

# BCTGM *News*

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## **The First 100 Days** **for Workers**

**Education**

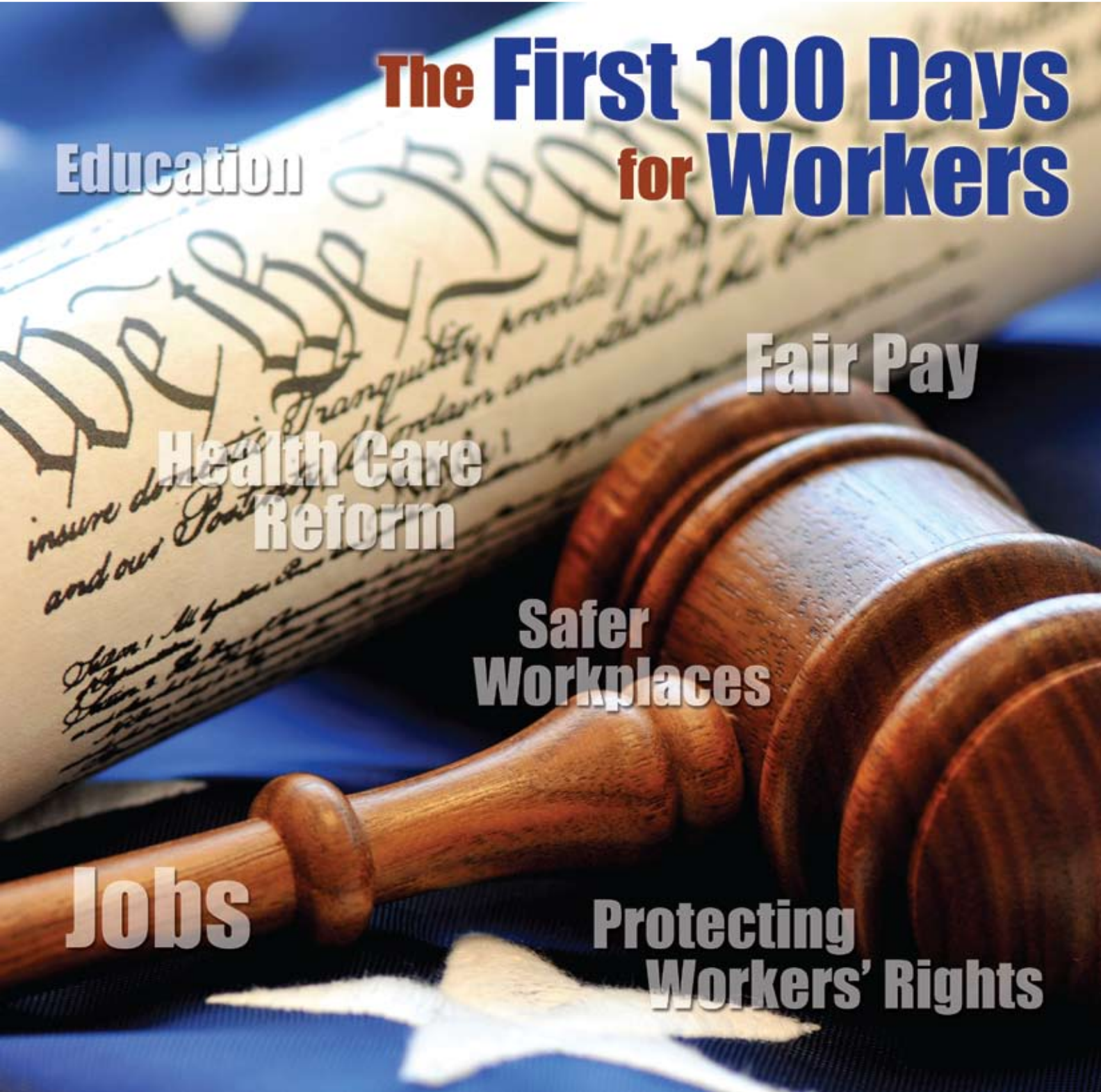
**Fair Pay**

**Health Care  
Reform**

**Safer  
Workplaces**

**Jobs**

**Protecting  
Workers' Rights**





## *the* PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Taxing Health Benefits Would Be a Disgrace

Rebuilding the American economy and revitalizing our middle class will not be fully accomplished until the nation's broken health care system is repaired. The BCTGM strongly supports comprehensive health care reform that guarantees coverage and quality care for all Americans, lowers costs and lets people choose their own doctors.

But what we will never support and will oppose with every resource at our disposal is the taxation of the health benefits for which our members and this Union have fought and sacrificed for decades.

Congress is now in the process of crafting health care reform legislation. Amazingly, some Democratic leaders in the Senate are advocating taxing employee health benefits as a way to pay for this reform.

Taxing workers' health benefits was John McCain's plan in the last election and has been the Republican Party's approach for years. Barack Obama vehemently opposed taxing workers' benefits and made this a key issue in the campaign.

Most importantly, the American people soundly rejected this outrageous idea last year when they voted for change.

We know that many BCTGM members voted for Barack Obama and against John McCain based on this issue alone.

Taxing worker benefits was a bad idea when John McCain proposed it during the 2008 campaign and it is an even worse idea today when it is proposed by the politicians who are supposed to be the defenders of working people.

Taxing health benefits that are negotiated is unfair and punishes those who have done the right thing. Our members have paid for these benefits by taking less in wages and other benefits over the last twenty five years. A new tax on health benefits means unionized workers would pay twice and this cannot be allowed to happen.

This tax would undermine the entire employer-based benefits system, the primary source of health coverage and financing for most Americans, as employers would scramble to reduce coverage drastically or drop it altogether.

The cost of paying for health care reform ought not to be borne by workers but rather by those that are responsible for wrecking the system in the first place, namely the health insurance companies.

Health care costs have been going through the roof for the last several decades not because of an increase in actual costs for treatment, but rather as a result of the unconscionable profits demanded by the CEO's of insurance companies.

This is precisely why health insurance companies are opposed to including any type of government component in the reform legislation. They fear the competition would lower company profits and executive bonuses.

The industry's recent pronouncement that it "really" wants to help solve the health care crisis should be dismissed outright for the phony, empty rhetoric that it is. When push comes to shove, they will choose profits over patients' health, lower costs and true reform every time.

Insurance executives should have no influence over the terms of the health care legislation that is ultimately produced by Congress. They forfeited that privilege when they deliberately crippled the health care system and sacrificed people's health and the finances of millions of working families for larger profits and more money for their own wallets.

Instead of burdening workers with a crushing new tax increase, Congress should look at taxing the excessive profits of health insurance and pharmaceutical companies as well as the hundreds of other large, highly-profitable corporations in this country that pay little or no taxes, including most of the oil companies.

When Democratic Senator Max Baucus of Montana, a congressional leader on health care reform, says that not taxing health care benefits "often leads people to buy more health coverage than they need," it clearly shows that he has no understanding whatsoever about what really takes place in the workplace, at the collective bargaining table or around the kitchen table.



This lack of awareness on the part of someone so influential in the legislative process is dangerous to union members. Unfortunately, he is not alone in Congress in this way of thinking.

It is truly disappointing to see a number of congressional Democrats, most of whom were elected by working people, reaching back to failed, rejected Republican policy proposals. If they continue down this path and fail to embrace the change demanded by the voters last year, the millions of people who got involved, some for the first time, will drop out.

Moreover, if they continue down this path they will lose the support of the very people who put them in office, including members of the BCTGM. And, they will deserve the political fate that awaits them. No industry, no company, and no BCTGM member is spared from this reality.

**Frank Hurt**

*BCTGM International President*

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# BCTGM Rallies for Employee Free Choice Act

**O**n May 6, BCTGM Local 85 (Sacramento, Calif.) members were among more than a thousand California workers, interfaith leaders, community allies and elected officials to participate in a statewide overnight vigil and fast to urge passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The message was clear to Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the only Democrat in California not currently signed on as a co-sponsor of the bill: Now is the time to reform labor law and rebuild the middle class.

The event was organized by the Sacramento Central Labor Council.

The 18-hour vigil and fast caught the attention of every major TV station and news outlet in the Sacramento area, according to Local 85 Financial Secretary Marty Zimmerman. The vigil took place a day after the Sacramento City Council approved a resolution in support of the Employee Free Choice Act.

On February 17 in Chicago, BCTGM International Vice President Steve Bertelli and Local 1 members were among some 3,000 gathered to demand that Congress pass the Employee Free Choice Act.

Rally participants heard from workers who were coerced



**BCTGM L. 85 (Sacramento) members participated in a 18-hour vigil and fast for the Employee Free Choice Act at the Federal Building in Sacramento. Pictured here is (left to right) Asst. Rep. Dawn Moeckly, Asst. Rep. Jerry Gil and Fin. Secy. Marty Zimmerman.**

and harassed by their bosses for attempting to form a union, as well as from union leaders and elected officials like Rep. Danny Davis, who was one of the 10 Illinois House members who co-sponsored the bill in 2007.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney spoke at the rally, saying that giving workers the freedom to bargain was essential to level the playing field and make the economy work for everyone.

“We’re all in this fight together because today in America corporations hold all the cards—and the deck is stacked against workers,” said Sweeney.

Sweeney urged attendees to call and write members of Congress to urge a quick vote for the Employee Free Choice Act. Passage of the bill, he said, will require a concerted national effort by union members and allies of working families.

Working people across the country are countering a multimillion-dollar corporate disinformation campaign with people power in support of the Employee Free Choice Act and pressing for every vote in Congress. More than 1.5 million have signed postcards and petitions urging their members of Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, and the AFL-CIO is raising funds for ads to correct the lies and smears against unions and the legislation.



**BCTGM L.1 (Chicago) members were among more than 3,000 activists at a rally in Chicago to support passage of the Employee Free Choice Act.**

# Family Candy Maker Stays True to History...

**T**hree generations of the Sconza family have proudly operated the Sconza Candy Company for 70 years, relying on many of the same old-fashioned candy-making techniques that family members have mastered during the company's proud history.



**Founders Mary and Vincent Sconza started the business in their Oakland, Calif. kitchen in 1939 making peanut brittle.**

The Sconza Candy Company was founded in Oakland, Calif. in 1939 by Vincent and Mary Sconza, who made peanut brittle in their kitchen and sold it to locals in the neighborhood. In 1948, the family began making its renowned panned candy. Today, Sconza is run by Jim Sconza, the son of its founder, along with third-generation family members.

BCTGM Local 125 (San Leandro, Calif.) members churn out about 120,000 pounds of candy a day. That includes Sconza

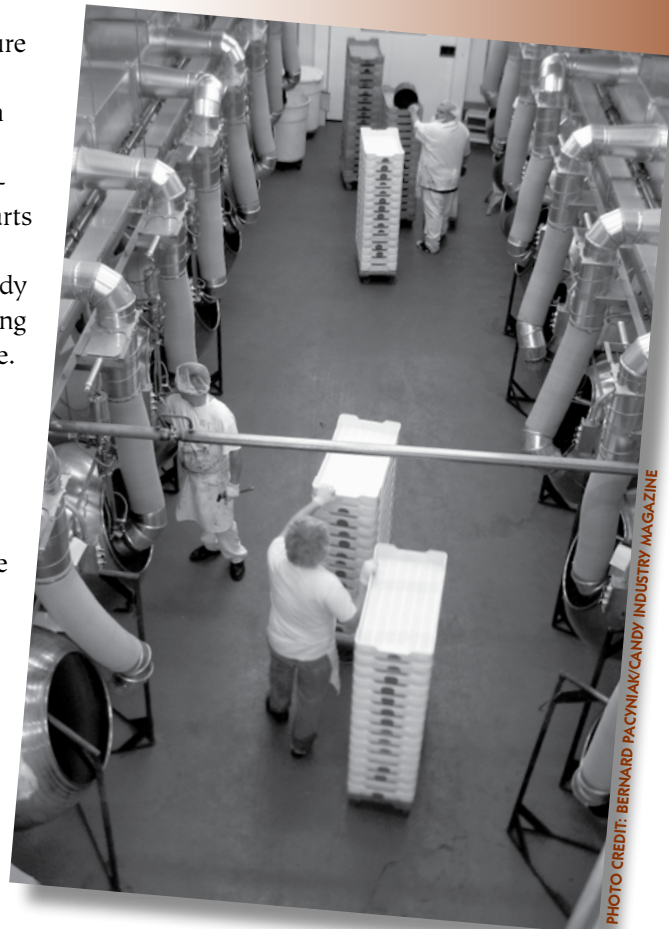
brand confections, private-label candies and bulk products. The company makes jawbreakers, Jordan almonds, Boston beans, chocolate-covered nuts and fruit, toffee-covered nuts and Kosher products. According to Sconza, the company is the only giant jawbreaker manufacturer in the United States that hasn't moved production overseas. It is also one of the largest producers of Jordan almonds, a fresh nut in a candy shell that is popular at weddings.

The company's signature product continues to be panned candy, the creation of which is considered an art form. Panning is a time-consuming process that starts with a tiny center and then builds the flavor of the candy around the center by rotating it inside a panning machine. Some panned candies take days to make while others, like the company's novelty giant jawbreakers, require two weeks of panning.

To make the core of the panned candy, blackened caldron-like pots of nuts and caramelizing sugar are heated over a flame and then the contents are tossed onto a conveyor belt. In the process, Local 125 master candy makers don't use gauges or computers, instead mixing ingredients by hand relying on their well-honed knowledge of the craft.

BCTGM Local 125 (San Leandro, Calif.) members churn out about 120,000 pounds of candy a day.

**Local 125 members load pans in a panning room dedicated to chocolate at the Sconza Candy plant.**



**PHOTO CREDIT: BERNARD PACYNAK/CANDY INDUSTRY MAGAZINE**



Sconza has 130 panning machines of varying sizes that can each hold 320 to 900 pounds of candy. The machines resemble a large clothes dryer, slowly spinning the core of the candy to coat it with layers of flavor, color and ingredients.

In 2008, Sconza moved from the 60,000-square-foot Oakland, Calif. facility it had operated in since 1967, to a former Hershey Co. plant in Oakdale, Calif. — a 300,000 square-foot

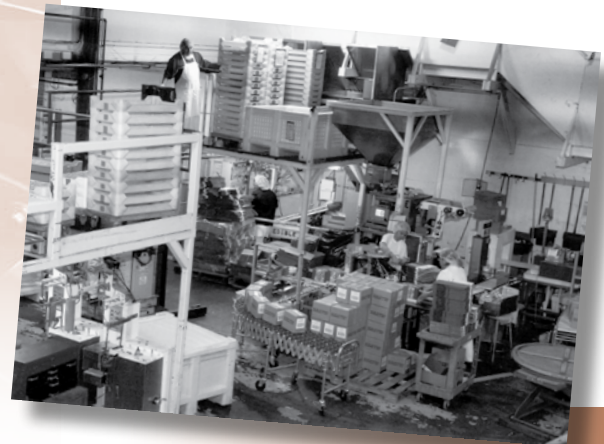
facility. The operation is spread over three buildings, including a 25,000-square-foot warehouse down the street from the manufacturing plant.

“This move will enable us to continue the tradition of quality that my father established 70 years ago,” Chief Executive Officer Jim Sconza noted in a recent article in *Candy Industry* magazine, adding that the company plans to continue making candy for “generations to come.”



PHOTO CREDIT: BERNARD PACYNIAK/CANDY INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

Local 125 members hand pack finished products.



Sconza Candy Company is a family owned and operated business. Pictured here are union members packaging product at the company's former Oakland, Calif. location. The company bought the old Hershey plant in Oakdale, Calif. and began operations there in 2008.



A Local 125 member packs chocolate covered almonds in boxes.



# ...and Expands into Future

# Keebler Members Ratify New Master Contract

**B**CTGM negotiators successfully negotiated a new four-year master contract with Keebler, a subsidiary of the Kellogg Company. The agreement covers members at Keebler facilities in Georgia, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania and was ratified by the membership in early May.

The new contract features a wage increase totaling \$1.95 over the course of the contract. Pension levels were also increased at all locations, and the P-Plan benefit will be increased in 2010.

Other highlights of the new agreement are the maintenance of all health benefits, enhanced dental benefits, an increase in accident and sickness benefits, and improvements in funeral leave language.

Leading the negotiations was International Vice

President Bob Oakley, assisted by International Representative Jimmy Condran. The Negotiating Committee included Johnny Jackson (Local 42/Atlanta), Arthur Bennett (Local 42), Tyrone Walker (Local 42), Orin Holder (Local 70/Grand Rapids, Mich.), Bill Arends (Local 70), Mark Heintzelman (Local 70), Doug Walters (Local 253/Cincinnati), Shawn Turner (Local 253), and Walter Akers (Local 253).

According to Oakley the new agreement was the result of hard work by the negotiating committee. "We did our homework on the company, we informally surveyed our membership to see what issues they were most concerned about, and we prepared ourselves for tough negotiating sessions. The result is a contract the membership can be proud of," said Oakley.

## General Mills Bargaining Conference Meets in Atlanta



Delegates to the 2009 General Mills Bargaining Conference includes union leaders from 12 BCTGM local unions.

**T**o begin preparations for contract negotiations with General Mills in 2010, 25 representatives from 12 BCTGM locals met in Atlanta on May 4. The current Master Agreement expires in April 2010 and negotiations on a new contract will begin months before that.

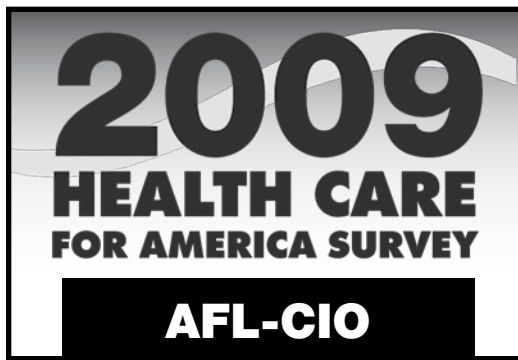
The conference, chaired by Region 4 International Vice President Tony Johnson, brought together local union leadership to begin laying the foundation for those negotiations. The conference delegates voted on the make-up of the negotiating committee and finalized rally points for the negotiations.

The delegates also discussed several important issues, including outsourcing, issues related to the

pension fund, health insurance, the Employee Free Choice Act, and steward training.

According to Johnson, the most significant aspect of the conference was gathering local union leaders from across the country together. "We had a lot of important discussions about how this company operates its business in different locations. I certainly think we are all on the same page and this will be reflected at the bargaining table," said Johnson.

The BCTGM represents more than 2,500 General Mills workers throughout North America, at cereal plants, frozen dough facilities, grain mills and elevators.



**C**omprehensive health care reform is front and center in the nation's policy debate. As President Obama has said, "Health care reform cannot wait, it must not wait, and it will not wait another year."

**Now, you have an opportunity to help shape health care reform to meet the needs of working families.**

The AFL-CIO and Working America want to know about your experiences with America's health care system—what's working, what isn't, what costs too much and more.

**Tallied results of the survey will be shared with national and state leaders and the media.**

Congress, the Administration and the media are hearing plenty about health care reform from drug makers and insurance companies—they need to hear from working families, too.

Millions of working families are paying a steep price for a health care system that's just not working anymore:

- Forty-one percent of working Americans had problems paying medical bills in 2007, and four in 10 of those used all their savings to pay their health care bills.
- About half the families that file for bankruptcy do so at least in part because of health care debt.
- In December 2008 and January 2009, nearly 50 million people had no health insurance. About 14,000 people a day lost their coverage during those months.
- Uninsured adults are 25 percent more likely to die prematurely than adults who have insurance.

The 2009 survey also provides an opportunity to tell your health care story in your own words in writing or in a video.

While individual survey responses are confidential, the AFL-CIO will share the compiled results with Congress, the Obama Administration and state lawmakers, as well as print and broadcast media.

**Last year, more than 26,000 people completed the 2008 survey, and 7,500 shared poignant stories about their families' health care experiences.**

That survey gained widespread media coverage and kept health care at the top of the national agenda during the 2008 elections. The 2009 Health Care for America Survey is expected to receive even more responses and media attention as health care reform moves forward.

**Take the survey online by visiting  
[www.healthcaresurvey.aflcio.org](http://www.healthcaresurvey.aflcio.org).**



# The Obama Administration's First 100 Days Mark Major Wins for Working Families

**W**hat a difference an election makes, especially an election in which working family voters pooled their strength together to put an end to the most anti-worker, corporate-beholden administration in modern times and elect a president who shares the values and dreams of working people.

April 29th marked the 100th day of Barack Obama's presidency. Since elected, President Obama, Vice President Joe Biden and the Democratic Congress have made

Obama shaped and signed into law an economic recovery package that could create and save as many as 3.5 million jobs...

major strides to rebuild America for working families.

"Over their first 100 days in office, President Obama and Vice President Biden have taken important steps on the economy, health care and the protection of workers' rights that will build a

future for working people and all of America. We look forward to working with the administration to pass the Employee Free Choice Act and comprehensive national health care reform in the near future," says BCTGM International President Frank Hurt.

Highlights of the first one hundred days of the Obama presidency include:

## **Economic Recovery**

Obama shaped and signed into law an economic recovery package that could create and save as many as 3.5 million jobs; which invests in roads, bridges, mass transit, energy-efficient buildings, flood control, clean water projects and other infrastructure projects; provides state fiscal relief to protect vital services and prevent layoffs; contains strong Buy American provisions; and extends and increases unemployment benefits.

## **First Budget Introduced**

The new President's budget lays a solid foundation to restore the economy, reform health care, and make significant investments in education, clean energy and

green jobs. The budget also includes tax cuts for middle-class working families, rather than the Bush Administration's approach of giving tax breaks to the wealthy.

## **Fair Pay Act**

Within days of taking office, President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law overturning a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision that made it virtually impossible for workers to challenge pay discrimination based on gender. The Bush Administration vetoed or threatened to veto any change to the Courts decision.

## **Transparency Increased**

President Obama opened up the White House to new transparency requirements, including launching a website, [www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov), where taxpayers can track how the economic stimulus money is being spent.

## **Middle Class Task Force**

Rather than relying on

corporate executives for policy ideas, the Obama Administration has instead turned to working families for advice. The “White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families”, a Cabinet-level task force chaired by Vice President Biden, is charged with developing and coordinating policies to rebuild the nation’s

middle class and lift the poor out of poverty. The Task Force has already held several meetings and town hall gatherings to get input from working families and policy experts. Workers and others can share their stories and comment at the task force website, [www.whitehouse.gov/StrongMiddleClass](http://www.whitehouse.gov/StrongMiddleClass).

...the safety agency will move on several rules... to protect workers from exposure to dangerous substances and chemicals.

## Department of Labor, OSHA, Revived Under Solis

The Department of Labor is living up to its name once again in the Obama Administration. New Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, former Congresswoman from California and the daughter of union members, is a long-time supporter of issues pertinent to working families, including the Employee Free Choice Act, fair pay, occupational safety and health, and worker training.

The new Secretary hit the ground running by eliminating a recent Bush Administration rule that called for unnecessary and wasteful reporting requirements by union leaders. The Department moved aggressively to implement the pieces of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that protects workers who have lost their jobs, and provides new training opportunities for workers looking to upgrade their job skills.

Solis immediately showed that she was serious about making America’s workplaces safer by naming Jordan Barab, a longtime workplace safety advocate, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health. Solis also stepped up enforcement measures — from January 20, 2009 to April 15, 2009, OSHA conducted 8,804 inspections, issued 21,166 citations for violations and levied nearly \$27 million in penalties. The Administration’s Labor Department budget boosts OSHA’s funding by \$51 million and includes the hiring of 160 new safety inspectors.

Solis has also focused on two issues of great concern to workers in the baking, snack, grain, sugar and candy industries: diacetyl and combustible dust.

### A Step Toward Safer Workplace

According to the Labor Department’s regulatory agenda released on May 12, the safety agency will move on several rules stalled under Bush’s OSHA, including rules to protect workers from exposure to dangerous substances and chemicals. OSHA also will take action on several other issues, including protecting workers who “blow the whistle” on employers’ unsafe practices.

**Diacetyl Regulations** – In February, the Department of Labor directed OSHA to speed up establishment of new rules to protect workers in the snack and flavorings industry from the threat of bronchitis obliterans (commonly known as Popcorn Lung), a potentially life threatening ailment caused by exposure to diacetyl, a butter flavoring. On May 5, OSHA convened a Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA) panel on a draft proposed rule concerning occupational exposure to diacetyl and food flavorings containing diacetyl.

**Rulemaking on Combustible Dust** – OSHA announced in May it will issue an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and convene related stakeholder meetings to evaluate possible regulatory methods, and request data and comments on issues related to combustible dust such as hazard recognition, assessment, communication, defining combustible dust and other concerns. This action comes just over a year after 14 workers were killed by a sugar dust explosion at an Imperial Sugar plant in Georgia.

# Notable Quotes

**“The Labor Department is back in business to support working and middle class people — and, furthermore, we’re going to enforce our labor laws.”**

— Department of Labor Secretary, Hilda Solis, speaking to the California Labor Federation in March

**“The status quo is unsustainable and we cannot allow millions of Americans to continue to go without the care they need and deserve.”**

— Kathleen Sebelius, Health & Human Services Secretary, during a speech before the United Nurses of America’s 12th National Nurses Congress.

**“Because of the Bush administration’s foot dragging on this issue, this disease has already sickened and killed a number of workers nationwide.”**

— Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D. Calif.), after the Labor Department announced it would speed up the process of regulating ‘diacetyl’, an ingredient that has proven to cause serious and potentially fatal lung disease in workers at popcorn flavoring plants.

**“The freedom to organize is an American value, one of the many values we veterans fought to protect. Past generations of veterans were able to enter the middle class because unions were there to fight for fair wages and benefits. The Employee Free Choice Act ensures that veterans and civilians in the workforce will continue to get a fair shake, which is why we’re proud to support it.”**

— Jon Soltz, an Iraq war veteran and the chairman of VoteVets.org, on a workers’ right to join a union.

**“Unionized firms do not fail at any higher rates than nonunion firms. This research really puts the lie to some claims of opponents of the Employee Free Choice Act.”**

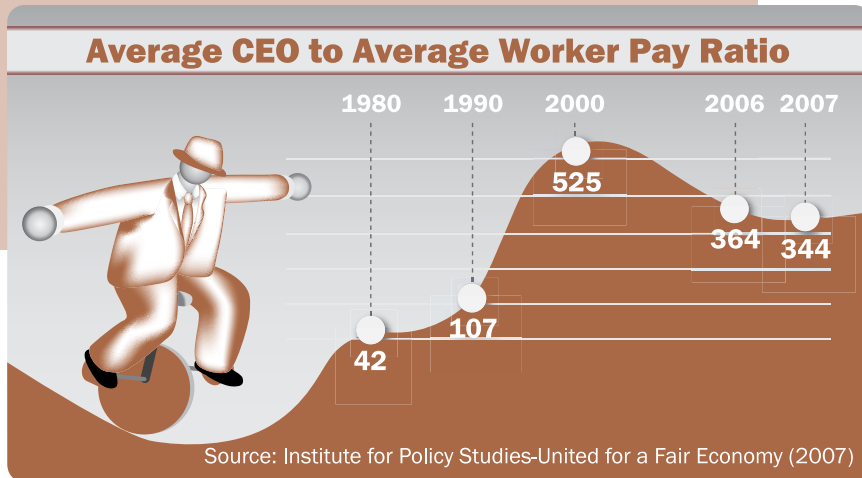
— Josh Bivens, economist, Economic Policy Institute, commenting on newly released research that shows that union firms do not suffer after workers unionize.

**“I said when I made the switch, I’m still against that bill. Democrats are all for it; Republicans are all against it, and I’m the critical vote.”**

— Sen. Arlen Specter, explained on NBC’s “Meet the Press” his switch from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party and his continued opposition of the Employee Free Choice Act.

# 2009 Executive PayWatch

averages nearly \$25 million per CEO to run companies that might have gone bankrupt if not for billions of dollars in taxpayer assistance.



**E**xcessive executive compensation has taken center stage since the government bailout

of banks that began in September 2008. Americans have expressed outrage as CEOs and other executives responsible for the financial crisis have pocketed millions of dollars from bonuses and golden parachutes. CEO perks alone grew in 2008 to an average of \$336,248—or nine times the median salary of a full-time worker. Meanwhile, the economy tanked for working people while many companies were bailed out with more than \$700 billion in taxpayer money, as well as low-interest loans and guarantees.

After having seen millions of jobs lost and trillions of retirement savings erased because of the financial crisis, Americans were outraged to learn that Wall Street firms paid out more than \$18.4 billion in cash bonuses in 2008, the sixth largest bonus pool on record. Even more shocking, many of these Wall Street firms had just received billions in taxpayer money to help prevent their collapse.

For years, CEOs have justified their high compensation as being “pay for performance.” But for Wall Street, the promise of high annual payouts without the need to worry about long-term consequences created incentives to pursue such unsustainable business practices as using short-term borrowing to invest in mortgage-backed securities. Wall Street pay packages encouraged executives to take risks their firms could not support.

For example, in 2007—the year the financial crisis began to unfold—the top 10 recipients of the federal government’s Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) collectively paid their CEOs a combined \$242 million in total annual compensation. That

But even as the economy slumped, the median salary for CEOs of 200 large companies increased 4.5 percent to \$1.08 million, according to a survey by *The Wall Street Journal*. And despite the public outcry over private jets and other executive

perks, companies kept plying executives with generous freebies.

To fix our broken system we must re-regulate our financial markets. The good news is that the framework for the needed financial services regulatory reform already is in front of us. The Special Report on Regulatory Reform by the Congressional Oversight Panel identifies the key principles essential for meaningful financial reform. The panel was established by Congress to monitor the bailout and to help ensure that aid to the financial sector is accompanied by meaningful market reforms. The report concluded that “the present regulatory system has failed to effectively manage risk, require sufficient transparency and ensure fair dealings.”

The new rules Americans need can be put this way: No more gambling with public money, no lying and no stealing. Self-regulation is not acceptable. Any regulator of system wide risk must be a fully accountable body and should not have the power to override investor and consumer protections.

U.S. Rep Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), chairs of the House Finance Committee and the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, respectively, are working on new financial regulations right now. But banks, CEOs and their corporate lobbyists are working hard behind the scenes to make sure whatever new regulations are passed are toothless Band-Aids, designed to maximize PR benefit, not fix the system.

For more information on runaway CEO pay and what you can do, visit [www.aflcio.org/corporatewatch/paywatch](http://www.aflcio.org/corporatewatch/paywatch).



# 2009 BCTGM International Scholarship Recipients

The BCTGM International proudly announces the winners of the 2009 BCTGM International Scholarship Program. Ten \$1,000 one-time awards were presented to the below students. The winners were chosen from a total of 203 applicants from the U.S. and Canada.

The BCTGM International Scholarship Program is an example of the union's commitment to higher education at a time when college costs continue to soar out of reach for many working families. Since 1962, the International has helped fulfill the educational dreams of students representing BCTGM families



**Andrea Miller**



**Jessica Miller**

**Andrea and Jessica Miller** (twins), daughters of Andrew S. Miller, member of BCTGM Local 57 (Columbus, Ohio) employed at General Mills. Andrea will attend Gannon University and Jessica will attend University of Akron.



**Molly Miller**, daughter of Robert J. Miller, member of BCTGM Local 464 (Hershey, Pa.) employed with the Hershey Company. Molly will attend Millersville University.



**Stephen J. Kocienski**, son of Stephen F. Kocienski, member of BCTGM Local 50 (New York, N.Y.) employed with Freihofer Baking. Stephen will attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute.



**Elizabeth Windsor**, daughter of Timothy W. Windsor, member of BCTGM Local 317T (Greensboro, N.C.) employed at Lorillard Tobacco. Elizabeth will attend the University of North Carolina.



**Joshua Wood**, son of Michele Davis, member of BCTGM Local 358 (Richmond, Va.) employed with Filtrona Richmond Inc. Joshua will attend Virginia Commonwealth University.



**Michael Li**, son of Bi Ci Cai, member of BCTGM Local 125 (San Leandro, Calif.) employed at See's Candies. Michael will attend the University of California-Berkeley.



**Carmen Quan**, daughter of Ve Kiu Quan, member of BCTGM Local 264 (Mississauga, Ontario) employed at W. & H. Voortman Ltd. Carmen will attend the University of Waterloo.



**Amber Miller**, daughter of Samuel W. Lee, retired member of BCTGM Local 25 (Chattanooga, Tenn.) previously employed at Interstate Brands Corporation. Amber will attend the University of Tennessee.

**Samuel Caux**, member of BCTGM Local 480 (Ste-Marie de Beauce, Quebec) employed at G. M. Smucker Inc. Samuel will attend Laval University.



## CLC President Challenges Parliament to **Fix EI now**

**O**TTAWA - Thousands of workers were forced to turn to self-employment in April 2009 because they can't find jobs or get Employment Insurance (EI), says Canadian Labour Congress president Ken Georgetti.

"We're seeing unemployed workers, especially older workers, turning to self-employment in desperation. There is little out there in the way of job creation and far too many people can't get Employment Insurance."

Georgetti was responding to the release by Statistics Canada of labour force figures for April. The level of employment increased by 35,900, due entirely to the rise in self-employment. "This is not a sign of economic recovery because we actually lost 1,100 jobs in April. What we are seeing is workers doing whatever they can to get by during this economic crisis. I salute their courage and determination."

Statistics Canada data shows that almost 60 percent of unemployed workers are not receiving EI benefits. Georgetti says that is not acceptable and he renewed his call for improvements to EI. He said there is a growing national consensus in favor of EI reform. "People are telling pollsters that EI should be improved, newspapers are saying the same thing, and the opposition parties are threatening an election on the issue. The Prime Minister and his cabinet are the only ones who seem prepared to allow unemployed Canadians to fend for themselves," concluded Georgetti.

The CLC has repeatedly called on the government to:

- **Change accessibility rules to provide regular EI benefits on the basis of 360 hours of work—no matter where people live and work in Canada.**
- **Make all workers eligible for up to 50 weeks of EI benefits.**
- **Raise benefits immediately to 60 percent of earnings calculated on a worker's best 12 weeks of earnings.**

Statistics Canada data shows that almost 60 percent of unemployed workers are not receiving EI benefits.

**Canada now has over 1,464,600 unemployed men and women. This represents an increase of 27.2% since last October.**

**The number of full-time jobs lost since October 2008: 347,400.**

**Canadian workers who have been laid-off since October 2008: 320,700.**

The unemployment rate remains at eight percent, despite the fact that an additional 8,000 Canadians were unemployed in April 2009. The broadest measure of unemployment, which includes discouraged workers and involuntary part-time workers, is rising rapidly. It rose from eight percent in October 2008 to 12.4 percent in March 2009. (This data is not seasonally adjusted, but the "real" rate of unemployment was also up sharply compared to March 2008).

Workers aged 15 to 24 have been leaving the labour market in order to avoid unemployment. About two-thirds of the growth in employment was among Canadians aged 55 and over. The fact that self-employment increased significantly last month may be a sign that many of those aged 55 and older are coming back to work because of losses in their pension income, or because they have exhausted their Employment Insurance benefits after being laid off. Thirdly, this is a sign of courage and determination by laid-off workers who are trying to avoid being unemployed during this economic crisis.



## 40 Year Certificate

L. 334 (Portland, Maine) member Ken Rumney has been a union member and an IBC worker for 40 years. Recently, the local honored his years of service by presenting him with a 40-year certificate. Pictured here, from left to right, is L. 334 Fin. Secy. Jim Anderschat, Rumney, L. Bus. Agt. John Jordan and Pres. Frank Bonaventure.

## Educational Conference

L. 33G (Louisville, Ky.) held a two-day educational conference in April for all officers and stewards. According to L. 33G Pres. Roger Miller, the annual event is always well attended. This year's conference focused on contract negotiation preparation and arbitration procedures. Pictured here are the participants of the event at the L. 33G union hall in Clarksville, Ind.



## The Role of Unions

In April, L. 57 (Columbus, Ohio) Fin. Secy. Vester Newsome, Intl. Rep. John Price and L. 57 Chf. Stew. Greg Fuller was invited to speak to a sociology class at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio on the role unions play in working America. The group explained contract negotiation, preparation for bargaining, strikes, the National Labor Relations Board, and working after union contracts expire. Pictured here is (from left to right) Newsome, Prof. Jennifer Johnson, Fuller and Price.



## "Bye, America"

IBEW Local 688 President Lance Biglin in Mansfield, Ohio has taken a creative approach to help educate Americans on the importance of buying American. Biglin together with his wife have published a children's book, "Bye, America" to help teach children—and in some cases their parents—why it is important to buy American made products.



In his letter introducing the book Biglin writes, "This is the story of four million American families who have seen their jobs disappear over the last eight years."

The children's story follows one worker who loses his job when his factory moves to China. The father takes his children to "Walrus Mart" to show his family why it is important to buy American-made products. Sadly, every product they looked at was labeled "Made in China".

"The United States has lost 3,500,000 jobs since the year 2000. Most of these were jobs that paid Americans a fair wage for a hard day's work. When these jobs leave our country, there is very seldom an opportunity for a better job for these displaced workers. This book gives you a chance to sit down with the next generation of Americans and explain to them the importance of supporting their fellow countrymen. We are not losing these jobs because we are unproductive; we are losing these jobs because other countries are exploiting their workers, producing unsafe goods and just plain cheating," concludes Biglin.

The book is beautifully illustrated by the author's wife, Kristi Biglin. To order copies of the book, which is "proudly union printed in the U.S.A.," visit [www.byeamerica.com](http://www.byeamerica.com).

# BCTGM

# POWER



## The BCTGM POWER/ Union Plus Consumer Credit Counseling Service Difference

- Free budget analysis session for union members
- Program provider, non-profit Money Management International (MMI), is accredited to provide counseling for labor union members entering bankruptcy
- No set up fee for initial debt management plan (DMP)
- Receive reimbursement of all first year DMP fees after successfully completing 12 months of the plan (union members only).
- Largest network of local offices for those who don't prefer credit counseling online or by phone
- Consumer credit and money management counseling workshops provided for union members
- Experienced credit counselors are available 24/7.  
Call 1-877-833-1745.

Call 1-877-833-1745 or Visit  
[www.unionplus.org/money-credit/  
consumer-credit-counseling](http://www.unionplus.org/money-credit/consumer-credit-counseling)

A faltering economy has led to an increase in the number of working families facing financial problems and increased debt. An estimated 500,000 union members sought help from a consumer credit counseling agency last year.

To provide union members with confidential financial guidance, free consumer credit counseling services and debt management assistance, BCTGM Power participates in the Union Plus Credit Counseling program.

## Starting Credit Counseling

You can get a FREE consumer credit counseling session, budget analysis and money management advice to get back on the road to financial recovery. Complete a confidential request for consumer credit counseling online or call 1-877-833-1745 — available 24/7.

## Your Free Session Covers:

- Complete financial review, budget analysis and credit management counseling
- Assistance in budgeting or advice on sources of additional income
- Advice on how to work with creditors
- A written Action Plan that summarizes your financial situation, provides a budget and timeline for reaching your debt management and repayment goals, and restates action items
- Referral to a social service organization in your area, if appropriate
- Referral to Union Plus Legal Service or Union Plus Mortgage Assistance program, if appropriate

## Debt Management Plan (DMP)

If you need additional assistance, a counselor will work with you to develop a DMP to reduce your debt liabilities. Once the plan is set up, MMI will negotiate with your creditors on your behalf, disburse funds to creditors on your behalf, and work with creditors to stop the collection calls. You'll receive a 33 percent union-member-only discount off the fee to set up the plan.

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