

BCTGM *News*

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SETTING A DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE





the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Growing Labor Movement— **A MORE PROSPEROUS AMERICA**

For more than 70 years, the American labor movement has been the driving force for economic prosperity and a rising standard of living for our nation's working families. With the growth of the labor movement and expansion of collective bargaining brought about by the National Labor Relations Act, a vibrant middle class was built and with it a better America.

Unfortunately, our nation's labor laws do not work as they were intended by the lawmakers who enacted them. Over the last decade, anti-union employers and their organizations have taken a hard line to weaken the labor movement by undermining the legal and moral right of workers to form a union and bargain collectively.

The facts are clear. The current system for workers to form unions and bargain is broken: One out of five activists who try to form unions is fired; each year in the United States, an average of 22,633 workers are unlawfully fired or discriminated against for supporting a union. That's one American worker every 23 minutes; seventy-eight percent of private sector employers require supervisors to deliver anti-union messages to the workers whose jobs and pay they control; half the employers at non-union facilities in this country threaten to shut down partially or totally if employees join together in a union; even after workers successfully form a union, one-third of the time employers never negotiate a contract.

More than half of America's working people, nearly 60 million, say they would join a union right now. Disgracefully, the vast majority cannot do so out of fear of getting fired, discriminated against or threats to close their shop.

With this employer barrage has come a declining percentage of the workforce that is organized, a growing gap between the "haves and the have nots" and a middle class that is less prosperous and less able to provide the basic necessities for their families.

Today we have a genuine opportunity to reverse this trend, expand the labor movement, rebuild the middle class and restore the American dream for working people.

The vehicle for this revitalization is a piece of legislation in Congress, the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). The EFCA will restore fairness and balance to the labor relations process by taking away the "right" of employers to deny workers their legitimate rights. It is the most important labor and human rights legislation in nearly 40 years.

Through union certification on the basis of signed authorization cards (card check recognition), the EFCA curtails an employer's ability to intimidate, threaten and harass employees during the union organizing process. With first contract mediation and arbitration, the EFCA puts an end to an employer's ability to avoid the legal

obligation to bargain a contract after workers have voted to form a union. And, with substantial penalties for employers who violate the law, the EFCA puts teeth into the enforcement process.

This legislation has been around for a number of years. However, the previous leadership in Congress that was bought and paid for by the corporate community never even allowed debate on this legislation, let alone a vote.

With a new Congress controlled by individuals committed to helping working families improve their lives and giving workers a fair shot at determining their future in the workplace, the EFCA is moving forward. Congressional leaders have assured the labor movement that there will be meaningful hearings and debate followed by a vote on the EFCA.

Despite the tremendous need for this legislation, its passage is far from certain. Employer organizations will spend millions to weaken or defeat it. They like the broken system and will use every resource at their disposal to maintain it.

The Employee Free Choice Act is vital to the future of our Union. It is worthy of the full, active and enthusiastic support of every one of our members and their families. I strongly urge you to get involved and call on your U.S. Representatives and Senators to work hard for the passage of the EFCA.

I hope you will join me in fighting for this historic change.

Frank Hurt
BCTGM International President





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BCTGM Participates in National Organizing Summit

The BCTGM was among hundreds of union activists and leaders who participated in the AFL-CIO Organizing Summit in December. The focus of the two-day event, held in Washington, D.C., was successful organizing techniques and innovative campaign strategies that have allowed workers to join unions despite a hostile National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). BCTGM International officers, representatives, rank-and-file members, and staff from across the country attended the summit, which featured speakers, panel discussions and working sessions.

Speakers included AFL-CIO President John Sweeney, U.S. Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Atlanta Labor Council President Charlie Flemming, and AFSCME President Gerald McEntee. The summit also included opportunities for the BCTGM group to discuss and debate issues facing the labor movement including implementing strategic campaigns, organizing globally, building community support during organizing drives and regulating globalization.

The summit also spotlighted ways to overcome organizing obstacles, led by passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, designed to help level the playing field between workers and management in organizing drives and in bargaining. Hundreds of union activists marched on Capitol Hill chanting “Union Power’s on the Rise, Now’s the Time to Organize!” Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) addressed the large crowd, promising to work with other like-minded politicians to pass the Act.

“A major focus of this summit was on the changed Congress and how we can change America’s labor laws to restore the freedom



Hundreds of union activists marched on Capitol Hill demanding the right to organize. Pictured here (from left) is Intl. Vice Pres. Bob Oakley, L. 42 Bus. Agt./Organizer Isaac Gubern, Intl. Reps. Jim Condran and John Price.

of workers to form unions and bargain collectively—and pass the Employee Free Choice Act,” reflected International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee. “It was also an opportunity for us to share best practices of how to organize in the current environment with other labor organizers. It was an incredible event.”

BCTGM Local 42 (Atlanta) Business Agent/Organizer Isaac Gubern was impressed by the energy of the participants. “There is a sense that we now have the momentum to make some real, substantive changes for the betterment of workers. People are excited,” reflected Gubern. International Vice President Bob Oakley and International Representatives John Price and Jim Condran also participated in the summit.

Edwards, Miller Honored at Summit

The AFL-CIO honored former Senator John Edwards and Representative George Miller (D-CA) with the Paul Wellstone Award. The award, named after the late Minnesota Senator, is given to elected leaders who take a strong stand in support of workers rights and social and economic justice. Both recipients gave rousing speeches, and received several standing ovations from the cheering crowd.



L. 42 Bus. Agt./Organizer Isaac Gubern (left) and Intl. Rep. Jim Condran (right) pose for a photo with Edwards (center) following his acceptance of the Wellstone Award.

You have a voice... make it heard!



Don't underestimate the impact of communication from constituents! Senators and Representatives closely keep track of letters, e-mails, phone calls, and visits.

The 110th Congress will be deliberating a number of measures in coming months that will affect workers' lives. One of the best ways for BCTGM members to have their views heard on Capital Hill when such legislation is being considered is through clear communication with their elected Congressional Representatives.

Don't underestimate the impact of communication from constituents! Senators and Representatives closely keep track of letters, e-mails, phone calls, and visits. Congressional Members need to understand how their actions will affect working Americans, especially their constituents who may have helped put them in office in 2006—and can help take them out in the next election!

The BCTGM encourages union members to contact their respective Representatives and Senators to let them know how specific legislation will affect working families. The following offers tips on communicating with Congressional Members through letter-writing; e-mail; phone calls; and personal visits. In many cases, personal communication from constituents may be the deciding factor on how a Member votes on important issues affecting American workers and their livelihoods.



Communicate electronically

If you know your Congressional Member's e-mail address, this can be an easy and effective way to express your views. If you have access to the Internet, looking up a Member's e-mail address is as easy as consulting the legislative section of the International's web site (<http://capwiz.com/bctgm/home/>). From there, you can enter your zip code to have your Member's information..

Customized letters are also available on the union's website to print out and mail (if you want a written response in return) or send via e-mail. However, when constructing a personal e-mail to a Member of Congress, follow the same suggestions as for a printed letter). For the subject line of your e-mail, identify your message by topic or by bill number.

Your Senators and Representatives have had dozens of chances to cast their votes for or against working families. The BCTGM's electronic voting record, found in the legislative alerts section of the union's web site, will let you know where your lawmakers stand on working family issues such as fair wages, education, health care, workplace safety and worker's rights. The International's web site also posts a daily schedule for congressional happenings.



Write a letter

The letter is the most popular choice of communication with a congressional office. If you choose not to use one of the custom letters found on the BCTGM's web site or do not have access to the internet, consider these helpful suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the letter:

State your purpose for writing in the first paragraph of the letter. Only address one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page. If the letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly. A House bill is usually identified as H.R. ____ and a Senate bill as S. _____. Bill numbers can be found on the BCTGM's web site.

Personalize your message. If you are writing on behalf of your local union, say so; and, if you are a constituent, let the Member know. If you are writing about a legislative proposal, explain how it affects you, your family, or your community. When using a form letter from bctgm.org, add such personal information.

Be courteous and to the point. Include key information, using personal examples to support your position.

Be specific about the action you want the Member to take. If you want information, request it. If you want the member to vote a certain way or cosponsor legislation, be specific and direct.

Address your letter to your Representative or Senator in the following manner:

To a Senator:

The Honorable (insert name)
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

To a House Member:

The Honorable (insert name)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



Call Congress

Your legislator is there to listen to you, so you should feel free to call. Every Representative and Senator maintains at least one office in Washington, D.C. or in their respective state.

To contact your Senators or Representatives in Washington, call the Capitol switchboard (202) 224-3121 and ask for the Senator or Representative by name and state. The operator will connect you with his or her office. (You can also look up this information on www.bctgm.org)

Carefully plan your telephone calls. Because Members of Congress and their staff get hundreds of calls,

keep your message between three and five minutes. You may want to write down your points so state them clearly.

When placing your call, identify yourself as a BCTGM member and a constituent, calling from your district. Ask to speak directly to the Member of Congress. If he or she is not available, ask to speak with the staff person who is responsible for the issue you are calling about.

Calling district offices of a Senator or a Representative is as effective as calling their Washington, D.C. offices, unless you must reach the member directly. District staff is in constant contact with their Washington offices.



Meet with your member

Face-to-face communication is extremely effective. As legislators are usually very busy, apply the letter-writing tips: keep your visits short, make your point quickly and clearly, and thank them for their time.

Plan your visit carefully. Know what it is you want to achieve. Determine who should be with you at the meeting and exactly what you are seeking.

Make an appointment. Write or telephone the local office to arrange a specific date and time for a meeting. It will be easier for the Member's staff to schedule a meeting with you if they know in advance what it is you want, whom you represent, and who will be attending the meeting.

Be prompt and patient. After arranging a meeting time, be prompt. However, because of their crowded schedules, the Senator or Representative may be late or your meeting may be interrupted. When interruptions occur, be flexible and patient.

Be prepared. Not only do Members of Congress have hectic schedules; they often try to keep abreast of more issues than it is possible for one person to know. Members are not likely to be familiar with all the details of every piece of legislation, and, therefore, they value direct statements or personal examples that demonstrate the positive or negative impacts of a specific issue or piece of legislation. You do not need to be an expert; simply explain how the legislation affects you and why you support or oppose it.

Be political. A defined constituency elects Members of Congress, and they want to be known for representing the best interests of their district or state. Wherever possible, demonstrate the connection between your position and what you are requesting and the interests of the Member's constituency. Ask for a commitment or response.

Follow up the meeting with a letter of thanks that outlines the different points covered during the meeting, items of agreement, next steps, additional information required, and any materials you promised to send.

Spirit of Giving is Alive in Illinois



BCTGM Local 1 (Chicago) exemplifies the spirit of giving through its generous contributions to its community. Thanks to the kindness of union members at Alpha Baking Company Inc., a disadvantaged family in LaPorte, Ill. enjoyed a dream Christmas.

Local 1 member Harold Norris, who is employed at the bakery, along with Local 1 chief steward Mike Pallo and plant manager Dirk Peterson led an effort to adopt a local family and provide them with meaningful gifts throughout the holidays.

"We had all met and decided to sponsor a family for Christmas," Norris said.



The LaPorte Salvation Army was able to provide several families from which to choose, and Norris said they chose the family whom they thought was most in need. But in choosing a family, Norris said the goal became not just providing a few presents, but fully treating the family.

"We gave them their Christmas wish," Norris said. "We got them just about anything they needed to have."

After raising more than \$1,400, Norris said new clothing was purchased "head to toe," for the family's three school-age children, as well as some fun toys to celebrate the season. Norris said the group was determined to make this the family's most perfect Christmas so when one of the children asked if Santa would be coming, the children's wish came true on Christmas day.

With the success of caring for the family this year, Norris said the Local 1 members and Alpha Baking representatives hope to help two or three families next holiday season.

Ask a Local Union Officer:

What does being a member of the BCTGM mean to you?



Thanks to my membership in the union, I don't have to pay high health care premiums. Recently my wife was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis and if I didn't have health care, I wouldn't be able to afford her medication.

David Melot

Financial Secretary Local 117G
Shawnee, Okla.



Membership in the union is very important to my family and me. It provides job security and because of my union contract, I am able to obtain a decent wage package to support my family. Because of all that the union has done for me and my family, I understand

the importance of organizing in order to build a stronger union for future generations.

Roger Brown

President Local 69, Port Chester, N.Y.



Being a member of the BCTGM means that I am able to maintain good health benefits, wages and working conditions through the negotiation of fair and decent contracts.

Jim Cummings

President Local 374G, Lancaster, Pa.

BCTGM Members Stand IN SOLIDARITY with Goodyear Workers

BCTGM members and community activists stood in solidarity with 14,000 striking Goodyear Tire Steeworkers (USW) nationwide on December 16, picketing outside local Goodyear stores and factories in recognition of a national AFL-CIO and United Steelworkers Day of Action.

In Atlanta, International Representative James Rivers joined Local 42 (Atlanta) Business Agent Johnny Jackson and Local 42 members at a protest outside a Goodyear

Tire store. In San Leandro, Calif., International Vice President Randy Roark and International Representative Marco Mendoza joined Local 125 officers and members outside a Goodyear location to protest the company's efforts to gut retiree health care. And in Evansville, Ind. International Secretary-

Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee and members of his family protested the company's unfair contract demands.

The BCTGM members and officers voiced their support for members of the USW forced out on strike on October 5, 2006 in order to protect their living standards—and those of Goodyear retirees—from the escalating greed of company executives. Three years ago the company asked workers for help and the union members agreed to concessions. When they requested



Pictured here outside a Goodyear location in San Leandro, Calif. is (from left) Intl. Rep. Marco Mendoza, L. 125 Pres. Ken Young, Intl. Vice Pres. Randy Roark, L. 125 member (Ghirardelli Chocolate Co. Steward) Sharon Lowrie and L. 125 Secy.-Treas. Donna Scarrano.

more concessions in this round of negotiations, union members refused and went on strike. The company threatened to close American factories and increase the number of tires it imports from developing countries like China. The company also attacked workers' and retirees' health care plans.

Thousands of union members throughout the country protested Goodyear's demands on USW members and in late December, the company returned to the bargaining table and reached a satisfactory agreement. On December 28, USW members approved the new three-year contract, officially ending the 86-day strike.

"Special thanks go out again to all of our AFL-CIO union affiliates, activist groups, community organizations, businesses and public officials who not only understood our struggle, but stood shoulder to shoulder with us," USW International President Leo W. Gerard said after the vote.

The new contract covers tire and engineered product plants in: Akron, St. Mary's and Marysville, Ohio; Gadsden, Ala.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Lincoln, Neb.; Topeka, Kan.; Fayetteville, N.C.; Danville, Va.; Tyler, Tex.; Sun Prairie, Wis.; and, Union City, Tenn. Some 400 USW-represented workers at four Goodyear plants in Ontario, Canada were still considering a separate agreement at press time.



BCTGM Intl. Rep. James Rivers (left), L. 42 Bus. Agt. Johnny Jackson (right) and Jackson's grandson (center) participate in the Goodyear protest in Atlanta.

The Goodyear protest in San Leandro, Calif.



THE FIRST 100 HOURS ○

The new House Democratic leadership promised during the election to begin the 110th Congress by leading us in a new direction, beginning with the consideration of six legislative priorities during its first 100 hours in session. That promise has been kept!

Three of the six legislative initiatives acted upon reflect BCTGM priorities: raising the minimum wage, driving down prescription drug prices, and lowering the cost of college loans for working families.

For 10 years, House Republicans refused to vote on raising the minimum wage, and millions of workers suffered and struggled earning just \$5.15 an hour. They watched the value of that \$5.15 shrink and shrink year by year.

In the first hours of business of the 110th Congress and with Democrats back at the helm, on January 9 the House voted 315-116 to give what economists say could be as many as 13 million low-wage workers a raise. Big Business is likely to target a similar bill in the Senate for special-interest provisions.

H.R. 2, introduced by George Miller (D-Calif.), would provide a \$2.10-an-hour raise over two years, with no special-interest giveaways to corporations that already have reaped tens of billions of dollars in tax breaks from the Bush administration and the previously Republican-controlled Congress.

The decade of inaction on the minimum wage eroded its real buying power to the lowest point in more than 50 years and brings a full-time minimum wage worker just \$206 a week, \$10,400 a year, far below the poverty line for even a small family. The increases in H.R. 2 mean a worker will bring home an additional \$4,400 a year. That figure translates into 15 months of groceries or two years of health care for a family of three, according to testimony last year before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

With Congress failing to act, the labor movement took the fight to the state level. The overwhelmingly popular and successful mobilization won minimum wage increases in 17 states through legislation or ballot box victories. The highlight

Minimum Wage Increase

came November 7 when voters in six states resoundingly approved minimum wage ballot measures.

Miller, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, says, "It is a moral outrage that millions of Americans who work full time still live in poverty. If we truly value work, then we have to ensure that it is fairly rewarded."

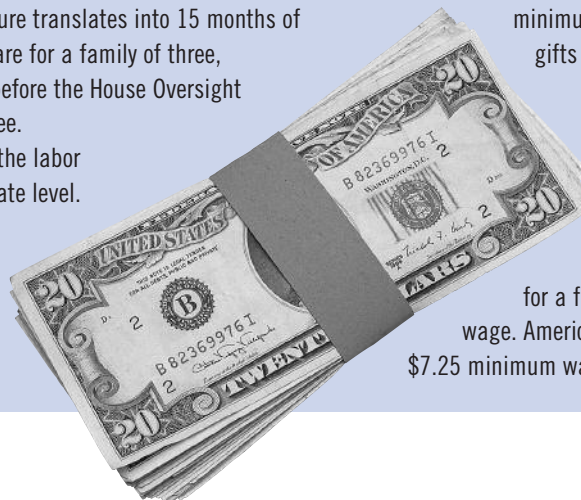
Shortly before the House vote, Miller, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and others urged the Senate to turn back business tax cut giveaways and pass a clean minimum wage bill.

"We cannot slow down this important legislation with other proposals that should stand or fall on their own merit. Minimum wage workers have waited almost 10 long years for an increase. We need to pass a clean bill giving them an increase as quickly as possible," said Kennedy.

In the last 10 years, the Republican-led Congress provided corporations with \$276 billion in tax cuts and provided small businesses with another \$36 billion in dedicated tax breaks. Last month, President Bush said he would support a minimum wage increase only if it contained more gifts to the business community.

An increase in pay for America's lowest paid workers should not have to depend on even more payoffs to business.

The BCTGM calls on Senators—Republicans and Democrats alike—to reject corporate poison pills and vote for a fair, long overdue raise in the minimum wage. America's workers deserve a clean vote on a \$7.25 minimum wage, with no strings attached.



OF THE 110TH CONGRESS

Medicare Price Negotiations



Relief may be on the way for the millions of seniors who rely on the Medicare Part D prescription drug program. Keeping the First 100 Hours momentum going in early January, the House passed, on a 255-170 vote, a bill that will require Medicare to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices.

The bill (H.R. 4), introduced by Reps. John Dingell (D-Mich.) and Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), would repeal the Bush administration-backed provision of the 2003 prescription drug law that expressly forbids Medicare from negotiating lower prices for seniors.

Recent polls show that more than 90 percent of Americans want Medicare to have the power to negotiate with the pharmaceutical industry. However, the Bush Administration said the overwhelming majority of Americans were wrong and threatened to veto any bill that requires drug price negotiations.

Here's one reason why a change is needed now: More than 2 million seniors nationwide who signed up last year for insurer Humana Inc.'s least expensive Medicare prescription drug plan this year will see their average premium cost jump by 60 percent. In seven states, costs will skyrocket an eye-popping 466 percent—starting this month.

The pharmaceutical industry has joined the Bush White House in vigorously opposing lower prices through negotiations—and already has launched a massive lobbying and PR campaign aimed at the Senate, which will take up the bill soon. Drug industry lobbyists have

buttonholed lawmakers, especially newly-elected members, according to news reports.

Prior to the recent vote, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhARMA) spent more than \$1 million on full-page newspaper ads touting the success of the existing Medicare drug system, according to *The Washington Post*.

“Drug companies spent more on lobbying than any other industry between 1998 and 2005—\$900 million, according to the

nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics. They donated a total of \$89.9 million in the same period to federal candidates and party committees, nearly three-quarters of it to Republicans,” reported the *Post*.

The money spent on the campaign against requiring Medicare to negotiate drug prices is a drop in the bucket compared with what Big Pharma could rake in under the status quo. According to *The New York Times*, “For big drug companies, the new Medicare prescription drug benefit is proving to be a financial windfall larger than even the most optimistic Wall Street analysts have predicted.”

Last fall, a report from House Democrats showed drug manufacturers' profits increased by more than \$8 billion in the first six months after the Medicare drug plan went into effect.

Edward J. Coyle, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, notes, “Today's vote... is the triumph of the public interest over the special interest. It is the first step toward making prescription drugs more affordable for our nation's retirees.”

Interest Rates on Student Loans

In 2006, Congress voted

to cut funding for student loans by approximately \$12 billion. College tuition and student fees are 41 percent higher today than in 2001, and the average college grad leaves school with a diploma and a \$17,500 debt. On January 17, the House voted, 356-71, to ease the burden of a college education when it passed a bill that will cut interest rates in half on federal student loans.

Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), chief sponsor of H.R. 5, the College Student Relief Act, notes, “This is really the first time that an entire generation of Americans has had to go deeply into debt in order to get a college degree. And many would-be students, as many as 200,000 per year, are choosing to delay or forgo attending college because they can't afford it,” said Miller.

“Passage of this legislation will be an important first step towards making college more affordable and accessible for millions of low- and middle-

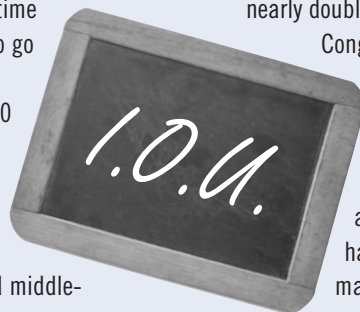
income students,” Miller added. Once the interest rate

cut is fully phased in, Miller says, it will save the typical borrower some \$4,400 over the life of the loan.

Prior to the House vote, the Bush Administration declared its opposition to the college loan interest rate cut that is estimated to help some 5.5 million students who get need-based federal loans. The bill cuts the current 6.8 percent interest rate—that last year the Bush administration and the Republican-controlled Congress allowed to nearly double—to 3.4 percent in five steps. Additionally, in 2006

Congress stripped \$12 billion from student loan programs in order to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), the chief sponsor of the Senate companion bill, notes, “Again and again in recent years, the response of Congress and the administration to this crisis has been to respond with half-measures—or worse, with measures that actually made the crisis even worse.”



2006 INJUSTICE INDEX The Year in Review

Wages that an average CEO earns before lunchtime: **more than a full-time minimum wage worker makes in a year**

Ratio of the average U.S. CEO's annual pay to a minimum wage worker's: **821:1**

Year when this ratio reached its highest so far: **2006**

Percentage of Americans who feel chronically overworked: **30**

Years of unused vacation time that American workers collectively give back to their employers each year: **1.6 million**

Percentage of women earning less than \$40,000 per year who receive no paid vacation time at all: **37**

Average amount that companies spend to recruit a new CEO from outside the company: **\$2 million**

Probability that the newly hired CEO will either quit or be fired within the first eighteen months: **1 in 2**

Number of times that Congress has reduced the estate tax since it last raised the federal minimum wage: **9**

Longest period in which the federal minimum wage has not been increased: **1997-2006**

Number of workers who would directly benefit from an increase in the minimum wage: **5.6 million**

Number of very large estates that would directly benefit from a reduction in the estate tax: **8,200**

Number of households using credit to cover basic living expenses: **7 in 10**

Amount in tax breaks and subsidies that last year's energy bill paid out to the gas and oil industry during a period of record profits and higher prices at the pump: **\$6 billion**



Percentage of U.S. workers who are confident they will be able to live comfortably after retirement: **68**

Percentage who have saved less than \$25,000 toward their retirement: **53**

Percent of African-American and Latino families that have zero or negative net worth, respectively: **31 and 38**

Date on which the Dow Jones Industrial Average reached its all-time high: **October 26, 2006**

Decrease in percentage of Americans who own stocks from 2004 to 2006, the first such decline on record: **51.9% to 48.6%**

Total Wal-Mart received in government subsidies, sometimes called “corporate welfare” by activists, in 2005: **\$3.75 billion**



Percentage of the GDP that went to wages and salaries in the first half of 2006: **51.8**

Time when the percentage of GDP belonging to wages and salaries was lower than in 2006, out of the 77 previous years for which these data are available: **Never**

Estimated additional amount U.S. workers would receive annually if all employers obeyed workplace laws: **\$19 billion**

Ratio of compensation of CEOs of publicly traded defense companies to privates before September 11th, 2001: **190 to 1**

Ratio in 2006: **308 to 1**

Percentage increase in out-of-pocket medical expenses for the average American in the past 5 years: **93**

Estimated amount the U.S. would save each year on paperwork if it adopted single-payer health care: **\$161,000,000,000**

According to exit polls in the midterm elections, percentage of Americans who think life for the next generation will be about the same or worse respectively: **28, 40**



Editors Note: The material on these pages was published by the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to progressive public policy for social and economic fairness. Originally called the Drum Major Foundation, DMI was founded by Harry Wachtel, lawyer and advisor to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the turbulent years of the civil rights movement. For more information on publications by DMI, visit www.drummajorinstitute.org.

ACT NOW to Save Family and Medical Leave

If a member of your family gets sick, you should be able to take time off from work to take care of them without being afraid of losing your job. That's why Congress passed the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in 1993.

But the Bush Administration's Labor Department and Big Business have set their sights on FMLA. Right now, the Labor Department is asking for comments on the law, but many workers' advocates believe that is just a first step toward revising the rules to make it harder to take FMLA leave.

The FMLA, for which unions led the fight, allows employees to balance their work and family life by taking up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a personal illness, the illness of a family member or for a new baby. It was the first piece of legislation President Bill Clinton signed after taking office.

Here's what C.J., a Working America member from Pennsylvania, had to say about Family and Medical Leave:

"As a working woman, I have worked for 35 years caring for the elderly. I have raised a son and am now finding that my parents need more time and help with getting to medical appointments. As with many other workers in the same situation, this means missing work to help. We need laws to help us keep our jobs when illness happens."

In an AFL-CIO Point of View guest column last year, former 9to5, National Association of Working Women Director Ellen Bravo wrote:

"Since it was passed in 1993, an estimated 50 million workers have been able to care for a loved one or recover from illness without being fired. At the same time, nearly nine in 10 employers report

that the FMLA has had a positive effect or neutral effect on productivity and profits."

In 2005, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other Big Business groups, including the National Association of Manufacturers, launched a campaign to weaken the FMLA.

Michael Eastman, the chamber's head of labor policy, said at the time of the campaign's launch, "Changing FMLA...is our number one priority right now in terms of labor issues. Business executives struggle continuously with the

law's requirements—what conditions qualify as 'serious,' and tracking leave and verifying if it's legitimate."

This year, the Chamber already has sent out an action alert to its members urging them to send comments to the Labor Department.

You can act now to save FMLA. Join with Working America (www.workingamerica.org), the AFL-CIO community affiliate, to let lawmakers and officials know how important it is for workers to be able to take time to care for a sick family member.



Region 5 Meets at BCTGM Headquarters



Organizing topped the agenda at the Region 5 staff meeting held at the BCTGM International headquarters in December.

International President Frank Hurt led the meeting, assisted by International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organizing David Durkee, and Executive Vice President Joe Thibodeau.

Region 5 International Vice-President Sean Kelly reviewed the past year, including local union mergers, contract settlements, and recent arbitrations. In addition, the group discussed upcoming contract negotiations with Canada Bread, Weston's, and Smucker's. "We continue to negotiate some of the best contracts in the food industry in Canada; this is something we need to be very proud of," said Hurt.

Both Hurt and Durkee stressed the need to continue to make organizing a high priority in Canada. Durkee talked about the number of new state-of-the-art facilities in the confectionery and baking industries that have been built in Canada in recent years. "We need to ensure that these non-union workers understand the tremendous benefits of joining the BCTGM family," said Durkee.

Also discussed was the current political climate at both the federal and provincial level. According to Kelly, many of the provincial premiers are still ignoring the needs of workers and their families. "There's a lot of talk about improving health care, protecting retirement security and enhancing workers compensation, but at the moment, it's just a lot of talk," said Kelly.



Intl. Exec. Officers meet with Intl. Vice Pres. Kelly (right, center) and Region 5 staff.

Hurt commended all of them on their hard work and dedication. "These staff meetings allow us to look back on the previous year, and learn from what we have done well. In addition, we can plan

ahead to make the upcoming year even more of a success for our members and our organization," said Hurt.

ATTENTION

Applicants to the 2007 BCTGM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The deadline for applications to the BCTGM 2007 International Scholarship program has passed. **All those who submitted an application prior to the January 31 deadline date are reminded to submit the following requirements prior to the March 31 deadline for requirements:**

Personal Profile — completed by the applicant

Academic Report — completed by the high school (or college, if a member). The report should reflect the first semester grades for the senior year (or more recent academic performance, if a member).

Essay — Each applicant is required to write and submit an essay (250-500 words) to demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. Your essay may be one of the following:

- Same essay as the essay requirement from your college application.
- Same essay as the Union Plus Scholarship application (U.S. applicants only).
- Essay on "Organized Labor's Contribution to the Welfare of the People of North America."

SAT or ACT Scores (if applicable)

For more information contact the BCTGM International Scholarship Office at 301/933-8600.

What's in that union-made bread?

There must be something in the union-made bread produced by members of BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.). In the last two decades, the offspring of four Local 114 members have been crowned Miss America, Miss Oregon and Miss Teen Oregon.

The most famous is Katie Harmon, Miss America 2002. She is the granddaughter of BCTGM Local 114 member Adolph DiMarco.

The latest is Miss Oregon Donilee McGinnis. She will represent the state at the Miss America Pageant on January 29 in Las Vegas. She is the daughter of Ron McGinnis, a 13-year member of the union who works at the Oroweat Bakery in Beaverton, Ore.

In 1984, Renee Bagley, the daughter of member Clyde Bagley, was crowned Miss Oregon; and in 1996, Kristen Cook, the stepdaughter of Local 114 Business Representative Gene Beaudoin, was selected Miss Teen Oregon.

Donilee McGinnis, 24, of Scappoose, Ore., is a communications major at Portland State University. She first competed for the Miss Oregon title in 2004 after being recruited by Katie Harmon's mother, a customer at a Gresham dress shop where McGinnis worked. McGinnis placed

BCTGM Local 114 member Ron McGinnis (left) proudly poses with his daughter, Miss Oregon Donilee McGinnis, outside the Oroweat bakery.



Miss Oregon Donilee McGinnis (center) is the daughter of BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) member Ron McGinnis (in baker's whites) at Oroweat Bakery in Beaverton, Ore. Also pictured are Miss Oregon's mother Donilu, brother David, Local 114 Business Manager Terry Lansing (left) and Local 114 Business Representative Gene Beaudoin (fourth from left).

in the Top 10 that year, finished fourth in 2005, and captured the title in 2006.

Her talent is tap dancing, and her platform issue for the Miss America contest is "Autism: Advocacy and Awareness." She selected that topic because her brother, David, 18, is autistic. Donilee volunteers for the Autism Society of

Oregon, as well as the Autism Research & Resources of Oregon. Last year she led an in-house autism awareness training project for the Portland Police Bureau.








Editors Note: The above article and photos appeared in the Jan. 5 edition of the NW Labor Press and are reprinted here with permission.

Flower Power Service

Send Flowers for Valentines Day— or ANY Occasion!

Flowers make the perfect gift for birthdays, holidays, celebrations and tokens of sympathy. The BCTGM Power Flower Service offers a variety of flowers and plants at union-members-only prices. Choose long-stem roses, table centerpieces, spring bouquets, flowers with balloons, baskets and more. Union members can order discounted flowers online or by phone and have them delivered anywhere in the world—satisfaction 100 percent guaranteed!

This BCTGM Power program offers:

-  **15% discount per order**
-  **Unconditional 100% satisfaction guarantee**
-  **Additional savings for online orders**
(\$1.00 off service and transmission fee)
-  **Wide selection of expertly designed flower arrangements, blooming plants and wreaths**
-  **Same-day flower delivery service**
(if ordered before noon in recipient's time zone)
-  **International service** *(with three-day delivery guarantee; orders for delivery outside the U.S. and Canada taken by phone only)*
-  **Secure site with a password-protected section that can also send gift reminders**



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—BCTGM International President Frank Hurt

SUPPORT THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT!

IF PASSED, the Employee Free Choice Act would provide:

- ★ **Certification on the Basis of Signed Authorizations**
- ★ **First-Contract Mediation and Arbitration**
- ★ **Stronger Penalties for Violations while Workers are Attempting to Organize or Obtain a First Contract**

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FOR THE RIGHT TO
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PLEASE EMAIL YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

and ask them to support the EFCA.

www.unionvoice.org/campaign/BCTGMSupport_EFCA.

Congressional support grows every day
and labor continues to make this bill our top priority.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on the Employee Free Choice Act and restoring workers' freedom to form unions, visit www.bctgm.org.