

# BCTGM *News*

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# VOICES

NOVEMBER 4, 2008



# *the* PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## ARE YOU BETTER OFF...?

As you and your family members focus on the choices in this year's crucial elections, it is helpful to think back to a presidential debate nearly 30 years ago, during which one candidate posed the question to the American people, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?"

For eight years, working people in this country have been slammed hard by the corporate policies of the Bush-Cheney Administration.

In every measure that matters to working families, our standard of living has declined dramatically during their time in office.

Millions of Americans have lost their jobs to workers in low-wage countries around the world; rising health insurance costs are pricing many working families out of desperately-needed coverage; the constant increase in the cost of groceries, gasoline and home heating and cooling fuel is crippling family budgets and escalating higher education costs are leaving many working parents unable to send their sons and daughters to college.

And now thrown on top of these immense pressures is a crisis on Wall Street and in the nation's financial markets that threatens the economic and retirement security of virtually every American.

In eight years, our nation has gone from a \$130 billion budget surplus to a nearly \$500 billion deficit (and growing). Our national debt has gone up 170 percent. Median family income has actually declined by \$1000. And today, 36 million Americans live in poverty.

This has been a stunning reversal of fortune for working families as the country had enjoyed solid economic growth and prosperity during the eight years prior to the start of the Bush-Cheney Administration.

Since taking office, this Administration has pursued tax policies that reward employers that ship American jobs offshore; energy policies that allow oil companies to gouge the public while reaping record profits; health care policies that give insurance and pharmaceutical companies a stranglehold over the availability, cost and quality of care for working people and anti-regulatory policies that have allowed banks, financial institutions and mortgage companies to run amok, forcing families out of their homes and leaving taxpayers to foot a massive federal bailout bill just to keep our economy from collapsing.

This is the record of the Bush-Cheney years.

Have you had enough?

If you haven't and you believe the country is on the right track, then you will probably support John McCain, who has spent the last eight years helping George Bush and Dick Cheney push these policies through the United States Senate.

But, if you have had enough, then I urge you to support Senator Barack Obama for President because he

and Senator Joe Biden will lead our nation in a completely new direction. They will put working families first, not last, as it has been for far too long.

An Obama-Biden Administration will clean up the devastating economic mess created over the last eight years by leaders in Washington who believe that leaving corporations completely unchecked, without any government oversight is somehow good for the country. It is painfully clear that this approach has been an economic disaster.

Together, the Obama-Biden team will reign in the oil companies, health insurance and pharmaceutical companies and the bankers and Wall Streeters whose outrageous greed has brought our nation's economy to its knees.

Senator Obama's comprehensive plan to rebuild our weakened economy begins with the creation of good jobs right here in America, making quality, affordable health care available to all Americans and protecting the pensions and retirement security of working people.

At a time when working men and women are facing economic hardship not seen in many generations, America needs a leader who possesses the strength, vision, character and compassion to turn this country around and build a brighter, more secure future for our children and grandchildren.

That leader is Senator Barack Obama.

**Frank Hurt**

*BCTGM International President*

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# Coalition for a Democratic Workplace

## EXPOSED

**Y**ou'd think a group called the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace (CDW) would be dedicated to promoting the needs and desires of America's workers. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, CDW spreads half-truths and lies about the Employee Free Choice Act to wage an ill-conceived assault on the rights and opportunities of millions of men and women across the country.

Here's the real scoop on the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace:

CDW is a front group for business associations, industry lobbying groups, and right-wing policy centers who are against workers getting a fair shake in this economy. Its financial backers include some of the most virulent anti-worker and anti-union organizations in the country, including:

- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation's most powerful business lobbying organization;
- The Retail Industry Leaders Association, a group whose biggest member is Wal-Mart, the poster child for low wages; and
- The Associated Builders and Contractors, an association of anti-union contractors who fight against workers having unions to

improve their wages and safety on the job.

CDW is conducting a controversial print and broadcast ad campaign in an effort to defeat the Employee Free Choice Act.

According to American Rights at Work, which is staging protests against the CDW bus tour

“These same groups oppose everything from paid sick days to fair pay and even the hugely popular Family and Medical Leave Act. It's unbelievable that business interests would suddenly care about privacy now, when corporations increasingly monitor employees' every move—including e-mail, phone calls, personal belongings, and even interactions outside of the workplace.”

On August 21, BCTGM Local 334 (Portland, Maine) participated in a rally against the Coalition bus tour. When the brightly painted CDW bus stuffed with anti-union literature, T-shirts, Frisbees and other give-aways arrived in downtown Portland, it was greeted with chants by about 100 union members, Democratic activists and political supporters who organized for a counter-rally by the Maine Democratic Party.

According to Local 334 Business Agent John Jordan, “This group is all about spreading lies and misinformation. They are not telling the truth about unions in America—that we are the force that lifts workers and their families up and gives them a better life. This is why we need the Employee Free Choice Act—so every worker has the chance to join a union and gain respect and dignity. We will continue our fight against groups like the CDW.”



**L. 334 Bus. Agt. John Jordan shows his support for the Employee Free Choice Act.**



across the country, “The CEOs and multimillion dollar business industry groups backing CDW don't care about democracy or privacy. They're distorting the truth because they want to stop workers from having a better standard of living, access to health care, job security, and the rest of the benefits that accompany union membership.

# Canadian Weston Bakery

## Receives Safety Awards

BCTGM Local 389 (Winnipeg, Manitoba) Business Agent Sherry Giovannetti is proud that her plant, the Weston Bakery in Regina, Saskatchewan, has been recognized as one of the safest plants in Canada.

Giovannetti, who is a full-time worker at the bakery, attributes the awards to monthly health and safety education programs and the plant's safety committee. The prestigious awards include "The Canadian President's Award for Outstanding Leadership, Innovation and Performance in Health & Safety" and 600 consecutive days without worker absenteeism due to injury/loss time accident in the Regina facility.

Weston Bakeries presented the awards in recognition of the



The Health and Safety Committee displays their award. Pictured from left to right is Plant Manager Rob Taylor, L. 389 member Jerad Ignatecu, L.389 member/committee chair Dave Kenaschuk, Maintenance Supervisor Murray Teichroeb, L. 389 Bus. Agt. Sherry Giovannetti, L. 389 member Garrett Pruden, L. 389 member Colin Ruge, Plant Supervisor Rob Blom, Sanitation/Shipping Supervisor Jim Prentice.

joint effort between the local and plant management and the plant's safety record as compared to 34 of the company's other facilities being measured in the same areas.

"The union is committed to supporting this safety initiative

by ensuring employees take the education and apply it to working safely," notes Giovannetti.

"We've seen substantial results because of this joint effort, which has resulted in a safe workplace for our members."



BCTGM Local 389 members gather for a photo outside the Weston Bakery in Regina, Saskatchewan, which is recognized as one of the company's safest plants in Canada.

# BCTGM Organizes Cereal/Snack Co-Packer

Despite a very difficult organizing environment in the United States, one BCTGM Local showed that with the right relationship, and the right leverage, organizing is possible.

In July 2008, BCTGM Local 70 (Grand Rapids, Mich.), successfully organized Roskam Baking Company's new cereal and snack bar manufacturing facility in Grand Rapids. Roskam, a well-known co-packer for Kellogg's, General Mills and Quaker Oats, has facilities throughout Michigan, which are organized by the BCTGM.

The organizing drive began after Roskam announced that it was acquiring a building in Grand Rapids and converting it into a new, state-of-the-art facility. Local 70, which has enjoyed a long-established relationship with Roskam for decades, began discussions with the company about voluntarily recognizing the BCTGM at the new facility.

The company refused the initial request, but did allow Local 70 representatives—including Business Agent Orrin Holder—to come into the plant to gauge employee interest and to sign up employees if they desired. According to Holder, the drive was a success and the Local signed up a "significant majority" of the employees in the plant and presented the authorization cards to Roskam officials. Roskam immediately recognized the Local and negotiations on a first contract began within weeks.

According to International Vice President Mike Konesko, the key

**"Employees express interest in unionization, the company allows them to make a decision free from intimidation and coercion, and good faith negotiations begin immediately after recognition."**

—David B. Durkee  
*BCTGM International  
Secretary-Treasurer/  
Director of Organization*

to the recognition was the Local's long-standing association with Roskam. "A relationship of mutual respect had been established over the past few decades, and

this allowed for a discourse between the parties that might not otherwise have been possible," said Konesko.

David B. Durkee, BCTGM International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization, pointed out that this illustrates how an organizing campaign should be run in a democratic America. "Employees express interest in unionization, the company allows them to make a decision free from intimidation and coercion, and good faith negotiations begin immediately after recognition," said Durkee. "Unfortunately, we know that because of the unjust labor laws in this country, and with rampant corporate greed, the situation at Roskam is not the norm," stated Durkee.

The plant will be producing granola cereal under the Bear Naked label. Kellogg's, which acquired Bear Naked in November 2007 for \$60 million, moved production to Grand Rapids from a small facility in Connecticut, which is now closed. Bear Naked was started by Kelly Flatley and Brendan Synnott, two high school friends who wanted to redefine the natural-foods market with their homemade nutty granola. The Grand Rapids plant will also be producing cereal bars for General Mills among other products.

The BCTGM represents over 4,500 Kellogg workers and nearly 3,000 General Mills workers in the cereal and snack sectors. BCTGM Local 70 also represents workers at Kerry Foods and Kellogg/Keebler.



# FIRED INTERBAKE WORKER EXPLAINS **Why EFCA Is Needed**



If there ever was a doubt amongst the stewards gathered in Linthicum, Md. that labor law reform was badly needed in the United States, they left the training true believers.

Speaking before more than 30 union members at the annual Local 68 (Baltimore) steward training, former Interbake Foods worker John Robinson described how he and several other workers were fired for trying to join the BCTGM at the company's Front Royal, Va. facility.

"They tried to intimidate us; they spied on us; and they tried to pit worker against worker," Robinson told the group. He explained how the company fought the unionization effort and described in detail how he and others were fired. Many of the stewards were shocked to hear that after one employee had been fired for union activity, the company hung the empty uniform in the plant for all to see. "It was blatant intimidation," said Robinson.

Most of the stewards present at the training had not been involved in organizing drives at their workplaces and could not comprehend how far a company would go to keep workers from joining the union. Many expressed outright anger that the law could not protect the fired workers. "Corporate greed,"

stated one steward. Another union member noted that "this shouldn't happen in the United States."

A discussion followed concerning the need to promote the Employee Free Choice Act (H.R. 800) and have it passed by Congress. Many stewards talked about needing a President in the White House that would put working families first. Local 68 President Gary Oskoian explained how important it was to elect a pro-worker Congress so that a working-families agenda could be achieved.

After the training, the group gave John Robinson a standing ovation and offered words of encouragement to him and to the other Interbake workers who were fired for exercising their protected rights.

The organizing drive at Interbake, a subsidiary of baking giant George Weston, began in the autumn of 2005 and continued through 2006. An election set for October 2006 was blocked by the NLRB so that the government agency could investigate dozens of unfair labor practice charges (ULP's) filed against the company. In early 2008, after the company hired a well-known union-busting law firm, half a dozen workers were fired for union activity. Local 68 immediately filed ULP's on their behalf, along with dozens of other charges. A trial is currently set for the end of October.

**"They tried to intimidate us; they spied on us; and they tried to pit worker against worker."**

—John Robinson



## **2009 BCTGM International Scholarship Program**

The BCTGM International Scholarship Program will award **ten \$1,000 one-time scholarship awards** in 2009. One of the scholarships is reserved for a Canadian and up to three of the 10 are designated for active members of the BCTGM. **The deadline for applications is January 31, 2009.**

To learn more about this special BCTGM membership feature, you can find the official rules and regulations for the 2009 BCTGM International Scholarship Program and the application on the union's website, **[www.bctgm.org](http://www.bctgm.org)**.

# Secret Rule Would Harm Workers

**A** new Department of Labor rule that would make it tougher to regulate workers' on-the-job exposure to toxins and chemicals is moving quickly through the Bush Administration with little, to no public input.

The new rule would call for reexamining the methods used to measure risks posed by workplace exposure to toxins. It would also require the agency to take an extra, burdensome, step before setting new limits on chemicals in the workplace by allowing an additional round of challenges to agency risk assessments.

The secret rule was immediately denounced by the BCTGM, the AFL-CIO, the occupational safety & health community, and several leading members of Congress.

After news of the secret rule-making was reported by the *Washington Post* in July, U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, proposed legislation (H.R. 6660) to forbid the Department of Labor from issuing, administering or enforcing the department's proposal. "The fact that the Department of Labor seems to be engaged in secret rulemaking makes me highly suspicious that some high-level political appointees are up to no good. This Congress will not stand for the gutting of health and safety protections as the Bush Administration heads out the door," said Miller.

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**"This cynical measure is unfounded, unsound, and harmful to workers."**

—Peg Seminario,  
AFL-CIO Director of  
Safety & Health

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According to BCTGM International President Frank Hurt, it is yet another sign that the current administration has little interest in protecting workers. "Despite overwhelming scientific support, over the past seven years OSHA has refused to pass new rules protecting workers. And yet

now, behind the urging of the business community, they want to make it even harder for future administrations to pass worker protections," said Hurt.

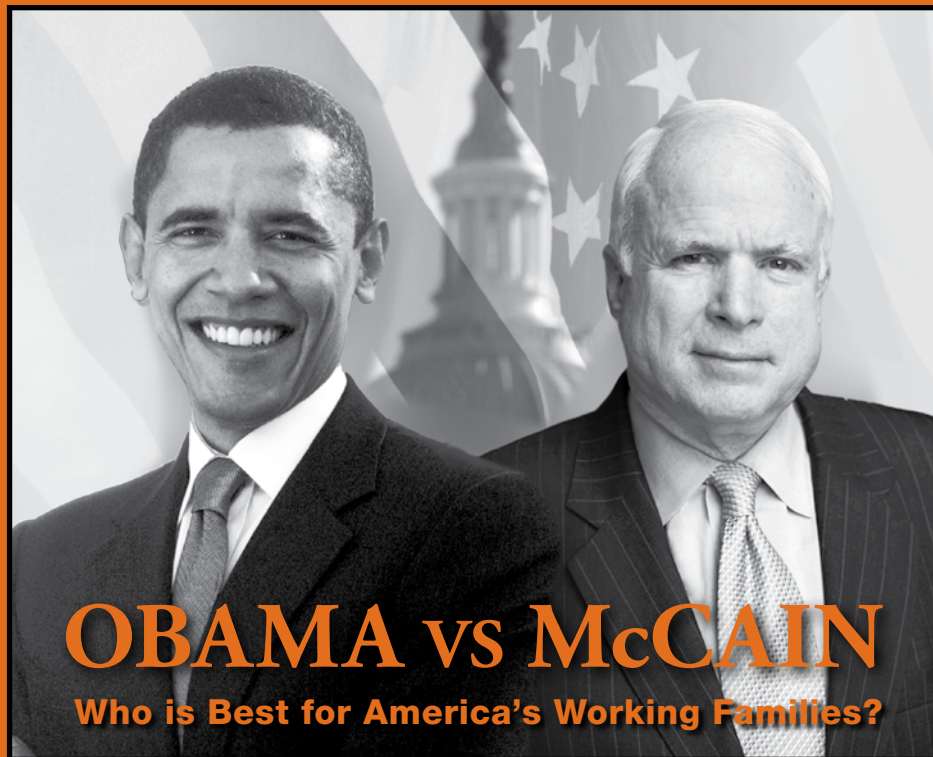
In response to the outcry over the secret rule-making, the House of Representative's Committee on Education and Labor, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, held a hearing to explore why the Bush Administration was moving forward with a rule that would undermine future health and safety protections for American workers.

"I am troubled by the Department of Labor's attempt to rush through this rule without a full consideration of its effect on the health and safety of American workers," said U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.), chair of the subcommittee. "This proposed rule has without explanation leaptfrogged ahead of many other worker protection standards that OSHA should have been working on for the last eight years."

Speaking before the committee was Peg Seminario, AFL-CIO Director of Safety & Health. According to Seminario, the risk assessment rule is unnecessary as OSHA already has a rigorous risk assessment procedure in place. "OSHA has conducted risk assessments for its occupational health rules for decades. OSHA's risk assessments have withstood court challenges and have been found to be sound," said Seminario.



*This is the second in our 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. In our last issue, we examined the candidate's position and voting record on the economy, jobs & wages and health care. This issue we will examine their positions on trade, workers' rights and retirement security.*



## OBAMA vs MCCAIN

### Who is Best for America's Working Families?

**BARACK OBAMA**

**JOHN MCCAIN**

#### FAIR TRADE

**Obama: Renegotiate NAFTA or Opt Out.** Obama said, "I will make sure that we renegotiate [NAFTA]... I think we should use the hammer of a potential opt-out as leverage to ensure that we actually get labor and environmental standards that are enforced. And that is not what has been happening so far." (Cleveland Democratic Debate, NBC, 2/26/08)

**McCain Thinks NAFTA Was a Good Idea.** McCain voted for NAFTA and recently said, "I know NAFTA was a good idea." (Des Moines Register, 11/07; H.R. 3450, Vote 395, 11/20/93; H.R. 4444, Vote 251, 9/19/00)

**Obama Voted Against Central America Free Trade Agreement.** Obama voted against the Central America Free Trade Agreement because it did not contain adequate protections for the environment or for workers, such as the freedom to form unions. (S. 1307, Vote 170, 6/30/05)

**McCain Voted for CAFTA and Wants to Expand It.** CAFTA cuts tariffs among the United States, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The agreement was modeled after NAFTA. McCain said, "We need to build on the passage of the Central America Free Trade Agreement by expanding U.S. trade with the region... My administration would reduce barriers to trade and press for renewed Trade Promotion Authority." (S. 1307, Vote 170, 6/30/05; McCain's address on Latin America to the Florida Association of Broadcasters, published 6/20/07)

**Obama Proposes 'Advanced Manufacturing Fund' to Prevent Job Displacement.** Obama proposed creation of an "advanced manufacturing fund" to promote industries that are likely to keep jobs in the United States. (Chicago Sun-Times, 5/14/08)

**McCain Has Voted for Every Other Bad Trade Agreement.** McCain voted for trade agreements with Oman, Singapore, Chile and Morocco, among others, as well as for Fast Track bills to make it easier for the president to enact trade agreements without strong worker protections. (S. 3569, Vote 190, 6/29/06; H.R. 2739, Vote 318, 7/31/03; H.R. 2738, Vote 319, 7/31/03; H.R. 434, Vote 353, 11/3/99; H.R. 3009, Vote 115, 5/16/02, Vote 117, 5/21/02, Vote 207, 8/1/02; S. 1269, Vote 292, 11/4/97)

**Obama: No Tax Breaks for Job Exporters.** "We're not going to be giving tax breaks to companies that send jobs overseas," Obama said. (Detroit Free Press, 6/3/08; Obama Remarks, Raleigh, North Carolina, 6/9/08)

**McCain Voted to Keep Tax Breaks for Companies That Reimport Foreign Manufactured Goods.** McCain voted against a bill to tax multinational companies on income from foreign factories when goods are shipped back to the United States and to require companies to notify employees and give a reason before they move their jobs overseas. Essentially, he voted to reward companies that ship jobs overseas with a tax haven. (S. 1637, Vote 83, 5/5/04)

**WORKERS' RIGHTS**

**Obama Voted for Employee Free Choice Act.** Obama co-sponsored and voted for the Employee Free Choice Act, which would restore workers' freedom to form unions and bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions without employer harassment. Obama says, "We will pass the Employee Free Choice Act. It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when." (H.R. 800, Vote 227, 6/26/07) (Chicago Tribune, 3/4/07)

**McCain Voted Against the Employee Free Choice Act but for a National 'Right to Work' for Less Law.** McCain voted against the Employee Free Choice Act, which would level the playing field for workers trying to form unions. He voted for a national "right to work" for less law that would attempt to eliminate unions altogether. (H.R. 800, Vote 227, 6/26/07; S. 1788 Vote 188, 7/10/96)

**Obama Says Choice to Form Unions Belongs to Workers.** "The choice to organize should be left up to workers and workers alone. It should be their free choice." At an AFSCME forum, Obama said, "In this country, we believe that if the majority of workers in a company want a union, they should get a union. We can do this." (Take Back America Conference, 6/19/07; Obama Senate Press Release, 6/20/07)

**McCain Voted to Allow Employers to Hire Permanent Replacements During a Strike.** McCain voted against ending debate on a bill that would bar employers from hiring permanent replacements for striking workers. (S. 55, Vote 189, 7/13/94)

**Obama Says Workers Are Victimized by Current Law.** Obama said workers are being victimized by current organizing laws. "The employers are abiding by the letter of the law...but it turns out we (still) have an overwhelming number of voters who would want to join a union....It would seem to me that we should change the law." (Investor's Business Daily, 3/30/07)

**McCain Says Government Workers Are 'Crippled' by Union Contracts.** In his speech to the Oklahoma state legislature, McCain said, "We must streamline our workforce, demand high standards of behavior, promote excellence at every level based on merit and accountability, and not let good workers be crippled by the fine print of the latest union contract. ... The civil service has strayed from its reformist roots and has mutated into a no-accountability zone, where employment is treated as an entitlement, good performance as an option, and accountability as someone else's problem." (Address to the Oklahoma state legislature, 5/21/07)

**RETIREMENT SECURITY**

**Obama Says He Will NOT Cut Benefits or Raise Retirement Age.** Obama wrote, "I do not want to cut benefits or raise the retirement age. I believe there are a number of ways we can make Social Security solvent that do not involve placing these added burdens on our seniors." (Quad-City Times, 9/21/07)

**McCain Voted to Raise Medicare Eligibility Age.** In 1997, McCain voted to support provisions that would increase the age for Medicare eligibility from 65 to 67 and impose a new \$5 co-payment for home health care visits. [S. 947, Vote #112, 6/24/97; S. Amdt. 445, Vote #115, 6/25/97]

**Obama Opposed Deep Cuts to Social Security Benefits.** Obama opposed a Social Security plan that would require deep benefit cuts or a massive increase in debt. That same year, Obama supported legislation to prioritize Social Security solvency over tax cuts for the wealthy. (S.C.R. 18, Vote 49, 3/15/05; S.Amdt. 144 to S.C.R. 18, Vote 47, 3/15/05)

**McCain Wanted to Divert Social Security Money to Private Accounts.** The Wall Street Journal reported that "[a] centerpiece of a McCain presidential bid in 2000 was a plan to divert a portion of Social Security payroll taxes to fund private accounts, much as President Bush proposed unsuccessfully." The plan would put workers' retirement money into the risky market and reduce the amount of Social Security payments they would receive from the government. The plan would undermine the Social Security system. [Wall Street Journal, 3/3/08]

**Obama Opposed Steep Increases in Seniors' Medicare Premiums.** Obama voted to protect seniors from steep increases in their Medicare Part B premiums, which they faced because Congress increased Medicare payments to physicians but failed to enact savings from Medicare payments to private health plans. (S. 1932, Vote 287, 11/3/05)

**McCain Voted for Steep Increases in Seniors' Medicare Premiums.** McCain voted against protecting seniors from steep increases in their Medicare Part B premiums. [S. 1932, Vote #287, 11/3/05]

**Obama: Eliminate Income Taxes for Seniors Earning Less Than \$50,000; Seniors Bear Unfair Tax Burden.** Obama proposes tax relief for seniors. He wrote, "My plan will eliminate income taxes for about 7 million seniors making less than \$50,000 a year. . . . This tax cut is needed especially because since 1993 seniors have been bearing an unfair tax burden." (Quad-City Times, 9/21/07)

**McCain Voted for Bush's 2006 Social Security Privatization Plan.** In 2006, McCain voted for the Social Security Reserve Fund. The proposal would shift Social Security's annual surpluses into a reserve account that would be converted into risky private accounts. [SCR 83, Vote #68, 3/16/06; SCR 83, Vote #68, 3/16/06]

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

**McCain Voted to Cut Billions from Medicare.** McCain voted for the budget reconciliation bill that reduced spending on Medicare by \$6.4 billion by requiring that beneficiaries purchase medical equipment and cutting payments to home health care providers. [S. 1932, Vote #363, 12/21/05; Congressional Quarterly, 12/26/05]

# NOTABLE Quotes

**“Wall Street has shown it cannot be trusted to police itself. We need to reinstate a strong regulatory system that protects our economy.”**

—Senator Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.) speaking about the Wall Street financial crisis.

**“With record joblessness, health care in crisis, crumbling infrastructure and lost homes, we must be every bit as determined to not allow Main Street to fail as we are to save Wall Street and our foreign central bank creditors.”**

—AFL-CIO President John Sweeney speaking about the impact the financial crisis will have on working families.

**“Our nation can’t survive in a global economy without a different set of trade rules that protect workers here from the race to the bottom and workers abroad from exploitation by drug companies and energy companies.”**

—Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) after introducing the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment Act, also called the Trade Act, in the Senate.

**“President Bush has filled top posts across his administration with people who do not agree with the mission of their organizations.”**

—New York Times editorial referring to a new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on how Elaine Chao’s Department of Labor mishandled cases in its Wage & Hour Division.

**“Do any of you doubt that this administration has anything else in mind than doing in the labor movement?”**

—Senator Joe Biden (D-Del.) speaking at union rally in Virginia.

**“The proposed risk assessment rule has been developed in secret by political appointees... with little involvement by OSHA and MSHA and with no public notice prior to its publication.”**

—Peg Seminario, AFL-CIO Director of Safety and Health

# I AM A UNION OFFICER

## BECAUSE . . .

### **BETTY TROUT**

**Financial Secretary  
Local 387G  
(Lancaster, Pa.)**

I want to be able to support the people I work with; see that the contract is upheld by both company and union; to be able to answer questions and address issues that may be real or not; and to be aware of things that affect our livelihood.



### **GEORGENE BARRAGAN**

**Business Agent  
Local 114  
(Portland, Ore.)**

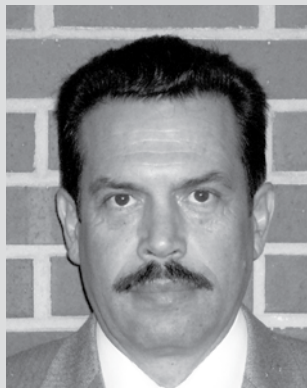
To make a difference and show workers that they have a voice in the workplace.



### **HUMBERTO GOMEZ**

**Business Agent  
Local 24  
(Redwood City, Calif.)**

I want to help the workers, especially the Hispanics in the region, and explain how the union works.



### **DARRYL O'BLENES**

**Financial Secretary  
Local 406  
(Moncton, NB)**

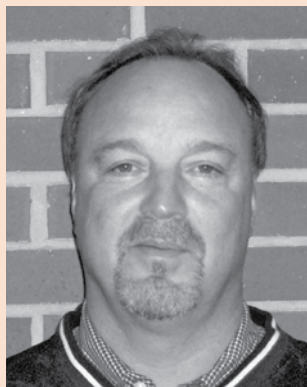
I want to be a voice in my workplace to help represent those who feel threatened or afraid of speaking out. Educate some people who still don't understand what unions are all about.



### **TIM ZAGURSKI**

**Financial Secretary  
Local 50G  
(Omaha, Neb.)**

Despite what some people think or believe, all people are not created equal. And for those who do not have the physical or mental faculties to stand up for themselves, I will do my best to help these people level the playing field.



### **CALVIN WILLIAMS**

**Financial Secretary  
Local 50  
(Edison, N.J.)**

I am a union officer because I love helping people and because my father educated me about the union; he was a shop steward in the post office for 20 years before he passed away.



# BCTGM Supporters in Congress



Elwyn Tinklenberg is running for Congress in Minnesota's 6th Congressional District. Pictured here is BCTGM Local 92 (Twin Cities, Minn.) President Ron Mohrland (left) and Financial Secretary Doug Lemke (right) presenting Tinklenberg (center) with a BCTGM-PAC donation to aid in his campaign. Tinklenberg supports the creation of good jobs at good wages through reforms in tax, trade, economic, and labor policy.



U.S. Rep. Tim Walz represents Minnesota's First Congressional District and is a strong supporter of the BCTGM. Pictured here presenting Walz (right) with a BCTGM-PAC donation to help with his re-election campaign is BCTGM Local 62G (Mankato, Minn.) President Kent Williams (left).



Debbie Halverson is an Illinois state senator who is the labor-endorsed, Democratic candidate for U.S. House of Representatives from Illinois' 11th Congressional District. Throughout her career in public service, Halverson has been a leading advocate for the issues that matter most to her district—labor, health care, and education. Pictured here presenting Halverson with a BCTGM-PAC donation are BCTGM Local 342 (Bloomington, Ill.) Executive Board members and stewards.



Congressman John Barrow represents Georgia's 12th Congressional District. Pictured here presenting Barrow (right) with a BCTGM-PAC donation to aid in his re-election campaign is BCTGM Local 42 (Atlanta) Business Agent Isaac Gobern (left). In the House of Representatives, Barrow currently serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee and the Agriculture Committee.



BCTGM Local 125 (San Bernadino, Calif.) Vice President Rene Castillo (right) presents a BCTGM-PAC donation to U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo (left) to aid in her re-election campaign to California's 14th Congressional District. Rep. Eshoo is a cosponsor of H.R. 800, the Employee Free Choice Act.



# What Canadian Working Families Want in New Government

## Childcare:

The shortage of affordable child care outside of Quebec means that many working parents, especially women who are single parents, cannot work full-time, or cannot join the workforce at all. It also stops parents from gaining work experience, training for better jobs and holds them back when it comes to saving for retirement or their children's education.

Legislation is needed immediately to create a public, non-profit child care system by attaching strings to federal transfers for early learning and child care.

## Protecting Jobs and Wages

Tens of thousands of well-paid jobs are being lost in communities that rely on manufacturing and forestry because of the high dollar and bad trade deals. The energy boom is making a few people rich and creating jobs in a few places, but it is unsustainable.

Canada must reject one-sided trade deals like the proposed Canada-Korea deal, and ensure that trade with China and other Asian countries is more balanced so that good jobs in sectors like auto, aerospace and machinery and equipment are protected and created. NAFTA rules that don't support Canadian employment should be challenged, just as the U.S. rejects them when they don't work for them.

Public investment, social infrastructure and respect for the environment and workers have a huge role to play in building a strong economy. It certainly works in other countries.

## Pharmacare

The growth in costs of the health care system has been largely due to the higher and higher cost of prescription drugs. That is why a pan-Canadian,



publicly-funded and controlled prescription drug plan is needed.

Health benefits, as a share of wages, have doubled over the past decade and will likely increase even faster over the next. Bargaining over health benefits has become more and more difficult in recent years because of fast-rising costs.

A public drug plan would have much lower administrative costs than the current proliferation of employer plans, a much greater ability to lower costs through

bulk purchasing and a greater ability to control costs through the use of generic drugs and drug formularies. Furthermore, a public drug plan would cover every Canadian.

## Retirement Security

Canada's public pension system, while reducing poverty among seniors, still provides an insufficient income for many. Almost one in ten seniors still lives in poverty, and many more live very close to the poverty line.

The majority of Canadian workers with no workplace pension are forced into individual savings accounts (RRSPs) with high fees and unpredictable returns. Few people are able to save enough money to secure a decent retirement, and this is increasingly true for young people. They are entering the workforce later in life, are having difficulty finding steady work, and usually have high student debts and mortgages.

The CPP is a national success story, but its absolute maximum benefit level in 2008 is \$884.58 per month (with most Canadians earning less). Polls suggest a strong majority of working families support an increase in CPP benefits even if it means an increase in premiums. This is why the labour movement supports a doubling of both CPP and Old Age Security (OAS) payments.



## American Citizenship

BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) member Mario Aldaco was sworn in as a U.S. citizen on August 28. Following the ceremony, the 24-year-old native of Mexico went with Local 114 Financial Secretary Terry Lansing to the Oregon Elections Division to register to vote. Aldaco is employed at Richmond Baking in McMinnville, Ore., where he is a lead sanitation worker responsible for the cleaning of all the baking equipment and machines. He was instrumental in helping Local 114 win their organizing campaign at the bakery in 2006. “Mario has worked hard for this union and to become a U.S. citizen. We’re proud of him,” Lansing said. For his part, Aldaco said it made him happy that Lansing could be with him when he took the oath.

## Stewards Train

In Toledo, Ohio, shop stewards from BCTGM Local 58G (Toledo, Ohio) pose for a photo following a stewards training seminar in August.



## Matter of Education

Educating shop stewards is a top priority at Local 125 (San Leandro, Calif.). Training for the stewards includes an intense agenda of grievance handling, organizing, and contract arbitration. After the training, the stewards enjoy a union-made and decorated cake while discussing ways to bring their new knowledge back to the shop floor.



◀ Pictured at the September 2007 training is (left to right) Local 125 members Janice Perkins, Ken Hyynh, Jose Banuelos, Arnold Applin and Miguel Garibay.



▲ Pictured at the July training is (front row, left to right) Local 125 members Guadalupe Castillo, Tina Davenport, (back row, left to right) Kao S. Saechao, Rodolfo Gomez, Miguel Jaime, Anthony Sandoval and Christian Dominguez.



# Assistance for BCTGM Power Program Participants Impacted by Hurricane Ike

**U**nion members living in areas impacted by the recent hurricanes in the Gulf Coast area and *who participate* in BCTGM Power/Union Plus programs may have one less financial worry.

The Union Plus Credit Card Disaster Relief Fund is available to help cardholders who are facing financial hardship due to the storms. Union cardholders are eligible to apply for Disaster Relief Fund grants of \$500. The money does not have to be repaid.

**To qualify for a Union Plus Credit Card Disaster Relief Fund grant, the union member must:**

1. Have been a victim of the hurricane in counties designated by FEMA\* as qualifying for individual assistance.
2. Have experienced a significant loss of income or property due to the disaster.
3. Have been a Union Plus Credit Card holder for at least 12 months and have an account in good standing.
4. Describe his or her circumstances and document the income or property loss.

To apply for a Disaster Relief Fund grant, *cardholders* can call the **Union Plus Credit Card Disaster Relief Fund at 1-877-761-5028**. The Disaster Relief Fund provided \$400,000 to 800 union members on the Gulf Coast impacted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Other special assistance for cardholders includes skip payments, lower rates, fee waivers and other help.

Disaster victims who participate in the BCTGM Power/Union Plus Loan, Auto Insurance, Mortgage and UnionSecure Insurance programs may be eligible to receive payment extensions or other special help from the program providers. Assistance plans vary by program provider.

**To find out more, members who participate in any of the following programs should call:**

- Union Plus Loan: 1-800-224-5920
- Union Plus Mortgage: 1-866-766-2164
- Union Plus Auto Insurance: 1-877-244-0304
- UnionSecure Insurance: 1-800-393-0864

**All members are also eligible for free credit counseling through the Union Plus Credit Counseling Program and free legal advice through the Union Plus Legal Service:**

- Union Plus Legal Service: 1-888-993-8886
- Union Plus Credit Counseling: 1-877-833-1745

**For more information about the Union Plus benefits visit [www.UnionPlus.org](http://www.UnionPlus.org).**

\*To see which counties have been designated by FEMA to qualify for individual assistance, visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov) and select Hurricane Gustav or Hurricane Ike information.



# Are We **BETTER OFF** Than We Were 8 Years Ago?

**46 MILLION WITHOUT HEALTH CARE**

(Census Bureau, 8/07)

**2 MILLION HOME FORECLOSURES**

(Brookings Institution, 3/7/08)

**605,000 JOBS LOST IN 2008**

(CNNMoney.com, 9/5/08; Associated Press, 9/5/08)



**\$4-A-GALLON GAS ENERGY CRISIS**

(CNNMoney.com, 6/8/08)

**JOBLESS CLAIMS REACH 7-YEAR HIGH**

(Associated Press, 10/3/08)

**A GLOBAL FINANCIAL MELTDOWN WITH NO END IN SIGHT**

(Associated Press, 9/16/08)

**Take Control: Hold Your Elected Officials Accountable**  
**VOTE ON NOVEMBER 4!**