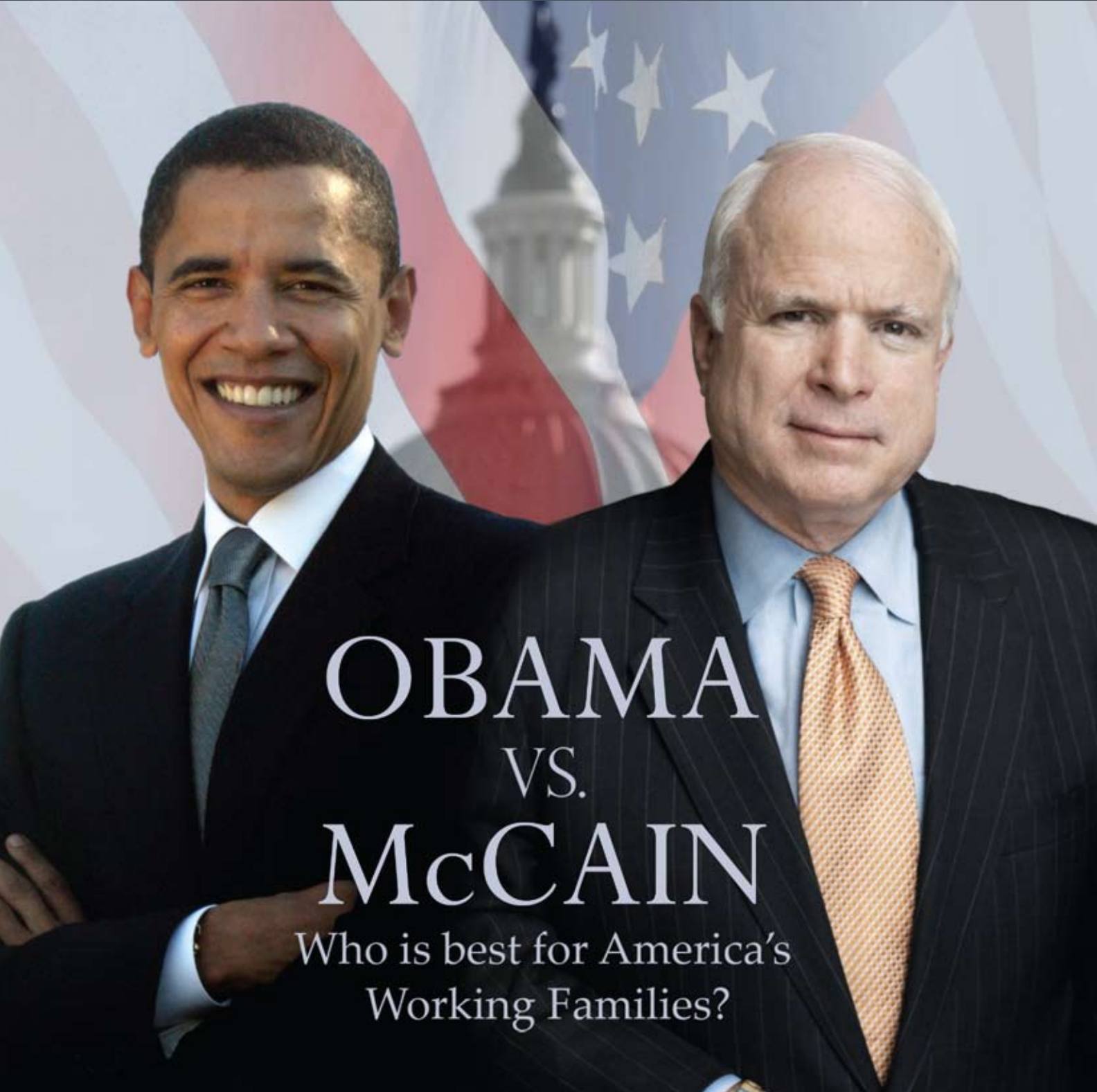


BCTGM *News*

July/August
2008

VOLUME 10
NUMBER 4



OBAMA VS. McCAIN

Who is best for America's
Working Families?



the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITY

"I am proud to stand with the BCTGM in our joint efforts to build an America that values the labor of every American and rewards it with a few basic guarantees—wages that can raise a family, health care if we get sick, a retirement that's dignified, working conditions that are safe."

Senator Barack Obama in a letter to International President Frank Hurt following the BCTGM's endorsement of his candidacy.

On June 27, the BCTGM formally endorsed Senator Barack Obama for President of the United States. We did so because on every important issue that affects the lives of working people, Obama's record and positions are far superior to those of John McCain.

While we respect Senator McCain's military service many years ago, throughout his time in Congress, he has consistently and stubbornly taken the side of corporate interests over the interests of working people.

Were he to become President, McCain would simply continue the ruinous policies of George W. Bush—policies which McCain has voted to support nearly 90 percent of the time.

In stark contrast, Senator Obama has a distinguished and inspiring record of standing with and fighting for working men and women. He truly understands the many challenges working families face every day and has devoted his entire adult life to their cause.

We need look no further than the two candidates' respective positions on the critical issues of health care, trade and workers' rights, to determine which candidate is best for working people.

On health care, McCain wants to put a hefty new tax on the value of the health care benefits we negotiate in our contracts. That would be a tax increase for every single BCTGM member.

McCain wants to shift a greater portion of the health care cost from employers to workers—despite the fact that more and more families are unable to afford decent health insurance or any insurance at all.

Obama knows that the current health insurance system in this country is broken and must be reformed. He supports high quality health care and prescription drug coverage that is available to all Americans at an affordable price. Obama won't coddle the health insurance companies, he'll take them on.

On trade, McCain voted for NAFTA, CAFTA and other job destroying trade deals. Amazingly, he still believes these deals have been good for American workers and, like George Bush and the captains of industry, advocates more lousy free trade agreements.

Senator Obama is committed to a trade policy that benefits American workers. He will be a tough negotiator and stand up to our trading partners. Obama wants to rebuild this country's manufacturing sector which has been decimated over the last eight years. On workers' rights,

McCain voted to block the Employee Free Choice Act. Obama voted in support of this vital, historic labor law reform legislation and has committed to work hard for its passage if he is elected president.

For the last eight years, workers can point to little good that has come out of government policy. We have seen a steady decline in our standard of living as millions of good jobs get shipped to low-wage countries and virtually all of our disposable income goes just to pay for groceries, gasoline, health care and home heating fuel.

The 2008 presidential election provides a rare opportunity for working people to take back our government; an opportunity which we haven't had in many years. It is time to exercise our collective power and restore the influence working men and women have in our government and the workplace— influence that has been seriously eroded over the last eight years as corporate bosses have controlled the politicians running this government.

For any worker who wants what is best for our families and our country, the choice in this election is clear.

Frank Hurt

BCTGM International President

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Internal Organizing, Negotiations and Training the Focus for Local 42

Organizing and negotiating in Right-to-Work (for less) states has always been difficult for the labor movement. However, the BCTGM has risen to this challenge by putting additional resources into its internal organizing efforts. The result has been a revitalized membership, enhanced collective bargaining agreements and a renewed energy to organize non-union facilities.

According to BCTGM International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization, David B. Durkee, the key to internal organizing is communication. "We need to be sure that every worker learns about the benefits of BCTGM membership, that their concerns and needs are addressed, and that they understand how the entire union's strength and leverage is bolstered by their membership," said Durkee.

Such an approach has paid dividends for Local 42 (Atlanta). Over the past decade, with employee turnover at many of its employers increasing, the local leadership found it more difficult to keep track of new hires and get them signed up in the union.

According to Local 42 Business Agent Johnny Jackson, the local responded by targeting those plants whose membership had slipped and whose contracts were expiring, educating stewards on the importance of signing up new hires, and proving to its membership that uniting together would benefit them all in the form of superior collective agreements.



To kick off negotiations with Kraft Foods, Local 42 held a "Solidarity Rally" outside the plant in Atlanta.

"We used this approach throughout the local and I can say that it has had a significant impact on the agreements we have negotiated over the past few years," said Jackson.

Indeed, in the past year the local made internal organizing an integral part of their preparations prior to commencing negotiations with Kraft Foods, Golden State Foods, Unilever and J&J Snacks. The result is excellent collective agreements that the membership is very proud of. Business Agent Isaac Govern notes that having some of the best collective agreements in the food industry makes organizing non-union workplaces that much easier. "When workers in non-union plants see our contracts and see us active in the community, they understand how significant gains come directly from workers standing up for their common interest and they want to join our union," said Govern.



To prepare for negotiations with Golden State Foods, Local 42 initiated an aggressive internal organizing campaign that involved local leadership, stewards and plant activists. Pictured above is the local's negotiating committee.



Local 42 negotiators discuss proposals with J&J Snacks representatives. Pictured above are J&J members Gene Noble, Donnie Hurst, and Kareem Marshal, with Local 42 Business Agents Isaac Govern and Johnny Jackson.

Court Overturns Flawed Decision

The arbitrator found that Michigan Sugar violated the collective agreement after it discontinued health insurance coverage for BCTGM members who honored the picket line.

Ending years of litigation, on May 22, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a decision by a district court judge in eastern Michigan who had ruled against BCTGM members employed at Michigan Sugar. The decision, involving BCTGM Locals 259G (Carrollton, Mich.), 260G (Caro, Mich.), 261G (Sebewaing, Mich.), and 262G (Croswell, Mich.), came four years after the company terminated the health insurance of members from those locals who had honored picket lines set up at their respective plants by striking BCTGM members from Michigan Sugar's two Ohio plants.

The decision was lauded by the International Union. "It is a shame that it took four years for this to be resolved, but it certainly points to the tenacity of our members in Michigan and Ohio," said International Executive Vice President Joseph Thibodeau.

The dispute began in 2004 when members of Local 294G (Fremont, Ohio), representing workers at the company's Ohio plants, went on an economic strike after negotiations for a new collective agreement faltered. The striking members set up picket lines at the Michigan facilities, and in a great show of solidarity, the Michigan members refused to cross the lines. The company immediately discontinued the health insurance of those Michigan members.

The union immediately filed a grievance, as well as an Unfair Labor Practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charging the company with threatening employees with loss of health benefits if they honored the picket lines. As is customary, the NLRB deferred the charges to arbitration.

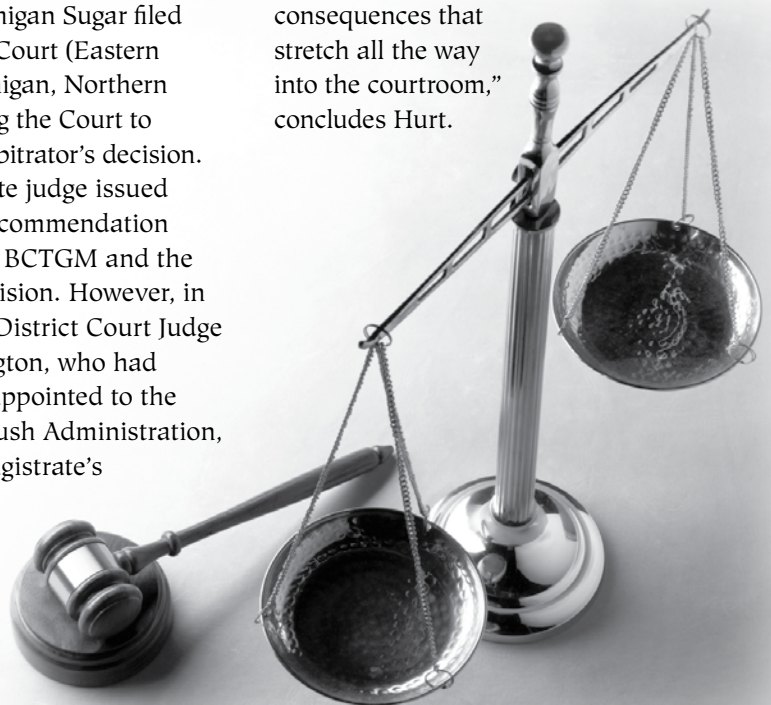
In October 2005, arbitrator Mario Chiesa found the company had violated the collective agreement after it had discontinued health insurance coverage for the members who honored the picket line, and ordered the company to make the affected employees whole. Soon after, in a desperate maneuver, Michigan Sugar filed suit in Federal Court (Eastern District of Michigan, Northern Division) asking the Court to overturn the arbitrator's decision.

A magistrate judge issued a report and recommendation siding with the BCTGM and the arbitrator's decision. However, in January 2007, District Court Judge Thomas Ludington, who had recently been appointed to the Court by the Bush Administration, ignored the Magistrate's report and

recommendation and ruled in favor of the company, and even found that the local unions owed the Michigan Sugar money.

The BCTGM locals, along with the assistance and support of the International Union, appealed to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that the District Court had erred in granting summary judgment to the company and that the arbitrator's ruling in favor of the BCTGM members should stand.

According to International President Frank Hurt, it is important for BCTGM members to remember that the U.S. President nominates judges. "Elections have consequences that stretch all the way into the courtroom," concludes Hurt.



AFL-CIO Forms New Union Veterans Council

On July 10, the AFL-CIO announced the formation of a national Union Veterans Council that will enlist millions of veterans to improve urgent veterans' and pocketbook issues and expose the records of candidates for office at every level on these issues.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the new council will reach out to 2.1 million union veterans as well as other veterans and current enlistees in the Armed Services who are union members. As its first action, the council launched a television spot featuring union electrician Jim Wasser, a Vietnam combat veteran, calling on working people to let Sen. John McCain know that his economic agenda is "not what we need."

Sweeney, AFL-CIO Building & Construction Trades Council President Mark Ayers—a former Navy aviator who will chair the Council—and Wasser made the announcement from Dayton, Ohio.

"We're forming this Union Veterans Council to bring together union members who are veterans to speak out on the issues that matter the most to them—in this year's election and beyond," Sweeney said. "With the formation of the Union Veterans Council, veterans will be front and center in the effort to put our country back on track."

He said the council will push candidates for answers to veterans' questions such as: *Will our leaders fully fund the VA? Will they push to make sure those who have served get the full education and health benefits they deserve? Will they make sure our country has good jobs*

available for all, including vets and their families when they return?

The Union Vets Council has also launched a website (www.unionveterans.org). In addition to the ad and the website, the Union Veterans Council will:

- Dispatch union veterans to go door-to-door and to worksites to talk to union members about key issues;
- Launch a first-ever online campaign to union veterans;
- Form state councils of union veterans (with the first seven announced today) and bring together top union leaders who are veterans to strategize and mobilize veterans at all levels of the union movement; and
- Identify and track union veterans for the first time.

While noting that union veterans respect Sen. John McCain's service to his country, Ayers said McCain's record in the U.S. Senate is out of step with where our country needs to go to serve veterans.

"Not only has McCain voted the wrong way on veterans issues—such as opposing increased funding for veterans' health care the last four years in a row—but he also doesn't support middle class people's issues," Ayers said. "He wants to tax people's health care benefits, and supports unfair trade deals, including NAFTA."

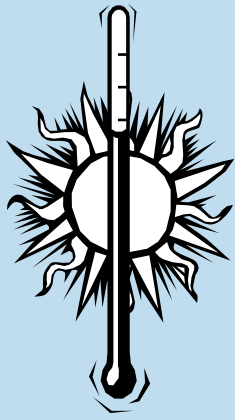
In conjunction with the formation of the Council, Sweeney announced the release of a television ad featuring an interview with Wasser, an International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) union electrician and U.S. Navy veteran who served



in Vietnam. In the ad, Wasser, says that McCain's record shows his priorities on issues like job investment and veterans' health care are not those of veterans and working families.

"Every vet respects John McCain's war record," Wasser says in the ad. "It's his record in the Senate I have a problem with."

The television ad began airing in six states: Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. The ad will run in communities in those states that have been hard hit by the failed Bush economic agenda and rapidly souring economy. The ad will run for three weeks, through the end of July. It can be viewed at www.aflcio.org/issues/politics/unionveterans2008_videos.cfm.



SUMMER

Reading List for Workers

The Labor Heritage Foundation is dedicated to strengthening the labor movement through the use of music and the arts. The Foundation offers music, books, movies, posters, buttons and more to remind us about what being a trade unionist is all about. Listed here are a few summer reading ideas offered by the Labor Heritage Foundation. You can order these books and much more by visiting the Foundation's comprehensive site: www.laborheritage.org.

Unseen America: Photos and Stories by Workers

Edited by Esther Cohen

In Unseen America, a program created by Esther Cohen of the Bread and Roses Cultural Project, thousands of workers were given cameras and lessons in photography, and then asked to document their lives. **\$35**

What's the Use of Walking If There's a Freight Train Going Your Way?: Black Hoboes and Their Songs

Paul Garon and Gene Tomko

An extraordinary cultural history of African-American working class life in the early 20th century. The accompanying CD has 25 songs by John Handcox, Blind Willie McTell, Sleepy John Estes, Son House, and many others. **\$18**

A Dangerous Woman: The Graphic Biography of Emma Goldman

Sharon Rudahl, with a foreword by Alice Wexler

A wonderful retelling of the famous anarchist and radical icon Emma Goldman's extraordinary life, this graphic biography embodies the richness and drama of Goldman's story in a wholly original way. **\$15**

Great Labor Quotations: Sourcebook and Reader

Peter Bollen with foreword by Jim Green

Primarily a quotation sourcebook for writers and speakers, GLQ is a unique compilation of quotations on work and labor drawn almost entirely from the American labor movement. A provocative, enlightening labor primer that will inspire and entertain jobholders everywhere. **\$17**

Not For Bread Alone Moe Foner

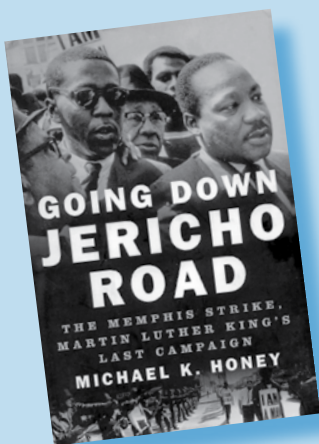
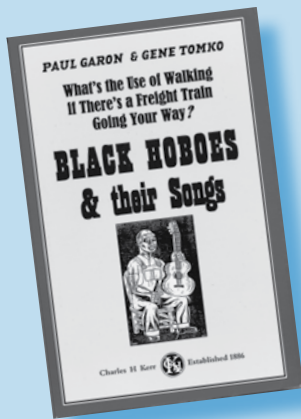
A Memoir by Moe Foner with a foreword by Ossie Davis.

Hardcover, \$19

Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign

Michael K. Honey

A moving account of the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike and the events leading to the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. **Hardcover. \$35**



BCTGM-Produced Milk-Bone Celebrates 100th Anniversary

BCTGM Local 802 members in Buffalo, N.Y. have been producing Milk-Bone dog biscuits at the company's only North American facility since 1957.

Milk-Bone was created in 1908 by F.H. Bennett Biscuit Company at a bakery in New York's Lower East Side. Milk-Bone outgrew the New York City plant and moved to Buffalo in 1922. The bone-shaped dog treat was originally named Malatoid. It became known as Milk-Bone sometime between 1915 and 1926 due to the cow's milk that was part of the recipe. The National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) acquired the brand in 1931.

Nabisco was the first national human food company to enter the pet food business. Initially, Nabisco had 3,000 salesmen who promoted the product to the nation's grocery stores. Until this time, pet foods were sold only in feed stores and other independent retailers. The idea of stocking dog biscuits in grocery stores was initially appalling to grocers.

In 1988, all U.S. Milk-Bone production was moved to Buffalo and in 2002, all Canadian production of the dog treats was moved to Buffalo.

In 1985, R.J. Reynolds purchased Nabisco and since then Milk-Bone has had several owners. Nabisco, under the ownership of Kraft Foods, sold the Milk-Bone rights to Del Monte Foods in 2006.

Recently, BCTGM International Vice President Art Montminy led contract negotiations between Del Monte and Local 802. According to Local 802 Business Agent Lawrence Backlas, this was the first contract negotiated for the Milk-Bone workers outside of the Nabisco pattern agreement. Therefore, the BCTGM and the company agreed to redefine the contract specifically for the Milk-Bone workers. Included in this agreement was a new policy and procedure manual that would contain language covering daily and weekly operational procedures. According to Backlas, this was one of the most significant gains of the 42-month agreement.

Local 802 members at the Buffalo plant produce approximately 30 million Milk-Bone snacks each day—more than seven billion were made last year.

The Buffalo, N.Y. Milk-Bone plant—the only plant in North America—proudly displays the 100-year anniversary banner on the bakery's flour silos.

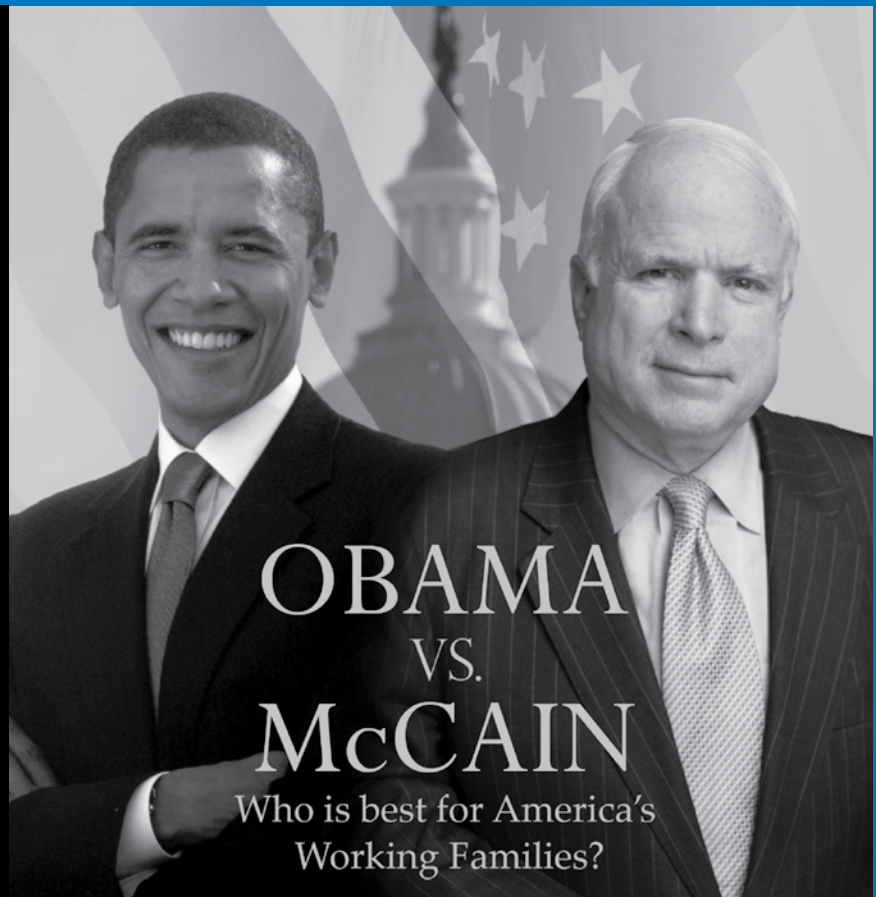


The 2008 negotiating team included (from the left) L. 802 Bus. Agt. Lawrence Backlas, Shop Chair Al Heitmann, and members Mark Orsi and Jordan Gostomski.



A photo of the Milk-Bone plant in the 1940s.

This is the first in a two part series designed to provide union members with factual information on where the two candidates for President of the United States stand on issues of importance to working families. We will examine each candidate's voting record and position on the economy, jobs, health care, trade, workers' rights and retirement security.



BARACK OBAMA

JOHN McCAIN

ECONOMY

Obama Supported an Economic Stimulus Package for America's Workers. Obama voted to end a Republican filibuster of an amendment to the economic stimulus bill extending unemployment insurance benefits for all unemployed workers, and an additional 26 weeks for workers in high-unemployment states. (S. Amdt. 3983 to H.R. 5140, Vote 8, 2/6/08)

McCain Says He Wants Tough Lender Standards—But Votes Against Them. McCain voted against a measure to discourage predatory lending practices and failed to vote on a bill that would overhaul the mortgage lending practices of the Federal Housing Administration. (McCain's Remarks on Economic Woes, 3/25/08; St. Petersburg Times, 1/24/08; S. 256, Vote #22, 3/3/05; S. 2338, Vote #432, 12/14/07)

Obama Voted Against \$50 Billion in Spending Cuts for Vital Working Family Programs. Obama voted against \$50 billion in spending cuts for programs vital for working families. The cuts included \$39.7 billion for Medicaid, Medicare, student aid and child-support enforcement. (S. 1932, Vote 363, 12/21/05)

McCain's Tax Cuts Would Cut Social Programs Working Families Need. "McCain cannot pay for his tax cuts without massive reductions in Social Security, Medicare or other key programs that benefit the vast majority of Americans." ("Five Easy Pieces and Two Trillion Dollars," Center for American Progress Action Fund, 3/21/08)

Obama Voted Twice Against Bush Tax Cuts for the Wealthy. Obama voted against tax cuts of \$60 billion and \$70 billion that would be paid for by huge cuts to programs vital to working families. Three-quarters of the benefits would go to families making \$100,000 or more a year. (S. 2020, Vote 347, 11/18/05; H.R. 4297, Vote 118, 5/11/06)

McCain Offers Massive Tax Cuts for Corporations and the Wealthy. McCain's plan offers two massive tax cuts for corporations, slashing tax rates from 35 percent to 25 percent, with 58 percent of the benefits going to the top 1 percent of taxpayers. This is an even larger tax rate cut for the wealthiest taxpayers than Bush gave them. (Reuters, 3/10/08; "Five Easy Pieces and Two Trillion Dollars," Center for American Progress Action Fund, 3/21/08)

Obama Voted Against Repealing and Cutting Estate Tax. Obama voted against repealing the estate tax, which would have cost \$1 trillion between 2012 and 2021, primarily benefiting the wealthy. Obama also voted against cutting the estate tax, which would have resulted in a \$753 billion budget deficit and funding reductions for working family programs. (H.R. 8, Vote 164, 6/8/06; H.R. 5970, Vote 229, 8/3/06)

GOOD JOBS & WAGES

Obama Opposed Disqualifying Millions of Workers from Overtime and Equal Pay Protections. Obama voted against a measure that would have disqualified as many as 10 million workers from minimum wage, overtime pay and equal pay protections under the Fair Labor Standards Act. (S. Amdt. 128 to S. 256, Vote 27, 3/7/05)

McCain Supported Tax Cuts for the Wealthiest Americans. McCain voted for a budget reconciliation bill in 2005 that included a \$60 billion tax cut for the wealthiest Americans, with more than three-quarters of the benefits going to families with \$100,000 or more in annual income. [S. 2020, Vote #26, 11/18/05]

Obama Voted to Raise the Federal Minimum Wage in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Obama voted for an increase from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 for the federal minimum wage in 2005 and 2006. In 2007, Obama voted for a “clean” increase to \$7.25 an hour, free of another round of corporate tax breaks sought by Republicans. (S. Amdt. 4322 to S. 2766, Vote 179, 6/21/06; S. Amdt. 44 to S. 256, Vote 26, 3/7/05; H.R. 2, Vote 23, 1/24/07)

McCain Voted to Gut the Family and Medical Leave Act. He voted to suspend the act unless the federal government either certified that compliance would not increase costs for business or provided financial assistance to businesses to cover any costs associated with implementing the law. [S. Amdt. 16, S. 5, Vote #7, 2/4/93; H.R. 1, Vote #11, 2/4/93]

Obama Voted for Harsher Penalties for Employers That Violate OSHA and Wage Protections. Obama supported an amendment that made “willful” or “grossly negligent” safety and health violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) a criminal felony, provided back pay to undocumented workers in cases of employer wage-and-hour violations and increased fines for wage-and-hour infractions and OSHA violations. (S. Amdt. 4106 to S. 2611, Vote 141, 5/23/06)

McCain Voted Against a Clean Minimum Wage Increase for Working Families. McCain voted to stall a clean minimum wage increase for working families—before bowing to public pressure and voting to pass the final bill that included tax breaks for businesses. He voted to completely repeal the minimum wage laws in 45 states and allow the other five states to opt out of any future minimum wage increases above \$5.15 an hour. [H.R. 2, Vote #23, 1/24/07; Vote #24, 1/24/07; Vote #25, 1/25/07; Vote #37, 1/31/07; Vote #39, 1/31/07; Vote #42, 1/31/07; S. 2766, Vote #179, 6/21/06; S. 256, Vote #26, 3/7/05]

Obama Supported Protecting Workers’ Vacation and Severance Pay from Bankruptcy Actions. Obama voted for an amendment protecting workers from losing vacation and severance pay when their employers declare bankruptcy. (S. 256, Vote 32, 3/9/05)

McCain Voted Against Protections for Workers’ Overtime Rights. McCain voted against protecting workers’ overtime pay from Bush administration rules that threaten the overtime rights of 6 million workers. [S. 1637, Vote #79, 5/4/04]

McCain Opposed Worker Safety and Ergonomic Standards. McCain voted to block the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) from issuing, implementing or enforcing standards to protect workers from ergonomic injuries. [H.R. 4577, Vote #143, 6/22/00]

HEALTH CARE

Obama Opposed Giving Insurance Companies Authority to Determine Coverage and Costs—Including the power to eliminate consumer protections that are now required under existing state laws, such as cancer screenings and well-child visits. (S. 1955, Vote 119, 5/11/06)

McCain wants to Tax Our Health Benefits. McCain would make employer-paid health premiums part of taxable income, creating a new tax on working families. He would drive insurance costs up further by promoting high-deductible health savings account plans. (Health08.org Forum, 10/31/07; Kaiser/HRET Employer Health Benefits 2007 Annual Survey; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 9/20/06, 4/5/06)

Obama Voted to Allow Importation of Affordable Prescriptions Drugs from Other Countries. (S. Amdt. 990 to S. 1082, Vote 150, 5/3/07)

Increases Costs to Workers. The modest tax credit McCain wants to give people to cover his new tax would cover less than half the average health premium, leaving workers to pick up the difference.

Obama Voted Against Cutting Medicaid Funding. Obama voted against a \$14 billion, five-year funding cut for Medicaid. (S. Amdt. 204 to S. Con. Res. 18, Vote 58, 3/17/05)

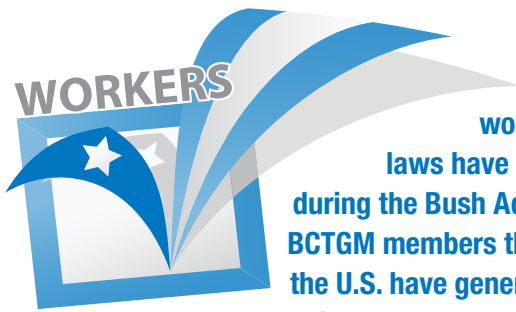
Makes Health Care Harder to Get. Pushing workers into the private health care market and promoting HSAs will encourage insurance companies to attract only the healthiest people, driving costs up overall.

Obama Opposed Steep Increases in Seniors’ Medicare Premiums. Obama voted to protect seniors from steep increases in Medicare Part B premiums. (S. 1932, Vote 287, 11/3/05)

Lowens the Quality of Available Health Care Plans. Many states have laws regulating health care quality by requiring basic services to be included in health care coverage. McCain’s proposal would circumvent these laws, resulting in lower quality coverage without consumer protections.

Obama Voted to Allow Medicare to Negotiate Lower Drug Prices for Senior Citizens. Obama voted to allow Medicare to negotiate with drug makers for lower prices for senior citizens. Republicans filibustered the bill. (S. 3, Vote 132, 4/18/07)

Sources: The Commonwealth Fund, Envisioning the Future, 1/08; Los Angeles Times, 11/20/07; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), Administration’s Proposed Tax Deduction for Health Insurance Seriously Flawed, 7/31/07; CBPP, GAO Study Confirms Health Savings Accounts Primarily Benefit High-Income Individuals, 9/20/06; CBPP, A Brief Overview of the Major Flaws with Health Savings Accounts, 4/5/06; The Commonwealth Fund, Paying More for Less, 6/05; McCain’s campaign website, accessed 2/21/08; Health 08.org (Kaiser Family Foundation) Presidential Candidate Forum: John McCain, 10/31/07; Kaiser Family Foundation and HRET, Employer Health Benefits 2007 Annual Survey.



While few worker-friendly laws have been enacted during the Bush Administration, BCTGM members throughout the U.S. have generously

supported policy makers who continue to fight for working families. Pictured here are BCTGM representatives presenting pro-worker Members of Congress with BCTGM-PAC donations.



▲ U.S. Rep. Zack Space serves Ohio's 18th Congressional District. Space has a proven record on issues that are critical to the economic development of Ohio, including fair trade policies to combat the exodus of Ohio factories overseas. Pictured here presenting Space (center) with a BCTGM-PAC donation is L. 19 (Cleveland) Pres. Paul LaBuda (left) and L. 19 Fin. Secy. Phil Lukic.

BCTGM Supports



▲ Congresswoman Betty Sutton (D) has earned a reputation as a tenacious advocate for Ohio's working families since being elected to represent Ohio's 13th district in 2006. Pictured here presenting Rep. Sutton (left) with a BCTGM-PAC donation to aid in her re-election campaign is L.33 (Akron, Ohio) Pres. Harry Ritchey (right).



▲ In 2007, Congresswoman Laura Richardson (D) defeated 16 candidates in a special election and was elected to her first term in the U.S. House of Representatives to represent California's culturally and economically diverse 37th Congressional District. Pictured here presenting Richardson (center) with a BCTGM-PAC donation to aid in her re-election campaign is BCTGM L. 37 Bus. Agt. Phil Gonzalez (left) and L. 37 Fin. Secy. Felipe Lopez (right).



▲ Jeff Merkley is the Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, currently running as the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate. The son of a sawmill worker, Merkley has spent his lifetime fighting for Oregon families. He was recently presented with a BCTGM-PAC donation to aid in his campaign by BCTGM Portland, Ore. Locals 114 and 364. Pictured here from left to right is L. 364 Bus. Agt. Cameron Taylor, L. 364 Secy-Treas. Victor Weeks, Merkley, Intl. Rep. Eric Anderson, Erin Herrera, and L.114 Bus. Rep. Georgene Barragan.

Union Values in Congress



◀ Rep. Tom Udall has represented New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District as a member of the United States House of Representatives since 1999. Currently Udall is running for the open Democratic Senate seat for New Mexico. BCTGM L. 351 (Albuquerque, N.M.) Pres. Earl Reed (right) presents Udall (left) with a BCTGM-PAC donation. Udall told Reed that if elected to the Senate he will sign the Employee Free Choice Act and work to put spiraling costs of health care under control.

▶ U.S. Rep. Tom Allen is a member of the House of Representatives representing Maine's 1st Congressional District and a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate. Through his groundbreaking legislation to prevent price gouging of senior citizens, Allen is a nationally recognized leader on prescription drug prices. Pictured here presenting Allen (left) with a BCTGM-PAC donation is L. 334 (Portland, Maine) Rec. Secy. Dennis Gale (right).



▲ In the Mississippi Senate Race, the BCTGM has endorsed Democratic nominee Ronnie Musgrove, former Governor of the state. During Musgrove's tenure as Governor, he helped create more than 52,000 new jobs, brought more than \$14 billion in new investments to the state, invested in creating rural jobs, and passed historic education funding reforms. Pictured here presenting Musgrove (left) with a BCTGM-PAC donation is International Vice President Tony Johnson (right).



▲ Congressman Bob Filner (D) represents California's 51st Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Filner is deeply committed to the battle for justice and equality and in 1961, he spent several months in a southern jail as a "Freedom Rider" in the Civil Rights movement. Pictured here presenting Filner (center) with a BCTGM-PAC donation is BCTGM L. 315 Secy.-Treas. Deborah Lacey-Zuelsdorf (left) and L. 315 Pres. Curtis Robertson.

Think Twice **Before** Buying a Del Webb Home

Editor's Note

Robert Masciola, deputy director of the AFL-CIO Center for Strategic Research, describes the current efforts of the Building Justice Campaign. The campaign, which seeks to raise standards in the residential construction sector, currently is focused on Pulte Homes and its Del Webb subsidiary to increase Pulte's accountability for the actions of its subcontractors. Until Pulte does so, the campaign is cautioning union members and retirees before purchasing a Pulte or Del Webb home.

Arizona and Nevada are two of the fastest growing states in the country as retirees flock West for warm weather and lower taxes. The retiree housing boom has been profitable for Pulte Homes, which owns Del Webb, the biggest national builder of “active adult” (55 years and older) communities.

The Building Justice Campaign, a partnership coalition of the Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), Sheet Metal Workers (SMWIA) and the AFL-CIO, is urging current members and union retirees to think twice if they are considering purchasing a Pulte or Del Webb home. Retirees' hard-earned money could be used to support subcontractors that deny workers safe working condition, adequate training, just compensation and respect on the job.

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Without proper training and equipment, residential construction workers are placed in a vulnerable position in a dangerous industry. Workers building homes for Pulte and Del Webb in Phoenix and Las Vegas report they are pressured to work quickly and bypass safety precautions. They also say they often don't have fresh drinking water in the hot desert heat and they lack adequate safety equipment. They are saddled with unaffordable health insurance, not paid overtime and have reported discrimination based on race and gender.

For nearly two years, Pulte, Del Webb and its subcontractors in Arizona and Nevada have refused to address the numerous problems in its housing developments throughout Las Vegas and the Phoenix Valley.

Due to Pulte's refusal to begin a dialogue with the Building Justice Campaign to properly address important issues, the campaign plans to reach out to union members and union retirees across the country to alert them to these appalling conditions and urge them not to support the injustice taking place on developments being built by Pulte and Del Webb.

“We believe the company considers current and retired union members an important demographic and so we should not allow the company's fancy marketing to fool us. We must make sure our retirement decisions don't support injustice. It's time to hold Pulte and Del Webb accountable, concludes Masciola.”





CLC Convenes 25th Constitutional Convention

Celebrating a half-century as the principal federation of trade unions in Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) met in Toronto in late May for its 25th Constitutional Convention. Delegates representing unions across all industries and from all parts of Canada, participated in the four-day event

The convention opened with a rousing address by CLC President Ken Georgetti. In his opening remarks, Georgetti painted a stark picture of what organized labour faces in Canada. "Union members across Canada face privatization, contracting out, the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing, forestry and resource sector jobs,

to stem the tide of job loss in the manufacturing sector, estimated at 450,000 over the last five years. "The Stephen Harper government has ignored this economic disaster and the effect it has had on the personal lives of so many workers," said Georgetti.

Throughout the convention, delegates discussed and listened to speeches and policy papers on the challenges facing working people throughout the country, and what the CLC has done to confront those challenges. Speakers at the Convention included John Sweeney, President, AFL-CIO; Phil Fontaine, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations; Armine Yalnizyan, Community Social Planning Council of Toronto; and

Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada.

As is customary, delegates

passed several resolutions on a wide range of topics, including those pertaining to card check recognition, anti-scab legislation, pay equity, temporary workers and the agencies that employ them, and the war in Afghanistan.

Georgetti was re-elected President without opposition,

cuts to Employment Insurance, unacceptable injuries and deaths in the workplace, and sisters who still don't have pay equal to that of men. That's why our convention slogan is 'Unions—Now more than ever!'", said Georgetti.

Georgetti also challenged the Harper government's failure

"In 1956, the Canadian Labour Congress was formed because unions had a common purpose—to build our movement and to improve the lives of working people. We joined together as affiliates for the same reason workers join together in a workplace—because the union makes us strong. We need to rededicate ourselves to the critical role of organizing workers and of cooperating as a movement. We need to focus on the many things that unite us."

Ken Georgetti, CLC President

winning a fourth three-year term. Also re-elected, by acclamation, were Secretary-Treasurer, Hassan Yussuff and Executive Vice Presidents Barbara Byers and Marie Clarke Walker.

In closing remarks to the convention, Georgetti stressed how important organized labor is to Canadian working families. "The only thing stopping big business and bad governments from completely ruining this country—is this labour movement," said Georgetti.



Canadian Labour Congress

Congrès du travail du Canada

LOCAL *View*

320 Years of Membership

Eight members of BCTGM Local 317T (Greensboro, N.C.) were recently presented with certificates marking 40 years of union membership. Pictured here displaying their awards is (front, from left) Shirley Smith, Jesse Decker (back, from left) Jaffa Graves, Robert Woods, and Local 317T Pres. Tony Pegram. Not pictured is Mary Austin, Maggie Reynolds, James Talton and Gary Whitaker.



Educated Stewards

Fifteen Local 1 (Chicago) stewards from Vie de France, Kraft, Tootsie Roll, Alpha Baking Co. and Brownie Products gathered at Local 1 headquarters May 29-30 for a special educational conference. The stewards training, led by Intl. Vice Pres. Steve Bertelli and Intl. Rep. Jethro Head, focused on grievance handling, workplace health and safety, and political action. Local 1 Pres. Donald Woods, Secy.-Treas. John Howard, Rec. Secy. Beth Zavala and Bus.Agt./Organizer Mary Ross assisted with the conference. Pictured here is the Local 1 conference graduates and staff.



Stewards Workshop

On April 11 in Bloomington, Ill., stewards from BCTGM Local 342 (Bloomington, Ill.) attended a special one-day training workshop lead by Intl. Vice Pres. Steve Bertelli. According to L. 342 Rec. Secy. Dale Gresham, the training was a valuable refresher for the stewards. The training included two new executive board members and six new stewards.

LOCAL UNION MERGERS

Since we last published a list of BCTGM Local Union mergers in the September/October 2007 issue of the *BCTGM News*, the following locals have merged:

- Local 49G (Iowa City, IA) merged with Local 36 (Davenport, IA) with an effective date of October 1, 2007.
- Local 343G (Naperville, IL) merged with Local 1 (Chicago, IL) with an effective date of April 1, 2008.
- Local 40G (Galesburg, IL) merged with Local 36 (Davenport, IA) with an effective date of May 1, 2008.
- Local 45 (Boston, MA) merged with Local 348 (Framingham, MA) with an effective date of July 1, 2008.
- Local 365G (Battle Creek, MI) merged with Local 3G (Battle Creek, MI) with an effective date of July 1, 2008.
- Local 333 (Montreal, QC) merged with Local 55 (St-Leonard, QC) with an effective date of July 1, 2008.

BCTGM Family Members Win Union Plus Scholarships

Tin Hong Nguyen of Arlington, Va., whose mother is a member of BCTGM Local 118, has been awarded a \$1,000 Union Plus Scholarship.

Lisa Bergman of Maria Stein, Ohio, whose father is a BCTGM Local 382G member, has been awarded a \$1,000 Union Plus Scholarship.

“With credit so tight, prices rising and fewer loans available to students who want to attend college, scholarship programs like these are more important than ever,” says Leslie Tolf, president of Union Privilege, the organization that administers the Union Plus Scholarship Program.

Lisa Bergman of Maria Stein, Ohio, whose father is a BCTGM Local 382G member, has been awarded a \$1,000 Union Plus Scholarship. Lisa recounts a conversation she and her father, Ernest Bergman, have had many times. When she teases him that he earns a decent living despite never having gone to college, he reminds her,

“That is because I have union protection, which ensures the workplace is fair and provides benefits like sick pay and paid vacation.”

Tin Hong Nguyen of Arlington, Va., whose mother is a member of BCTGM Local 118, has been awarded a \$1,000 Union Plus Scholarship. Tin has learned from his mother’s example. An Thi Nguyen came to America from Vietnam in 1992 and worked menial jobs to support her family. For years, Tin says, “she only qualified for low-paying jobs that required arduous labor.” Since An Thi became a Local 118 member in 2000, the family’s financial condition has improved, and Tin has been able to see a brighter future, one in which he goes to college and studies to become a dentist. *“Without the union, Mom would still be juggling three jobs,”* Tin says. *“I know our family has a better life because of the union.”*

Lisa and Tin are among 108 students representing 40 unions awarded a total of \$150,000 in Union Plus Scholarships. The awards are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Since 1992, Union Plus has awarded more than \$2.4 million in scholarships to union families.

Recipients are selected based on academic ability, social awareness, financial need and appreciation of labor.

Union Privilege offers an array of Union Plus benefits that save money for union members and their families. These include mortgage and finance benefits, education and insurance benefits and even money-saving offers on health services and vacations. Union members can visit www.UnionPlus.org to find out which programs their unions offer.

Join the **Million Member Mobilization**

Who's losing out in this sputtering economy?

Not corporate CEOs. Too many of them have made sure to secure a golden parachute for themselves, while workers face soaring health care costs, foreclosures and an uncertain future.

The Employee Free Choice Act would help level the playing field and get our economy back on track. That's why we've launched a huge campaign to get one million people to support this bill and tell Congress it's time for change!

The Employee Free Choice Act would give more workers the chance to negotiate for better benefits, wages and working conditions by forming unions.

And that will help all of us. There's strength in numbers, and as we build our collective muscle, we can raise living standards, improve health care and stop corporate America's race to the bottom.

But some CEOs try to stop unions, preventing their workers from negotiating a contract. In fact, 30 percent of corporations illegally fire pro-union workers during union organizing drives. Of course, no CEO would agree to work without a contract. So why can't their workers have the same rights?

It's time to bring back some fairness. That's why we need one million voices supporting the Employee Free Choice Act. But a million people is a LOT of people. We won't reach our goal without YOUR friends and family.

The economy should work for all of us, not just the privileged few. We can get there with your help.



Employee
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