic crisis and the country in a recession, a lot of folks have been asking me lately if we will be having a layoff at Quemetco. I have discussed the possibility of a layoff with George. He has assured me that at this time there are no plans for any reduction in force.

We are fortunate that we are not experiencing any layoffs. We are one of only two plants in the Local that are not laying off. We have also seen some of our sister locals here in Indiana have their plants closed. The most recent being Raybestos in Crawfordsville, Local 7-164. Over 400 Steelworkers will lose their jobs there when that plant closes in February.

Although we are not experiencing a lay off now, times are still tough. My advice to everyone is to keep a close eye on their finances. I would think it over before making any major purchases and try to keep some money in savings if at all possible. We can never be sure of what tomorrow holds, but we can try to be as prepared as we possibly can be.

I also ask that anyone who can make a donation of money or non-perishable food items to the Local for our laid off members that they do so by dropping them off at the Union Hall. We have around 800 members on lay off from our Local.

In Solidarity

Kelly Ray Hugunin

Kelly Ray Hugunin
USW, Local 1999
Unit 09, President



Sign Up for Indiana AFL-CIO

E-Activist Network

INDIANA AFL-CIO E-ACTIVIST NETWORK!

The Indiana AFL-CIO and its affiliated unions along with the independent unions have joined forces to fight back damaging legislation against Indiana's working families. Therefore, they have created an E-Activist network that allows them to directly communicate with union members about possible damaging legislation or other vital labor union news.

Members who register for the Indiana AFL-CIO E-Activist network can update their profiles, access the tell-a-friend web page, locate their legislators and send them an email, and check on any email alerts or advocacy campaigns. Through the E-Activist Network you can watch and listen to the Indiana General Assembly.

To sign up, go online and visit the IN AFL-CIO website at www.inaflcio.org. Bookmark the site in your web browser to stay informed and prepared to take action. **Please sign up today! And, tell a friend so they can sign up and be informed!**



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Obama Labor Dept. Advisors: President-Elect Backs Pro-Worker Agency Changes

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (PAI)--Democratic President-elect Barack Obama strongly supports changing the Labor Department to make it pro-worker and make it more activist in enforcement, a top member of Obama's agency transition team says.

"I'm 1000% confident in the interest, the will and the capacity of the incoming administration to implement the changes he (Obama) outlined in the campaign," said Thomas Perez, Maryland's Secretary of Labor, Licensing and Regulation.

Added another Obama advisor, workers' rights attorney Jill Ruckelshaus, change at DOL "is a top priority" for the incoming president, "in my opinion."



Ruckelshaus, Perez and Gov. Jon Corzine (D-N.J.) all spoke at a Dec. 8 symposium called by the liberal Center for American Progress think tank. The think tank held the session to discuss and release its comprehensive report on pro-worker moves Obama could implement at the sprawling agency without waiting for legislation.

Those moves would increase enforcement, notably in Labor's Wage and Hour Division, against companies that break overtime pay laws and misclassify workers as "independent contractors" to avoid paying Social Security, Medicare and workers' comp.

Other moves they recommended involved better collection of data on wage and hour and job safety and health violations, and using that evidence to target patterns of law-breaking, both by individual companies and industries. That would be followed by "pro-active" enforcement, multiple fines, and wider-ranging investigations of targeted firms, both to catch scofflaws and to deter other potential corporate lawbreakers.

All of those moves can be done by redirecting resources and emphasis within DOL, and without waiting for either a new law -- such as the Employee Free Choice Act -- to empower workers or for new Obama executive orders, the panelists said.

Obama has yet to name a Labor Secretary, or deputies for key posts there. Names floated for the top job include former House Minority Whip David Bonior (D-Mich.), now chair of American Rights at Work, Mary Beth Maxwell, the pro-worker organization's executive director, former House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.) and Gov. Jennifer Granholm (D-Mich.).

Whoever is Labor Secretary should be a key part of Obama's economic team, panelists at the center said. But that appears unlikely, as the economic team has been named. It includes several members of the more pro-business wing of the Democratic Party, a wing headed by former Clinton Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

Regardless of who gets named to the top job, Corzine and the panelists said a top priority of the Obama administration should be to "change the culture" in DOL away from its anti-worker pro-business bias under GOP Bush regime Labor Secretary Elaine Chao. Chao is the only original Bush Cabinet member to serve all eight years.

But Chao also made clear, in her first and only meeting with the AFL-CIO Executive Council, in 2001, that labor policy was out of her hands and instead

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After Five Years, Communications Workers Win Key Ruling VS. CNN

WASHINGTON (PAI)--After five years, the Communications Workers have finally won what the union calls a key case involving outsourcing, when a National Labor Relations Board administrative law judge ruled for the union and the agency in massive labor law-breaking charges against the Cable News Network (CNN).

In his Nov. 19 decision, agency ALJ Arthur J. Amchan virtually threw the book at CNN for its outsourcing of unionists' work in the network's Washington and New York bureaus in late 2003 and early 2004. CNN ended its contract with Team Video Services at those times and outsourced the work by setting up what it called its "Bureau Staffing Project," as a way to hire the video producers individually, Amchan said.

In his 169-page ruling, Amchan ordered at least 110 workers in NABET-CWA Locals 11 and 31 to be rehired with back pay and seniority to their old jobs or--if those no longer exist--retraining and placement in equivalent jobs. They were illegally fired and when they applied for their old jobs, CNN refused to hire them.

The judge called CNN's actions "a blatant attempt to avoid having to recognize and bargain with the employees' collective bargaining representatives."

Another 140 workers will get money from the ruling, when it is finalized, CWA spokeswoman Candice Johnson said. They were freelancers hired after the outsourcing occurred or other workers "who did not get the advantages of the union contracts" that the network illegally terminated.

Amchan also ordered the network to restore prior contracts and to pay the union locals all back dues it should have withheld, with interest. And he ordered CNN to bargain new contracts with the locals.

Those contracts would replace pacts the NABET locals signed with Team Video Services, the latest in a string of subcontractors the network hired over 20 years to provide its video/audio feeds for its network. Amchan found TVS and CNN were joint employers of the techs in the two bureaus. Under labor law, if the union represents the workers, joint employers must recognize and bargain with it--including bargaining over termination of its contract with TVS and the impact on the techs.

Instead, CNN "fired" TVS, ended the pacts and set up its Bureau Staffing Project to hire techs as freelancers. Amchan called the BSP "a sham" to fire the workers and both avoid rehiring the union supporters and to avoid unionists among new hires.

CNN's actions "really show the need for the Employee Free Choice Act," said Johnson. Its passage would cut down on opportunities for employers to break workers' rights

by such practices, she said. That's because the act's voluntary recognition--card-check--provision would make it easier to quickly organize a workplace.

NABET Local 31 President J. Carl Mayers called Amchan's ruling "a great victory for all union workers." He added it "would not have been possible without the hard work and courage of the members that were terminated by CNN as well as those that remained and never gave up hope."

Local 11 President Ed McEwan also called the decision a win "but one that took far too long to achieve because of our broken labor laws. Everyone should know the network management we rely on to bring us the news are not above the illegal practices they headline on a regular basis."

Press Associates, Inc. (PAI)



Chicago Workers Win In First Sit-Down Strike In Decades

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

CHICAGO (PAI)--Some 260 workers in the Republic Windows and Doors plant on Chicago's North Side won on Dec. 10 after staging, for at least five days, the first in-plant sit-down strike the labor movement has seen in decades.

Aided by strong outside support, including solidarity statements from President-elect Barack Obama and AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney, the workers, members of United Electrical Workers Local 1110, won a \$1.7 million settlement. It gives them eight weeks of salary, vacation pay they were owed and

two months of health coverage.



The money was pledged by the Bank of America, which yanked its line of credit from Republic, forcing the firm to close on three days' notice, along with J.P. Morgan Chase, said Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-Ill.) who arranged the settlement.

Bank of America, one of the major financial institutions that got federal bailout money (\$25 billion), was told that unless it freed up credit to pay the work-

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directed from the White House. Asked then about replacing the ergonomics rule that the GOP-run Congress and Bush overturned, Chao replied: "That's above my pay grade."

The panelists and their report "took a broad view of enforcement across DOL," as panelists David Madland and Karla Walter put it. That means not just increased enforcement, but also increased coordination in enforcement, because often violators -- either individual businesses such as Wal-Mart or industries such as poultry processing -- break a whole host of labor laws, in wages, hours, health and safety and other areas.

And while the Bush DOL has concentrated on individual violations, an Obama DOL should administer the law in those cases, too, but also use them as signals pointing to more widespread abuses in industries or firms, the panelists said.

DOL is also handicapped by the fact that the number of personnel in key areas, notably the Wage and Hour Division, has crashed. Panelist Kim Bobo, of Chicago-based Interfaith Worker Justice, again reiterated her point that the division has half as many inspectors as it had when it was founded, in 1941.

To augment its enforcement powers, the panel said, DOL should reach out to other organizations -- unions, non-profit groups such as Interfaith Worker Justice, state enforcement agencies and community groups -- to become constant "eyes and ears" against violators. Those organizations are also more familiar with local working conditions, have people available, and are more credible with workers, they said.

Corzine and Perez also said several states, including theirs, plus New York, Illinois and Massachusetts, stepped into enforcement voids left by Bush's DOL. And the governor said the feds could adopt some of their innovations, too. For example, he cited the "independent contractors" issue, a particular problem in construction and trucking. To halt such practices, New Jersey passed a law tightening and unifying the definition of "independent contractor." It also now has the power to put "stop work" orders on construction projects where contractors harm workers by misclassifying them.

"That (halt) gets their attention even faster," Corzine's labor commissioner said.

Press Associates, Inc. (PAI)

Chicago from Page 11.

ers, the city of Chicago, Cook County and the state of Illinois would all yank their business. BofA put \$1.35 million into an escrow account for the workers, and Morgan put in \$400,000.

On Dec. 3, two days before the plant closed, Local 1110 members demonstrated against the bank at its downtown Chicago offices, UE said. They chanted, "You got bailed out, we got sold out!"



Local 1110 President Armando Robles told the news media: "Just weeks before Christmas we are told our factory will close in three days. Taxpayers gave Bank of America billions, and they turn around and close our company. We will fight for a bailout for workers."

But the key feature of the struggle was the workers' in-plant sit-down, reminiscent of the historic sit-ins that workers, particularly the United Auto Workers, staged during union recognition drives in the 1930s. The Republic workers pointed out that not only did the firm close on three days' notice -- thanks to the bank -- but it broke federal law in doing so. The plant closing law requires 60 days' notice for such large shutdowns.

Robles summed up the workers' commitment to continue fighting for their rights: "We are united. We are America and we are going to continue to fight," he said.

Meantime, the workers cleaned up the factory and shoveled snow there. Some of its equipment had

been moved out and stored elsewhere in Chicago even before the sudden shutdown. "We're doing something we haven't done since the 1930s, so we're trying to make it work," UE organizer Leah Fried said of the in-plant sit-in.

Obama strongly supported the Republic workers. So did Sweeney.

"When it comes to the situation here in Chicago with the workers who are asking for their benefits and payments they have earned, I think they are absolutely right. What's happening to them is reflective of what's happening across this economy," the president-elect told a press conference in the city, his hometown.

"Members of the AFL-CIO stand in solidarity with... members of the United Electrical Workers who, in championing their own rights, are taking on the rampant corporate abuse of workers across this country," Sweeney said in a statement. The "peaceful occupation of the shuttered Republic plant put Washington and Wall Street on notice that working people have had enough. Our nation cannot afford to bail out banks and investment firms while leaving workers behind," he added.

Other unions, including SEIU, AFSCME and the Teamsters, sent leaders to the sit-in site to voice solidarity with the workers. Political support also came from the Rev. Jesse Jackson and pro-worker Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.).

And a UAW rep showed up with a \$5,000 check for the UE workers, even though UAW is currently grappling with the car company financial crisis. That crisis is also partially caused by banks yanking credit, from the Detroit-based auto firms, their dealers and their customers.

"The bank has the money," UE spokesman Mark Meinster said of BofA before the settlement was reached. "And we are demanding that Bank of America release the money owed to workers who have earned it and are entitled to it. We're occupying the plant to guard its assets and keep everything safe."

Meinster also said the workers would try to fight to

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Wal-Mart Settles Minn. Wage Suit, To Pay Workers And State \$54m

By Barb Kucera, Editor, *Workday Minnesota*, Special to PAI

HASTINGS, Minn. (PAI)--In yet another instance of corporate wage theft from workers, some 100,000 current and former hourly employees of Wal-Mart and Sam's Club stores in Minnesota – and the state itself – will share up to \$54 million from the giant retailer under a legal settlement announced Dec. 9.



The agreement is the final stage in a massive wage-and-hour class action suit that put a spotlight on Wal-Mart's practice of having employees work through their rest and meal breaks. It's the latest in a series of such suits Wal-Mart has lost nationwide.

In July, Dakota County District Judge Robert King ruled the company committed more than 2 million violations of the Minnesota Fair Labor Standards Act and ordered it to pay \$6.5 million in back pay. The judge then scheduled a jury trial to determine civil penalties and punitive damages, which could have reached billions of dollars. By reaching a settlement, Wal-Mart and the workers avoided going to trial.

The suit covers workers at Wal-Mart stores and

Sam's Clubs locations in Minnesota for just under 10 years, from Sept. 11, 1998, through Nov. 14, 2008. The agreement also includes "a substantial payment to the state of Minnesota," according to a joint statement by Wal-Mart and Maslon Edelman Borman & Brand, one law firm representing the workers.

"We are satisfied with this settlement, gratified these hourly workers will now be paid after seven years of litigation, and happy that the state...will receive the largest wage and hour civil penalty in its history," said Justin Perl, an attorney for the workers.

Company spokesman David Tovar claimed the monster retailer, known for its anti-worker actions -- including frequently forcing workers to toil "off the clock" -- "is pleased the court in Minnesota ruled in its favor on many claims." Tovar did not say what the pro-company rulings were.

Tovar also claimed Wal-Mart's "company policy" is to pay its workers, whom it calls associates, "for

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Chicago from Page 12.

keep Republic open, since the firm -- until it shut -- had them making energy-efficient glass for windows and doors.

Encouraging such domestic manufacturing of energy-efficient products is part of Obama's multi-billion-dollar program to reverse the current Bush crash and help revive the economy.

"The workers want Bank of America to keep the plant open and the workers employed," said UE President Carl Rosen. "There is always a demand for windows and doors. But with Barack Obama's stimulus proposal, there will be even greater demand for the products made by Republic's workers. It doesn't make sense to close this plant when the need is so obvious," he added.

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*"Honey, we only owe \$11,000 on our credit cards...
We'll never qualify for a government bailout at this rate."*

Wal-Mart from Page 13.

every hour worked and to make rest and meal breaks available.

He added that: "Any manager who violates these policies is subject to discipline, up to and including termination. We remain committed to providing good jobs with real career opportunity to the 1.45 million U.S. associates who choose to work for Wal-Mart and serve our customers every day."

Other evidence, both in the Minnesota court and produced from other sources nationwide, belies Tovar's statements about Wal-Mart disciplining managers who overwork employees without pay and who violate wage and hour laws.

In his ruling in July, Judge King found Wal-Mart repeatedly and willfully violated Minnesota labor laws or its contract with its employees on the issues of contractual rest breaks, statutory meal breaks, shaving time from paid rest breaks and failure to maintain accurate records.

In his decision, King found Wal-Mart was aware that employees were not receiving breaks to which they were entitled. "In essence, they (Wal-Mart) put their heads in the sand," King stated.

In testimony before King, former Wal-Mart workers described being forced to miss breaks so they could keep up with the work, even to the point of not having time to go to the bathroom.

As part of the settlement, Wal-Mart agreed to maintain various electronic systems, surveys, and notices that will further compliance with wage and hour policies and Minnesota laws. The settlement is subject to approval by the trial court.

The exact amount paid to class members -- the workers -- will depend on the court's approval as well as on the number and amount of claims submitted by class members, both sides said in their joint statement. King will hold a hearing for preliminary approval of the settlement on Jan. 14, 2009.

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DRIVE UNION

A guide to 2009 cars, trucks, SUVs and vans made by union members

UAW cars

Buick Lucerne
 Cadillac CTS
 Cadillac DTS
 Cadillac STS
 Cadillac XLR
 Chevrolet Cobalt
 Chevrolet Corvette
 Chevrolet Malibu/Hybrid
 Chrysler Sebring Convertible
 Chrysler Sebring Sedan
 Dodge Avenger
 Dodge Caliber
 Dodge Viper
 Ford Focus
 Ford Mustang
 Ford Taurus
 Lincoln MKS
 Mazda6
 Mercury Sable
 Mitsubishi Eclipse
 Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder
 Mitsubishi Galant
 Pontiac G5
 Pontiac G6
 Pontiac Solstice
 Pontiac Vibe
 Saturn Aura/Hybrid
 Saturn Sky
 Toyota Corolla*

UAW vans

Chevrolet Express
 Dodge Caravan
 Ford Econoline
 GMC Savana

UAW trucks

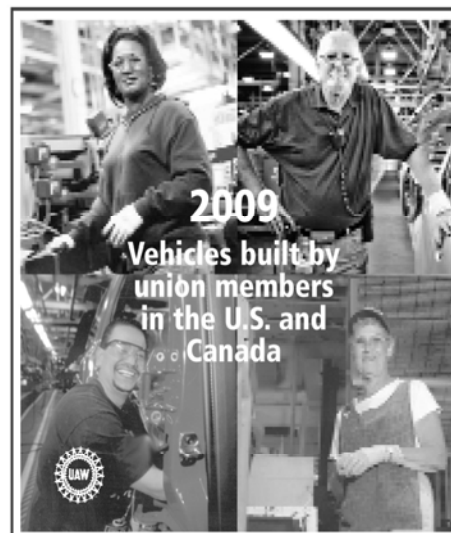
Chevrolet Colorado
 Chevrolet Silverado*
 Dodge Dakota
 Dodge Ram Pickup
 Ford F Series*
 Ford Ranger
 GMC Canyon
 GMC Sierra*
 Mazda B-Series
 Toyota Tacoma*

UAW SUVs/CUVs

Buick Enclave
 Cadillac Escalade/Hybrid
 Cadillac Escalade ESV
 Cadillac SRX
 Chevrolet Suburban*
 Chevrolet Tahoe*/Hybrid
 Chevrolet Traverse
 Chrysler Aspen/Hybrid
 Dodge Durango/Hybrid
 Dodge Nitro
 Ford Escape/Hybrid
 Ford Expedition
 Ford Explorer
 Ford Explorer Sport Trac
 Ford Taurus X
 GMC Acadia
 GMC Yukon*/Hybrid
 H2 Hummer
 H3 Hummer
 Jeep Commander
 Jeep Compass
 Jeep Grand Cherokee
 Jeep Liberty
 Jeep Patriot
 Jeep Wrangler
 Lincoln Navigator
 Mazda Tribute/Hybrid
 Mercury Mariner/Hybrid
 Mercury Mountaineer
 Mitsubishi Endeavor
 Saturn Outlook

CAW trucks

Chevrolet Silverado*/Hybrid
 GMC Sierra*/Hybrid



CAW cars

Buick Lacrosse
 Chevrolet Camaro
 Chevrolet Impala
 Chrysler 300
 Dodge Challenger
 Dodge Charger
 Ford Crown Victoria
 Lincoln Town Car
 Mercury Grand Marquis

CAW vans

Chrysler Town & Country
 Dodge Caravan
 Volkswagen Routan

CAW SUVs/CUVs

Chevrolet Equinox
 Ford Edge
 Ford Flex
 Lincoln MKT
 Lincoln MKX
 Pontiac Torrent
 Suzuki XL7

IUE SUVs/CUVs

Chevrolet Trailblazer
 GMC Envoy

All these vehicles are made in the United States or Canada by members of the United Auto Workers (UAW), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) or International Union of Electrical Workers-Communications Workers of America (IUE).

Because of the integration of U.S. and Canadian vehicle production, all these vehicles include significant UAW-made content and

support the jobs of UAW members.

However, those marked with an asterisk (*) are sourced from the United States and another country.

When purchasing one of these models, check the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). A VIN beginning with 1, 4 or 5 identifies a U.S.-made vehicle; 2 identifies a Canadian-made vehicle.

Not all vehicles made in the United States or Canada are built

by union-represented workers. The Toyota Corolla, for example, is made in the United States by UAW members, but the Canadian model is made in a nonunion plant and other models are imported from a third country.

To order copies of the 2009 union vehicle buying guide, contact the UAW Purchasing Department, 8000 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214, (313) 926-5221.

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 ALAN GREENSPAN BILL O'REILLY TED STEVENS MONICA GOODING WILLIAM KRISTOL

The Fool's Denial

SCRIPT BY
KARL ROVE

AGENT
DOUBLE-O

W
IS AT IT
AGAIN!

SPINDOUBT
2008



IN LIKE A LIAR
 OUT LIKE A LAME DUCK
THE LEGACY TOUR!

