

# USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 18/2

A Powerful Voice for Workers



### PUEBLO, CO

SOAR Chapter 38-3, otherwise known as the Phillip Murray SOAR Chapter, unanimously passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 10, 2023. Albert Becco serves as the SOAR chapter president.

*Thank you, and solidarity forever!*

### PITTSBURGH, PA

SOAR Chapter 20-15, otherwise known as the Steelworkers of the Greater Pittsburgh Area SOAR Chapter, passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 23, 2023. Denise Edwards serves as the SOAR chapter president.



## SOAR Chapters Sign On to **NO CUTS** to Retirement Security Campaign

### ARGOS, IN

SOAR Chapter 30-18, otherwise known as the Main Branch SOAR Retirees, passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 24, 2023. Charlie Averill serves as the SOAR chapter president.



### SPOKANE VALLEY, WA

SOAR Chapter 38-1, otherwise known as the SOAR District 38, Chapter 1—Local 338 SOAR Chapter, passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held April 11, 2023. Mike Lacy serve as the SOAR chapter president.

### MORRISON, TN

SOAR Chapter 9-UR13, otherwise known as the Local 1155L Morrison, TN Ferry, Bridgestone/Firestone Retirees, passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held April 12, 2023. Ron Vining serves as the SOAR chapter president.



See more on pages 11 and 14



**BILL PIENTA**  
SOAR President

## SOAR Activists Converge on Washington, D.C. for 2023 Rapid Response Conference

**After a three-year hiatus because of the COVID pandemic, SOAR activists are ready to return to Washington, D.C., for the 2023 Rapid Response, Legislative & Policy Conference from June 11 through 14.**

We know that current and future retirees' challenges were magnified throughout the pandemic, with more Americans facing uncertainty now than at any time in decades.

SOAR activists and active members of our mighty union are preparing to meet this moment with solidarity and resolve.

Unfortunately, some lawmakers remain emboldened to undercut workers' earned benefits in order to balance our federal budget.

So, SOAR teamed up with our union's Rapid Response program in March to roll out our "No Cuts to Retirement Security" campaign. At their membership meetings, we asked our local unions and SOAR chapters to adopt the "No Cuts to Social Safety Net Programs Like Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid" resolution and have collected thousands of our members' signatures.

The "No Cuts" resolution calls for encouraging members of Congress to raise or eliminate the debt ceiling without any spending concessions that would cut Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid and to protect these programs in the future.

To get more information about our "No Cuts to Retirement Security" campaign, Rapid Response created a very informative page detailing all the issues involved, resources and ways to take action here: <http://usw.to/NoCuts>.

If you are a SOAR member but haven't yet signed onto a resolution, you can still take part in our action by signing our "No Cuts" online petition at <http://usw.to/4gu>.

We want our "No Cuts to Retirement Security" message to be heard loud and clear by lawmakers in the halls of Congress, so USW District Directors are sending additional SOAR activists to this year's Conference. We intend to show these legislatures just what our members are made of!

Steelworkers are always ready for a fight, and we are determined to win just like we did with the Butch Lewis

Act, which rescued the pensions of more than 120,000 USW members.



**On May 23, 1985**, at the union's 30th International Convention, USW delegates voted unanimously to add an amendment to the USW Constitution recognizing SOAR as an affiliate organization of the USW, solidifying its focus on the unique issues impacting USW retirees and their spouses.

Since then, SOAR has been integral to our union's mission by actively defending vital programs like Social Security and Medicare, protecting Steelworker pension plans, and more. Further, SOAR has engaged in countless efforts to assure security for current and future generations of retirees regardless of whether they belong to a union.

**SOAR is how retirees stay connected to our union and where we continue the fight for retired and working families.**





## Wisconsin Voters Deliver Referendum on Scott Walker-Era, Anti-Worker Courts

**JULIE STEIN**  
*SOAR Director*

In early April, Wisconsin voters pulled the rug on a corporate-friendly State Supreme Court majority which, over the last decade, had dealt a number of significant blows to workers' rights in a state that some have argued to be the birthplace of organized labor.

With an overwhelming 11-point victory for the Honorable Janet Protasiewicz, voters installed a new 4-3 pro-union majority, delivering a clear referendum on a judiciary well-known for allowing a heavily-gerrymandered state legislative map.

Partisan gerrymandering paved the way for the passage of Wisconsin's controversial "Right to Work" law, and then-Governor Scott Walker's so-called "Budget Repair Bill" (more commonly known as Act 10), which gutted public employee unions' ability to bargain over compensation, retirement, health insurance, and sick leave.

These anti-union attacks spurred massive worker-led protests at the state capitol in Madison, followed by two recall attempts to oust Governor Walker and a decade of unions mobilizing to elect lawmakers and judges who will stand with working families.

With the State Supreme Court already being used to cosign much of Governor Walker's brand of anti-worker lawmaking, Judge Protasiewicz decided to run a nontraditional campaign for the state's highest court.

"Rather than reading between the lines and having to do your sleuthing around...I think I would rather just let people know what my values are," said Protasiewicz in a recent *New York Times* interview.

During the campaign, Protasiewicz didn't shy away from previously declaring Walker's Act 10 "unconstitutional." And she proudly celebrated endorsements from across the labor movement and groups like the Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, sharing our fundamental belief that older Americans have earned the Social Security benefits they have worked for over a lifetime.

*Join with us, as we continue  
the fight to protect and enhance  
the quality of life  
of our retirees and  
working families.*

*We are stronger together!*




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**SOAR in ACTION**

# USW@Work


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Tom Conway

# BUILDING WORKER

The United Steelworkers (USW) mounted tireless battles for fair trade and other lifelines that helped to keep McLouth Steel open during the 1980s, enabling Jay McMurrin and thousands of other Michigan workers to raise families and build pensions amid one of the nation's worst economic crises.

Recognizing that other workers need the same kind of strength behind them, McMurrin resolved to fight back when Republicans rammed union-gutting “right to work” (RTW) legislation through the state legislature in 2012.

He and other union supporters and their allies worked relentlessly for years to oust the corporate toadies and elect pro-worker lawmakers instead. Their long struggle culminated in victory Tuesday when new Democratic majorities in the House and Senate voted to repeal the deceptively named RTW laws, restoring workers’ full power to bargain fair contracts and safe working conditions.

Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer vowed to sign the legislation, which represents the latest in a string of victories for workers mobilizing to build strength across the country.

No one in America is ever forced to join a union, and no union wants workers to join against their will. Yet a union has a legal obligation to serve all workers in its bargaining unit.

Many states allow unions to charge non-members a small fee to help cover the costs of representation. But in some states, RTW laws pushed by corporations and anti-worker groups enable non-members to receive union services for free.

These laws intentionally divide workers, erode the solidarity that’s the foundation of union strength and starve unions of the resources needed for effective bargaining, training and other essential purposes—all to the boss’s benefit.

“‘Right to work’ is simply a union-busting scam that the Republicans dress up as ‘choice,’” observed McMurrin, a longtime USW member who worked at McLouth Steel for 27 years.

“It weakens the local union,” he said. “It weakens every worker’s position when you get into collective bargaining, when you get into grievance hearings, when you get into arbitrations. The boss knows your weaknesses, and he exploits them.” It’s no surprise that workers burdened by RTW laws make significantly lower wages than counterparts in other states. They’re also less likely to have employer-provided health insurance and retirement plans than other workers.



Jay McMurrin

At the same time, workers in RTW states face a higher risk of dying on the job because they lack the strong, unified voice needed to fight for workplace safety.

“Everything I have is because I was a Steelworker,” said McMurrin, who recalled that unshakable solidarity among his co-workers not only ensured good contracts and safe working conditions but kept their employer in business.

“The steel mill that I came out of was in financial trouble for 13 years, and the Steelworkers fought to keep the place open nearly every day of those 13 years,” said McMurrin, citing the busloads of USW members who converged on Washington, D.C., in the 1980s to demand support for the company. “We actually kept the place going so more people qualified for pensions and employer-sponsored health care. We did some good things there.”

Sadly, despite successes like that, Michigan’s GOP legislators conspired with corporations and other anti-union interests to undermine worker power.

Photo by Getty Images



# POWER

McMurrin was among the 10,000 protesters who packed the statehouse in a last-ditch effort to stop Republicans from pushing RTW through a lame-duck session during the 2012 holiday season.

Union members lost that skirmish but won the war.

After Republicans passed the legislation over protesters' objections, McMurrin said, workers and their allies launched a "long-game" plan to reverse it.

Workers helped pass a 2018 referendum that took redistricting out of the hands of partisan political hacks and put fair-minded citizens in charge of the process. New, equitably drawn legislative districts enabled voters to elect pro-worker lawmakers willing to represent them rather than corporations.

And those pro-worker majorities, in turn, speedily acted to end RTW. For McMurrin, the victory highlighted both the power of collective action and the importance of electing the right people to office.

Workers in other states are also beating back RTW amid growing support for organized labor and a pandemic that underscored Americans' need for good wages, affordable health care and the other benefits that unions deliver.

For example, even as Republicans in Michigan united behind a failed defense of RTW, several GOP legislators in Montana helped to kill RTW legislation in that state last month. The opponents included Republican Sen. Jason Small,

a member of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, who described his 26 years of union membership as a "heck of an opportunity" in his life.

"It has nothing to do with red or blue. It's what's right for people and their families," explained Curtis Schomer, vice president of USW local 11-0001.

Schomer, who ran unsuccessfully as a Republican candidate for the Montana House last year, repeatedly traveled to Helena, the state capital, to rally against RTW and testify against the harmful legislation.

He noted that a strong union gives him and his 1,300 co-workers at the Sibanye-Stillwater mining complex the power to take safety concerns directly to management and address problems immediately. In a dangerous industry like mining, he noted, that kind of voice saves lives and ensures workers return home safely at the end of their shifts.

Schomer expects pro-business interests to continue to push RTW in Montana. But he predicted those



Photos of USW members rallying against anti-worker RTW legislation at the Michigan statehouse.



efforts will fall flat in communities that not only have a rich legacy of labor activism but continue to appreciate the benefits unions provide.

"Our unions do a lot for our communities," Schomer said. "They especially do a lot on workplace safety. People see that."

The interim House of Commons Chamber in 2019. The seats on the Commons Floor are occupied by various staff members who work in the Parliamentary Precinct.

Photo: Leafsfan67, used under CC BY-SA 4.0



## IF CANADA IS “BROKEN” Whose Fault is That?

*Opinion by Doug Macpherson  
SOAR Vice-President and Canadian Coordinator*

**On Feb. 8, 2023, Canada’s Parliament resumed sitting. That evening, Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) held a press conference where he stated that Canada was broken and he inferred that he alone could fix it. He laid all the blame for economic and social problems at the feet of Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.**



Doug Macpherson

But, Canada is not a federal dictatorship. It is a confederation of 13 provinces and territories, each with its own elected governments that provide most of the services and policies that Canadians need and use in their day-to-day lives.

So, who governs Canada? I must admit, I did not know. With the exception of Canada’s largest provinces, I had limited knowledge of the makeup of Canada’s provincial and territorial governments. With a little research, I determined that at the moment, of 13 provincial and territorial governments, nine are governed by conservative or right-wing governments, one has a New Democratic Party government (B.C.), and

three are Liberal. So, if Canada is broken, it is by far being broken by policies implemented by conservative or right-wing governments.

**Let’s look at Ontario under Doug Ford’s Progressive Conservative government.**

There is a crisis in long-term care (LTC) homes. Yet, Ford’s government continued the privatization begun under his previous conservative government, where during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government had to call in the army to care for residents and who, after getting things under control, provided a stinging report on the quality of care and preventable disease control in private, for-profit care homes. Ford, who promised to place an “iron ring” around LTC homes, instead passed laws to indemnify for-profit LTC owners from being sued by survivors, or families, extended 30-year leases to these same private for-profit corporations.

Then there was Bill 7, passed by the Conservatives without debate or study by committee, which allows patients in acute-care hospital beds to be moved without consent to LTC homes which are not preferred by the patients but do have open beds. Guess which homes these are? Yes, these same for-profit LTC homes.

We have a crisis in the lack of affordable rental properties, but what did Ford do? He removed rent

control on rental properties, saying that this action would create more affordable rentals. Instead, owners are now raising rents to the point that they are unaffordable for too many renters. Seniors are being “renovicted” out of their long-term homes, unable, on their limited pension income, to find suitable accommodation in their twilight years.

And oh, we have a crisis in health care. In early 2023, many hospitals had to close emergency rooms and operating rooms because of a lack of staff. What was Ford’s response? He continued to stand behind Bill 124, a wage cap of one percent on public service employees in both the health and education sectors. Once again, a Conservative government created a crisis, forcing overwhelmed health care workers, who kept us safe during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, further weakening our public system.

To add insult to injury, recently Ford and his minister of health announced that to reduce the backlog of surgeries, he will move “simple surgeries”—knee and hip replacements and cataract surgeries—out of public hospitals to private, for-profit care clinics. Oh, it’s OK, he says, we will still pay with our OHIP health card. Really! This will result in a massive transfer of public funds from our public health system to the private, for-profit sector.

Public money, if invested properly in the public system, goes a long way to correcting the problem. This, unfortunately, is not unique to Ontario, but similar problems and political decisions are taking place in most Canadian provinces and territories.

There is one major exception. The NDP government in B.C. is working aggressively to build affordable rental homes and is limiting foreign investors in real estate. The government is buying back private, for-profit health clinics and bringing them under the public system once again.

If Canada is “broken,” it is the conservatives that are to blame.

***So, is Canada broken? I will let you decide. I have made up my mind. There will be a federal election in Canada within the next two years. Beware those with too-simple solutions to big problems. Be careful how you vote! And whom you vote for.***



## Local Union Firms up Connections with B.C. SOAR Chapter

**USW Local 2009 has recently adopted all six points of Resolution 8 adopted at the USW International Convention in Las Vegas last August, regarding the relationship between SOAR and the local union.**

The local union went beyond the resolution and amended the local’s by-laws to allow for a position on the local’s executive of a SOAR representative with full voice and vote. Fred Girling held this position until his recent retirement from the role, replaced by SOAR Chapter 3-14 Secretary-Treasurer Michelle Laurie.

SOAR delegates from Chapter 3-14 recently attended the local union’s delegates’ meeting.



From left: Fred Girling, retired District 3 SOAR Co-ordinator; Michelle Laurie, SOAR Chapter 3-14 Secretary-Treasurer; Brian Harder, District 3 SOAR Co-ordinator. Front: Lori Travis, SOAR Chapter 3-14 Vice-President.

## Norma Berti Breakfast Held in Hamilton for International Women's Day

Many Steelworker friends gathered at the USW hall in Hamilton to celebrate International Women's Day on Sunday, March 5.

A traditional breakfast was cooked and served by the men and great speeches by women leaders like Sylvia Boyce, USW National Health, Safety and Environment Co-ordinator and Monique Taylor, Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Hamilton Mountain.

The breakfast is named in honour of Norma Berti, a union women pioneer. A steward in the tin mill at Stelco in the 1960s, Berti was the first woman elected to the executive of a major steel local in Canada in 1976 when she successfully ran against the incumbent financial secretary, winning by over 1,000 votes. She held that position until her retirement, when she became treasurer of SOAR Chapter 6-10.



From left: Ron Wells, USW Local 1005 President; Monique Taylor, NDP MPP; Darren Green, Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council President; Sandy Shaw, NDP MPP; Mathew Green, NDP MP; Lena Sutton, District 6 SOAR board member; Doug Macpherson, SOAR Vice-President and National Co-ordinator. Front: Sarah Jama, recently elected NDP MPP for Hamilton Centre.

In the '60s, '70s and '80s, a steel mill was male-dominated and Norma faced much discrimination and had to fight both management and her brothers in the union to get her point across and get women's issues recognized.

## Canada's Newest SOAR Chapter Reaches Out

There's a new SOAR chapter in Western Canada— Chapter 3-30, in Elk Valley, British Columbia, welcomes newly-chartered members from USW Local 7884.

The first motion adopted by the chapter at its inaugural meeting was to open the membership to USW retirees from other locals in the area.

The second order of business was to decide how the chapter can work with local health providers on ways to contain major medical expenses

so as not to diminish the maximum caps established on medical expenses through the employer's post-retirement medical plans.

Local 7884, in establishing this chapter, adopted a standing motion to pay for each current and future retiree, in perpetuity, a 10-year membership in SOAR, thus ensuring an ongoing stream of new retirees to the chapter and ongoing new ideas. This is a first for locals in Canada and an example for all to follow.



From left: Member Ellie Grieser, Trustee Dwayne Harris, Trustee Howard Tomich, Vice President Murray Haight, President Ronald Gilbert Bourgeois, Member Jim Carson, Recording Secretary Otto Kilment, member Tracy James. Missing from photo are Treasurer Fred Riehl and Trustee Ken Caldwell.



**After almost three years of work, retired Steelworker Lee Popovich helped oversee the incorporation of SOAR Chapter 11-5 in a charter ceremony in the judge's chambers in the Duluth Labor Temple on January 17, 2023.**



From left: Tim Levens, Dave Lubbesmeyer, Glenn Jackson (seated), Cathy Drummond, Lee Popovich, Millicent O'Connell (seated), Deanna Hughes, and Adam Richter participated in the chartering ceremony of Head of the Lakes SOAR Chapter 11-5.

## District 11 Gets a New Chapter in NE Minnesota

USW Assistant to the Director Cathy Drummond was on hand on behalf of USW District 11 Director Emil Ramirez to present the charter. “This year, as SOAR celebrates its 38th year of activism, we couldn’t be prouder to add the new “Head of the Lakes” SOAR chapter to the organization, especially in District 11,” Drummond said.

The Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees was established in 1985 to provide retirees an opportunity to continue to act collectively on issues of concern to active and retired working families, as well as to serve as a social function.

Organizing a SOAR chapter is not easy, let alone during a pandemic. Despite COVID-19, Popovich has worked since 2021 to sign up enough new members to charter a chapter. Retirees at the U.S. Steel plant in Duluth met regularly after it shut down, but after some time, that group petered out.

Millicent O’Connell said her husband, David, was one of those retirees. “My husband (Dave) and (organizer) Bob (Olson) were among those who closed out the U.S. Steel plant,” she said. “Olson was an organizer, all right — they started meeting where they used to have the union hall, and then us wives started coming in one by one, and we were some of the first to meet together.”

O’Connell is now one of the charter members of the Head of the Lakes SOAR chapter. Popovich serves as president, and retired Steelworker Glenn Jackson serves

as vice president. Joining them as the first-ever officers of the chapter are David Lubbesmeyer, Recording Secretary; Timothy Levens, Financial Secretary; and Laurie Popovich, Treasurer. Additionally, Melissa Johnson, Millicent O’Connell and Kathy Wauzynski serve as Trustees.

To continue to grow its membership, Popovich says one of the first items of business is to inform all potential members of the opportunity to join.

SOAR membership is open to any like-minded individual, age 45 or over, who agrees with and supports the guiding principles and programs of the organization and our union. In addition, spouses and surviving spouses of members are eligible to join. “We want to get the locals at Sappi and the former Diamond Match plant in Cloquet, MN — the hardest part is making sure we contact everyone so they know they can join us.”

The chapter, which already has 30 members, plans to meet on the third Tuesday of every odd month at 2:30 p.m. at the Duluth Labor Temple, and it will continue to support the work of our union while fighting against efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.

Already on the agenda for discussion during their chapter meeting in May is the “No Cuts to Retirement Security” resolution, which Popovich said “they intend to adopt and have it signed in support of by the membership. Fortunately, this will occur just before our union’s lobbying efforts, in June, during the Rapid Response Conference in D.C.”

**SOAR welcomes all our new members from Chapter 11-5, and together we will continue the fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!**

# SOAR in ACTION



Fayetteville, NC— On November 15, 2022, SOAR Chapter 9-UR8 Chapter President Eddie Evans presents the Dream Center a financial donation to help serve those in need for the cold days ahead. They also donated socks, t-shirts, underwear and other items collected at their LU 959L Hall in Fayetteville, NC. Pictured, from left: Tommy Carteright, Dream Center Director; Eddie Evans, Chapter President; Dan Boliaris, Chapter Treasurer; Dream Center Staff—Renee Dickerson, Alison Stauffer, Debbie Davis; and Randy Davis, Dream Center Shelter Coordinator.



Moline, IL— On March, 2023, SOAR Chapter 11-4 members volunteered at Bridging the Gap's Annual Taco Dinner to help raise funds for the homeless vets in the Quad Cities area of Iowa/Illinois. From left: SOAR Chapter 11-4 members Sandy Gonzalez, Janice Payne, Bonnie Carey, John Lane and Bob Gonzalez.



Des Moines, IA — SOAR Chapter 11UR2 members gathered for their Annual February Luncheon held at the USW Local 310L Hall in Des Moines. Pictured, standing far right, Mike Harkin serves as chapter president. In solidarity to all the chapter members!



Granite City, IL — SOAR Chapter 7-34-2 recently enjoyed a well-organized, fun and very successful Trivia Night, raising over \$4,000 to purchase a desperately needed refrigerator and a stand-alone upright freezer for the Good Samaritan House in Granite City. Five families can now have their own shelf and don't have to double up, sharing one as they had before our donation. Thanks to all who contributed!



Pictured, from left: Priscilla Marco, SOAR Chapter 4-17. Center photo, from left: Retiree activists and Barry Markman, SOAR Chapter 4-17 member. Right photo: Senior activist holds "fake" cut-up credit card in a symbolic protest against the Big Banks.

New York, NY— On March 21, members of SOAR Chapter 4-17 attended a rally led by the organization Third Act—which aims to organize seniors to take action on climate change and safeguarding our democracy.

SOAR Chapter 4-17 Priscilla Marco explained that they had a presentation about Third Act at a recent chapter meeting, by Joel Shufro, who had worked with labor unions and health and safety as Director of NYCOSH. It's no surprise that Big Banks are funding the climate crisis. A key initiative of Third Act is to pressure the Big Banks on Wall Street to move their investments away from fossil fuel companies.

Marco, stated, "I was inspired to attend the rally because of their idea to involve seniors in protecting the environment for their grandchildren. Many protesters had photos of their grandkids on their signs. There was a samba band and performance artists with fake credit card signs to "cut up" in a symbolic protest against the big four banks— Citibank, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo and Bank of America. She continued, "If seniors cut up their credit cards and closed their accounts with these banks, they would have to listen to what we say. I was proud to see other union retirees in attendance, and my chapter looks forward to hearing more from Third Act."



# NO CUTS! TO RETIREMENT SECURITY

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**SOAR**  
SOLIDARITY • RESPONSIBILITY • RESPECT



**HUNTINGTON, WV**  
SOAR Chapter 23-4, also known as the Steelworker Retirees of Local Union 40, unanimously passed the “No Cuts to Retirement Security” resolution at their monthly chapter meeting held March 28, 2023! Richard Lewis serves as the SOAR chapter president.

*Thank you, and solidarity forever!*



**UNION CITY, TN**

SOAR Chapter 9-UR7, otherwise known as the Marvin Burkhardt URW SOAR Chapter, passed the “No Cuts to Retirement Security” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 6, 2023. Edward Dewaters serves as the SOAR chapter president.



**BETHLEHEM, PA**

SOAR Chapter 7-9, also known as the Paul J McHale Retirees SOAR Chapter, passed the “No Cuts to Retirement Security” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 16, 2023. Charles Kelly, the one wearing the shamrock shirt, serves as the SOAR chapter president.



**LOCKPORT, IL**

SOAR Chapter 7-PC-7, also known as the Citgo Local 7-517 Retirees, passed the “No Cuts to Retirement Security” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 21, 2023. Wilmer Wittig serves as the SOAR chapter president.



**MINNEAPOLIS, MN**

SOAR Chapter 33-7, otherwise known as the Twin Cities SOAR Retirees, virtually and in person, passed the “No Cuts to Retirement Security” resolution at their chapter meeting held April 5, 2023. Gerald Parzino serves as the SOAR chapter president.



**WARREN, OH**

SOAR Chapter 28-5, otherwise known as the Steelworker Retirees of Local Union 1375, passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held April 14, 2023. Cynthia Jackson serves as the SOAR chapter president.



**MUSCLE SHOALS, AL**

SOAR Chapter 9-4, otherwise known as the LU 200 Retirees of ALCOA, passed the “No Cuts” resolution at their chapter meeting held March 15, 2023. Dan Whited serves as the SOAR chapter president.



**Tom Donahue**  
1928-2023

## Tom Donahue ~ President Emeritus of the AFL-CIO

Tom Donahue, former AFL-CIO president and active labor leader for six decades, died on Feb. 18, 2023, at the age of 94.

The AFL-CIO, formed in 1955, is a coalition of 59 unions, including the USW, representing nearly 12.5 million members.

### Early Life

Born in 1928, Donahue grew up in an Irish Catholic family in the Bronx, the son of a union construction worker, and joined the U.S. Navy at the age of 17.

He worked a variety of jobs as a baker, bus driver and doorman before becoming a lawyer, the assistant secretary of labor under Lyndon B. Johnson and ultimately a legendary union organizer and leader.

### Career Beginnings

Donahue began his labor career in 1948 as a part-time organizer for the Retail Clerks International Association and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in labor relations and a law degree in the years that followed.

Numerous other unions were fortunate to have Donahue in their leadership over the years, including the Building Service Employees International Union (BSEIU) and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

In 1979, he was elected secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, a position he held until 1995 when he was named interim president, succeeding Lane Kirkland.

The "Kirkland-Donahue" years were often a tumultuous time for unions. Industrial plants were closed, jobs shipped overseas and numerous strikes were lost.

While critics remained, Kirkland and Donahue also had a fair amount of success during their partnership. Many autoworkers, mine workers and Teamsters joined or rejoined the AFL-CIO, and the organization's executive council prioritized diversity among its ranks.

### Innovative Leadership

While Donahue's term as president only lasted a few months, after being defeated by John Sweeney, he was crucial in modernizing the organization and committing the labor movement to larger social issues.

In a written statement, current AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and Secretary-Treasurer Fred Redmond remember Donahue's global impact.

"Donahue's influence extended well beyond our nation's borders," they said. He powerfully advanced

the cause of democracy and ensured the link between anti-democratic movements and worker oppression was clear to leaders here and abroad."

In the 1980s, he was active in supporting the solidarity movement against Poland's communist regime and an investment boycott of apartheid South Africa—the most prominent labor leader to do so.

During this time, he also served as chairperson of an advisory group on labor and diplomacy with secretaries of state Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell.

Throughout his tenure, he oversaw lobbying and petition drives and created numerous consumer benefit programs for union members including mortgage assistance, credit cards and supplemental medical insurance.

Notably, he helped build coalitions between the union and environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club and the National Toxics Campaign.

Donahue was a passionate representative of the union, and in 1993 he was one of the leading voices in opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) by providing several interviews to the media and testifying before Congress at least nine times.

During his storied career, he encouraged experimenting with fresh approaches to organizing, which led him to help create the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute in 1989—opening the door for the next generation of union leaders.

### A Legacy Remembered

Shuler and Redmond laud Donahue as a giant of the modern labor movement.

"Tom was an innovator, intellectual, and a visionary labor leader who was ahead of his time," said Shuler and Redmond in a drafted statement. "Donahue was creating a blueprint for unions that encouraged experimentation with new approaches and technology to expand worker organizing and increase the labor movement's influence."

After retiring from the AFL-CIO in 1995, he served on the National Endowment for Democracy and the State Department's advisory committee on labor diplomacy in Washington, D.C.

"Donahue put every ounce of his being into the labor movement he loved from the moment he joined it," said Shuler and Redmond.

Donahue is survived by his wife, one daughter, and six grandchildren. He is preceded in death by one son.

*May he rest as he served ~ in power and in peace.*

# Maximizing Taxpayer Investment

## Anything Less Than Made in America When Rebuilding our Infrastructure is **UNACCEPTABLE**



After decades of neglect, the United States is finally rebuilding its crumbling roads, bridges, water systems, railways, electrical grid and more thanks to the policies of President Joe Biden's administration. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law requires that all this new infrastructure be Made in America, something 83 percent of registered voters support.

But special interest groups are aiming to weaken Buy America requirements and allow importers to nab taxpayer funded contracts to rebuild our infrastructure. If they succeed, it would be a missed opportunity to make a once-in-a-generation investment that will also strengthen American manufacturing and create thousands of well-paying jobs.

Given the supply chain shortages of the past few years, the United States cannot afford to make this mistake and give in to foreign entities trying to capitalize on the wealth of American taxpayer investments. American tax dollars should be spent on American companies and the American workforce.

The good news is that America's factory workers stand ready to make everything from iron and steel to electric vehicle chargers and broadband fiberoptic cables if given the opportunity that was promised to them in the infrastructure law.

America's workers and manufacturers are counting on you to ensure our country's new infrastructure is Made in America.

Americans of all political backgrounds support Buy America as a recent Morning Consult poll found 83 percent of registered voters support domestic content requirements for infrastructure spending. We can't

afford to send tax dollars outside the United States to expand manufacturing in other countries when our own industrial supply chains are in need of repair.

Congress included strong Buy America policies in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law because it wanted to ensure taxpayer dollars are reinvested into strengthening America's industrial capabilities and supporting American jobs.

This law will certainly be of great benefit to all United Steelworker members and members of SOAR. A strong American steel industry, without foreign cheating and dumping, will provide job security, health benefits, profit sharing and a stronger pension for our hard-working, past, and present, Steelworker Brotherhood.

We at the Alliance for American Manufacturing encourage all our SOAR brothers and sisters to take the time to contact your state transportation officials to make sure our new infrastructure is Made in the USA. The bulk of funding may be provided by the federal government but when it comes down to local projects and contracts, we must be diligent that state and local officials are doing the right thing and following the intent of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law by supporting local businesses and our friends and neighbors who are employed at these hands-on companies.

The federal government is not going to be able to reasonably vet every infrastructure project, so it is incumbent on the manufacturing community, past and present, to let them know we are watching how and where our tax dollars are being spent.

Please take the time to contact your state, county, and other local officials to let them know anything less than Made in America when rebuilding our infrastructure is unacceptable.

*Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing.*





# SOAR EYES ON WASHINGTON

By Jay McMurren, SOAR Legislative Director

## REPEALED!

Usually, I report on legislative work at the federal level in Washington, D.C. However, given a key shift in the state legislature as a result of the 2022 elections, I couldn't be prouder to report on a couple of pieces of legislation from my home state of Michigan.



Jay McMurren

USW District 1 is celebrating a major political and legislative victory as Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, on March 19, signed a bill officially repealing the state's 10-year-old "Right to Work" law. USW District 1 Director Donny Blatt called the signing historic and the culmination of ten years of hard work by Democrats and organized labor.

At a meeting of local union officers, Blatt told the gathering, "Right to Work was not repealed because we lobbied our representative for the past several weeks. It happened because we worked to pass an initiative that allowed citizens to draw fairer legislative districts. Then, we went out and got labor-friendly, retiree-friendly candidates elected to office. And, for the first time in forty years, Democrats gained control of the Governor's Office, the Michigan

Senate and the State House. All this was a major effort, and we prevailed."

With the signing of the legislation, Michigan became the first state in nearly 60 years to repeal an anti-union Right to Work law. In 1965, Indiana repealed Right to Work. However, it was reinstated in 2010. In other encouraging news, several states have recently fought back efforts by legislators to pass Right to Work. For example, a Right to Work ballot initiative was defeated soundly in Missouri in 2018.

While the repeal is monumental, it will not become law for one year. That's because Republicans were able to block a Democrat effort for the bill to take immediate effect. So instead, District 1 will use that time to develop a plan to transition from Right to Work. Blatt said, "This is an excellent opportunity to begin to rebuild our Union; we want to make sure we do it right."

This repeal is not the only news worth celebrating in Michigan, however. Also, in March, Governor Whitmer signed a bill overturning the state's retirement tax, a move that follows former Governor Rick Snyder in 2011 signing highly controversial legislation establishing Michigan's retirement tax that applies a 4.25 percent income tax on pensions. This law phases out the tax over four years.



*Thank you, and solidarity forever!*



### MARTINS FERRY, OH

SOAR Chapter 23-9, otherwise known as the Steelworker Retirees of Marten Ferry, Ohio Area SOAR Chapter, passed the "No Cuts to Retirement Security" resolution at their chapter meeting held April 5, 2023. Frank Papini serves as the SOAR chapter president.



### LORAINE, OH

SOAR Chapter 28-7, otherwise known as the Steelworker Retirees of Carl J. Roberts SOAR Chapter, passed the "No Cuts to Retirement Security" resolution at their chapter meeting held April 12, 2023. Richard Lucente serves as the SOAR chapter president.

### COATESVILLE, PA

SOAR Chapter 7-4, also known as the SOAR Retirees of Coatesville Area, passed the "No Cuts to Retirement Security" resolution at their chapter meeting held April 6, 2023. Clyde Lowe serves as the SOAR chapter president.





# Older Americans Month: An Opportunity to Remember the Upsides of Aging

By Robert Roach, Jr.

May marks Older Americans Month, an annual celebration of seniors' contributions to the nation and an opportunity to recognize the power of older adults to influence our communities. This year the

federal government has said the theme is "Aging Unbound." To me, that is a reminder to remain optimistic and not allow society to stereotype us as we age.

Positive features of aging may not always be obvious, but they are all around, and we should not overlook them. Seniors have an abundance of knowledge accumulated over the years — some of that gained by learning from our mistakes, and some of it by having had more time to take in information and undergo a wide variety of life experiences.

With age also comes the opportunity to use that wisdom to improve our community, speak out against injustice, and make wise choices at the ballot box. Seniors can and should use their knowledge and collective power to advocate for issues like protecting and expanding Social Security and Medicare; defending our pensions when they are

attacked; and making prescription drugs more affordable.



Older Americans have been politically active and we need to continue making our voices heard. The proof is in the numbers: voter turnout was highest among those aged 65 to 74, at 76.0 percent in 2020, the last presidential election, compared to other age groups. Of those aged 75 and older, 72.3 percent voted. In comparison, the turnout percentage was lowest among those aged 18 to 24: 51.4 percent.

So, the next time your age-related aches and pains are bothering you, try to remember some of the upsides of being a senior, including your political influence. It's up to all of us who can to stay engaged in our community and inspire others to get involved as well.

*Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW.*

*For more information, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).*

## IN MEMORIAM



**Richard Morgan**  
1935-2023

### Richard Morgan ~ President of Flint Glass Workers

Richard Morgan, who was active for four decades in the American Flint Glass Workers Union (AFGWU), ultimately serving as the organization's national president, died on Jan. 20, 2023, at the age of 87.

Born in 1935, Morgan spent much of his childhood in Ireland and never lost his Irish brogue. He began his union career as a draftsman with Toledo Mold in the 1950s following a stint in the U.S. Army. He quickly became active in the AFGWU and went on to serve as local union president for 15 years.

In 1973, Morgan became a staff representative, a role in which he had success both as a union organizer and skilled contract negotiator.

Morgan became first vice president of AFGWU in 1989. His responsibilities in that office included serving as editor of the union's monthly publication "The American Flint Magazine." Morgan became the union's national president in 1998.

Tim Tuttle, who worked as a national staff representative during Morgan's tenure as AFGWU president and went on

to serve as the organization's president himself, said Morgan never forgot his working-class roots.

"He was a union guy through and through," said Tuttle, who served as chair of the USW's Glass Industry Council before his 2019 retirement. "He busted his butt to help working people."

While Morgan always remained true to the cause of workers, Tuttle said, he also was a consummate professional who never failed to show up for meetings in a suit and tie.

Tuttle recalled one particular contract settlement for which the ratification vote was held in an old church in the midst of a heat wave. Despite temperatures of more than 90 degrees, Morgan remained in his suit and tie for the duration of the meeting.

"He said, 'If a tie is good enough for the company, it's good enough for me,'" Tuttle recalled. "He always met the company face to face."

Morgan is survived by his wife of 35 years, as well as four daughters, seven grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

*May he rest as he served ~ in power and in peace.*



USW Membership Department  
60 Blvd. of the Allies  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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