

# USW@Work

A Regular Publication of the United Steelworkers

Volume 21/1

A Powerful Voice for Workers



CHAPTER 33-4 ~ AURORA, MN



CHAPTER 4-7 ~ SYRACUSE, NY



CHAPTER 11-4 ~ BETTENDORF, IA



CHAPTER 20-15 ~ PITTSBURGH, PA



CHAPTER 23-4 ~ HUNTINGTON, WV

SOAR chapters nationwide are demonstrating their commitment to retirement security through a powerful display of solidarity. At monthly meetings across the country, members proudly displayed signs and actively participated in the USW Rapid Response's "Balancing the Scales for Workers" petition drive, building momentum for worker advocacy and strengthening retirement protections for current workers and retirees. The petition champions six core priorities—including retirement security—that reflect the daily concerns of working families and the long-standing values of fairness, dignity, and economic justice. See page 13 to learn more.



CHAPTER 9-UR9 ~ LAVERGNE, TN



CHAPTER 7-PC-7 ~ LOCKPORT, IN



CHAPTER 9-4 ~ MUSCLE SHOALS, AL



CHAPTER 4-18 ~ PHILIPSBURG, NJ

The "ALL IN on Retirement Security!" initiative reflects SOAR's unwavering dedication to safeguarding workers' futures and strengthening retirement benefits for all.



CHAPTER 15-7 ~ WEST MIFFLIN, PA



**BILL PIENTA**  
*SOAR President*

## Milestones and Memories

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As I approach March 1, when I officially step down from my position in SOAR, I have spent time reflecting on the actions and people I have encountered that have helped shape my career with the USW.

I became involved in my local union in the early 70s, when Local 2693 had a reputation as being one of the most militant locals in District 4. From wildcat strikes to rallies and demonstrations—on political issues and the politicians who supported or opposed them—we were always engaged, including the time we marched to the front door of the White House to deliver petitions to the President (though we didn't make it past the front door).

I want to thank the late International President Lynn Williams, who hired me, and former District 4 Director Lou Thomas, who recommended me for a staff position in our union. I also thank former SOAR Director Jim Centner, who recommended me to the late International President Leo Gerard, who first appointed me to the Presidency of SOAR.



Serving as President of SOAR has been a tremendous honor, and I am grateful to the members who elected and re-elected me as their leader. I wish everyone in our union could attend a SOAR Executive Board meeting to hear board members report on the actions SOAR chapters take to support their locals, their districts, and seniors in their communities.

Over the past 40 years, SOAR has transformed from a retiree club into an unwavering voice for steelworkers who saw their health benefits vanish and their pensions reduced or eliminated. Today, we are an organization that champions all issues impacting retirees, our union, and the communities we call home.

Changing SOAR's bylaws to open membership to anyone age 45 or older who shares our vision, helping the organization recover from the damage caused by COVID-19, and getting SOAR involved in Rapid Response are among the accomplishments I am proud of. But what I am most proud of are the members themselves. Many never left their union. After retirement, they continue serving their communities and assisting their locals and districts without seeking praise or financial gain. Thank you.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank SOAR Director Julie Stein and administrative staff, Cheryl Omlor and Monica Mark, for their kindness and patience with everyone in SOAR. They are truly the backbone of our organization and make everyone feel welcome when calling the office for information or assistance. I also want to thank Ken Neumann, former National Director of Canada, for accepting International President McCall's offer to serve the members of SOAR as their president. Ken, I believe you will truly enjoy working with the activists of SOAR and creating your own memories. It really has been a great ride!

## Don't Let Them Hide: Why Your Primary Vote Matters for Social Security



**JULIE STEIN**  
*SOAR Director*

With nearly 80 percent of Americans believing Social Security benefits “should not be reduced in any way,” no serious candidate for federal office would run their campaign based on a pledge to undercut what is commonly referred to as the most successful legislative accomplishment in American history.

Rather, those candidates who don't share our commitment to defending retirement security for all Americans will hide behind vague terminology like “strengthening Social Security,” while offering no policies to actually do so once they take office.

President Trump and the current majority in Congress are perfect examples of this hypocrisy.

Since their inauguration in early 2025, those with the most power in Washington, D.C. have not passed new legislation to strengthen the future of Social Security by raising the cap so higher-income earners pay their fair share.

Additionally, they've not worked to bring down the cost of prescription drugs or expand affordable home care options so seniors can receive the care they need and deserve.

Instead, President Trump, his allies in Congress, and the now-disbanded Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have made countless unfounded claims about widespread Social Security fraud.

Their lies were then offered as justification for the firing of thousands of union members at the Social Security Administration (SSA) and for the subsequent closing of field offices in towns and cities across America.

None of these actions have helped seniors or strengthened the programs and services we need most, which is why we all need to be engaged and voting in the 2026 midterm elections, including state primary elections, which begin in March.

Primary elections are voters' opportunities to decide who will appear on the general election ballot in November. In many cases, primaries are your best opportunity to vote for change if you feel like your concerns aren't being addressed by lawmakers.

Voter turnout is also much lower in primary elections, so your vote can have a greater impact on the outcome.

### Keep in mind that each state runs its primaries a little differently.

Some states hold open primaries, meaning only voters of each political party can vote for their party's nominee, while others hold closed primaries.

▶ To see when your state's primary election is held, go to:

<https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/2026-state-primary-election-dates>

▶ Also, there is an easy-to-use tool that automatically directs you to your state and local election office, where you can get help with registering, voting and more. Go to: <https://www.usa.gov/state-election-office>

▶ Lastly, go to <https://retiredamericans.org/voting-record/> to find out if your incumbent federal lawmaker(s) have been voting in support of pro-retiree legislation.

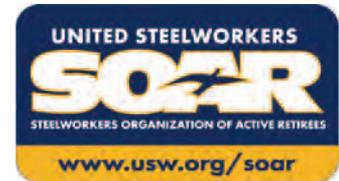


# 2026

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

STAY ACTIVE. STAY INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED.

STRONGER TOGETHER.



[facebook.com/groups/uswsoar](https://facebook.com/groups/uswsoar)



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# PIENTA to STEP DOWN as PRESIDENT of SOAR

**Bill Pienta left office as the union's District 4 director in 2012, and only one year later, he stepped back into a leadership role as the president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).**

In 13 years as president of the union's retiree arm—the longest tenure of any SOAR president—Pienta broadened the organization's focus and fostered increased activism among its membership.

"I'm proud that SOAR has been and continues to try to reinvent itself and become more relevant to the issues that we have today," Pienta said this winter as he prepared to enter his second retirement. "Any active worker should be interested in retiree issues, and retirees should be involved in current workers' issues, too."

## Creating Synergy

Harnessing that synergy and using it to make the union stronger was one of his proudest accomplishments as SOAR leader, said Pienta, who is planning to step down effective March 1. Retired National Director for Canada Ken Neumann is expected to be sworn in that day as the new SOAR president.

Working with Rapid Response Director Amber Miller, Pienta began to schedule the summer SOAR meetings to coincide with the union's Rapid Response and Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. That allowed retirees to participate in lobby days and to mentor young activists who may have been visiting the Capitol for the first time.

"We have a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge," Pienta explained. "There have been a number of stories where new SOAR chapters have started, and people have felt a lot more relaxed and gotten more involved because we did that. It ended up being a win-win."

## Renewed Focus

Late International President Lynn Williams created SOAR more than 40 years ago as a way to bring retired members into the union's effort to confront the massive crisis facing the steel industry. Plant closures and bankruptcies threatened workers' pensions, health care and other benefits. Active workers and retirees needed to support each other more than ever.

"SOAR started as a necessary group to focus on the collapse of the steel industry and the impact of the closures on retirees," Pienta explained.

Since those early days, the organization has continuously shifted its focus to include retirees from all walks of life, while welcoming younger retirees and even active workers into its ranks, moves that Pienta championed.

In addition to partnering with Rapid Response, Pienta worked to integrate SOAR members into other USW constituency groups, such as Next-Gen and Women of Steel, and to make the organization an integral part of the USW as a whole.

"It made you feel good to see the camaraderie and the way that the different groups worked together," Pienta said.

## Roots in District 4

The work of building unity and solidarity among diverse groups of workers was a task that Pienta was familiar with, thanks to his years as a leader in USW District 4, a region that includes about 80,000 members in the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and the territory of Puerto Rico.

Pienta joined the Steelworkers in 1966 when he went to work at the former Allegheny Ludlum steel mill in Dunkirk, N.Y., southwest of Buffalo on the shore of Lake Erie. He was just 18 years old, but quickly became an activist, and, over the years, stepped up every time USW members called on him for help.

"I don't ever want to say no to my union," Pienta said. "The more people we have doing the work of the union, the better."

Pienta joined the USW staff in 1990 and was elected District 4 director in 2004. In that role, he oversaw





Archive photo—Entekin steps down, Pienta takes the reins as SOAR president. Pictured left to right: Ken Neumann, USW national director for Canada; Stan Johnson, USW Int'l secretary-treasurer; Bill Pienta, SOAR president; Leo W. Gerard, USW Int'l president; C. L. "Connie" Entekin, SOAR president emeritus; and Fred Redmond, USW vice president human affairs. (July 2013)

bargaining with employers in steel, rubber, glass and other major industries, led significant organizing efforts, and built a strong member-driven movement throughout the district.

"The district was like a family. We all felt we were one," Pienta said, noting that everyone from rank-and-file members to staff representatives and sub-directors always called him "Bill." "It was all grassroots. We were never top down, and the members did some terrific work. I'm very proud of that."

In addition to his duties as director, Pienta served as vice president of the Buffalo Central Labor Council and secretary of the Western New York Area Labor Federation, and he represented the USW as a vice president of the New York State AFL-CIO. He also served as a director of the New York State Workforce Development Institute, Inc.

## Display of Solidarity

Pienta said one of his proudest moments as director came during a District 4 conference in Atlantic City. At the time, the United Auto Workers (UAW) union was attempting to organize casino dealers and asked for the USW's help.

"We organized a demonstration," Pienta explained. "We marched out of our meeting room, through the casino floor, out onto the boardwalk, and we picketed our own conference."

USW members, he said, refused to gamble in the casino to demonstrate their solidarity with the organizing effort. Instead, they took up a collection from attendees to benefit the workers.

"We went to the craps tables, and we donated it all as a tip to the dealers," he said.

## Activism in D.C.

Some of Pienta's other memorable moments came during lobbying trips to Washington, where District 4 members and SOAR activists were always well represented under his leadership.

Buses would leave the Buffalo area at night and arrive in Washington, D.C. in the morning, he said.

"I never would ask members to do something that I wouldn't do myself," he said.

It was on one of those lobbying trips that Pienta first met a young local union activist named David Wasiura, who now serves as District 4 director.

"I saw something in him very early on," Pienta said. "I knew he would be a great leader in this union."

Wasiura recalled the trip clearly, noting that Pienta took the time to answer questions and get to know him as the hours passed.

"I was brand new to the labor movement. But he listened and he gave me his insights," Wasiura said. "There are a few people you run into in your life that you can say, 'I wouldn't be where I am without them,' and Bill was one of those people for me."

## Future of SOAR

While Pienta is stepping down from his leadership role in SOAR, he intends to remain an active member of the organization and continue to help it evolve for a new generation of retirees.

One of his last projects as president was to distribute surveys to SOAR members to learn more about their priorities.

"Our intent is to get opinions from the membership on what is important to them," he said. "Our goal is to develop a system where we can aid SOAR chapters through best practices and learn what we can do to assist them in organizing."

"We have to try to find issues that engage and impact them, so they see the value in joining SOAR," he said.

Pienta said he was pleased to be leaving the SOAR presidency on his own terms and was looking forward to the next chapter in his USW story.

"I am so grateful for the opportunities and the benefits that the Steelworkers have provided for me," Pienta said. "I would rather leave a little bit early than stay a little bit too long."



## Why Canada Needs Universal Pharmacare: Closing the Gap in Our Health Care System

Recently, I spoke with a retired Ontario steelworker, Neil, who left work at the age of 62. At the time he retired, he was in good health and on no prescription medications. He knew his benefits would lapse once he stopped working, but he figured he could probably “wait it out” for the three years until Ontario Drug Benefit kicked in at age 65.

Under Ontario Drug Benefit, medications are covered through a public drug formulary for children and youth under 26, for adults over the age of 65, or for those on social

assistance or living in long-term care.

Sadly, only six months after retiring, Neil suffered a heart attack. Thanks to excellent medical care in his local (publicly funded) hospital and a supportive family

during his recovery, he survived. But not without acquiring a new suite of medications he needed to take daily to manage his newly diagnosed cardiovascular disease and prevent another heart attack from occurring down the road.

Suddenly, he was visiting the pharmacy once a month and paying \$200 out-of-pocket each time. Though it added some financial strain, he was able to afford to fill his prescription, but he often wondered: what would happen to others who couldn't find the extra \$200 per month in their budget?

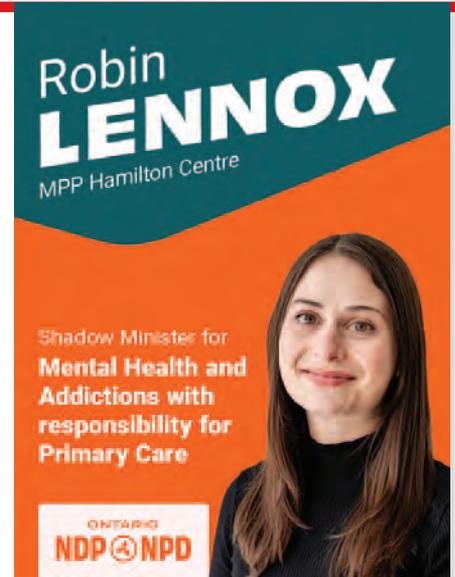
Far too many people across Canada make impossible choices every day about whether to fill their prescriptions, or to use that money for groceries or rent instead. When asked, one-in-10 Canadians report cost-related medication nonadherence—meaning they are either

rationing their medication by skipping doses or forgoing filling their prescriptions altogether due to financial barriers.

The consequences are significant: when health conditions aren't adequately managed with medication in the community, our emergency departments and hospitals see higher numbers of visits due to preventable complications of chronic disease. As the adage goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So why aren't we funding the essential medications people need at every age to keep them healthy and out of hospital?

Canada is the only high-income country with a universal health care system that doesn't have a requisite universal pharmacare program. This gap has been the focus of advocacy for decades, as health care providers and health economists alike have recognized the benefits that universal pharmacare would have on improving population health and reducing health system costs.

Expanding pharmacare would have significant benefits for workers, specifically. Currently, many workers have medication coverage through private health benefits paid for by their employer. But paying for private health benefits is more expensive than publicly funded pharmacare, which means that when union leadership goes to the bargaining table, there's less

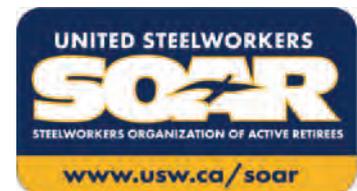


money on the table for wage negotiations.

If universal pharmacare was taken up by the government and offered to all, the money saved by employers could be redirected to higher wages. This would be even more impactful during our current affordability crisis, as many workers are struggling to make ends meet and could benefit from more livable wages.

Disentangling medication benefits from employers would also empower workers to leave their employment without losing their ability to pay for essential medications for themselves and their families. Or, in the case of Neil, the ability to retire with the peace of mind that you won't be left paying hundreds or thousands out of pocket for medications after you retire.

*Robin Lennox is the NDP Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) for Hamilton Centre in Ontario.*



# Affordability: A Definition

By Lena Sutton

SOAR Canadian National Co-ordinator

**On Dec. 2, 2025, SOAR Chapter 10 in Hamilton hosted its annual holiday luncheon, where 75 members donated non-perishable food items and unwrapped gifts to St. Matthew's House's Christmas program for needy families.**

St. Matthew's House, located in Hamilton's poorest section, serves low-income seniors, new immigrants, and families, and operates a food bank.

The chapter also presented \$1,870 in member donations, recognizing the importance of community organizations like St. Matthew's House.

One definition of affordability is "having enough money or means to act without the risk of adverse consequences," which now eludes many retirees, seniors, low-income individuals, and those on government assistance.

According to Statistics Canada, nearly half of Canadians struggle to meet day-to-day expenses, including housing, food, utilities, and uncovered medical costs, due to rising prices.

Rising prices disproportionately impact lower-income families, retirees, and seniors, causing greater stress and health consequences than for higher-income households.

Housing costs significantly impact affordability. In Hamilton, one-bedroom apartments at \$1,800 monthly are unaffordable for low-income individuals and seniors.

Many end up in shelters, tents, or on the street. Households with children face greater financial difficulties than households without children or single-occupant households.

Seniors who lose a partner face greater difficulty losing half or more of their household income. In December 2025, Canada's inflation reached 2.4 percent, with grocery prices up over 5 percent, making daily essentials like milk, bread, meat, and vegetables increasingly unaffordable. Healthy eating, which reduces health costs, is becoming inaccessible.

Canada sees nearly 2.2 million monthly food bank visits—double the number from six years ago. One in four people face food insecurity. Of food bank users, 25 percent are two-parent families and 19 percent are employed, an all-time high.

Many food bank users are seniors and retirees who once donated to the food bank. Hamilton's 2025 hunger report showed 18,943 individual monthly visits, 7,153



Gathered at the SOAR Chapter 10 Christmas luncheon in Hamilton (l-r): Jania Lebon, George Henry, Madeleine Bond, Gary Howe, Bill Mahoney, Renee Wetselaar, Lena Sutton, Brenda Smith and Bob Sutton.

household visits, 26,059 daily meals or snacks, and 32,775 Hamper Program visits.

Seniors comprise 8 percent of users. Food bank dependency should be decreasing, not increasing, in Canada. These numbers are disturbing, given the wealth gap between billionaires and average workers.

Canada has at least 89 billionaires, according to a report by Oxfam Canada. The wealth of the richest 40 people grew over 20 percent to nearly \$550B—exceeding Chile and Finland's GDP. Billionaires are 4,000 times more likely to hold political office than the general public.

Oxfam director Amitabh Behar stated the widening wealth gap creates a dangerous and unsustainable political deficit.

Governments are making wrong choices to pander to the elite, slashing taxes for the wealthy and corporations while cutting programs and raising costs for the working class, poor, low-income families, retirees, and seniors.

This year is the time to fight back against governments at all levels in Canada and the United States. We must ensure governments are paying attention to the issues of seniors, working-class people, retirees and all of those left behind, ahead of the millionaires, billionaires and corporations.

With elections at all levels of government, I urge all SOAR members in Canada and the U.S. to get involved and volunteer to help elect representatives who will represent us, not the billionaires and wealthy corporations.

# BUY UNION

## Keep Union Members Working

By Bob Sutton, Recording Secretary  
SOAR Chapter 10, Hamilton, Ont.

**As a retiree of Stelco Steel and a Canadian living in Ontario, which has long been considered the manufacturing hub of Canada, I am very concerned about how Canada's recently announced trade deal with China will affect our automobile industry.**

I understand the need to make agreements to secure our canola and other grain sales to China. In the agreement Canada has agreed to import 49,000 Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) with only 6.1 percent duty. This is upsetting. In reality, it shouldn't matter one bit; the Chinese EVs should sit on the lots unsold, but unfortunately that will not happen. Some Canadians look at the low price and buy them anyway.

To me, these Chinese EVs are no more upsetting than all of the Kias, Hyundais, Nissans, Volvos, Volkswagens and other vehicles that are not manufactured in Canada. The biggest problem is that Americans and Canadians don't buy the cars their neighbours build.

Unfortunately, this is true in almost everything we purchase. It is no wonder that since the first Canada/U.S. free trade agreement was signed in 1988, all three of the Canadian-owned steel companies (Algoma, Dofasco and Stelco) are now foreign-owned.

When I park in a shopping mall parking lot and look around, the majority of cars I see are not locally made. This was even true several years ago when I went to a meeting of our local labour council; the number of union leaders driving imported cars was disgusting.

When I had a discussion with an executive member of a union who was driving a Korean car, he first tried to justify it by saying he couldn't afford a North American, union-made car. I told him if he couldn't afford a new North American, union-made car, to purchase a used one. He then suggested that there were more union-made parts in his Korean car than in many Canadian-made vehicles. I asked him to prove that, but he never did supply me with the list that he promised.

Even more annoying is the city of Hamilton, often referred to as the steel city, the Pittsburgh of Canada. Can you imagine the frustration of Steelworkers when



SOAR member Bob Sutton with his union-made, made-in-Canada Dodge Grand Caravan.

they see a City of Hamilton vehicle that was imported? This is at a time when the motto is "stand up for steel." There is not an ounce of Canadian steel in these vehicles. It is not just vehicles! What is the matter with this city council? Do they not give any consideration to purchasing products that their constituents produce?

I purchased my first car in 1965 (well used) when I was in high school and my present vehicle is a Dodge Grand Caravan, which was made in Windsor, Ont. It most likely was made from steel that was made in Hamilton. Every single car, SUV, or van that I have ever owned has been union made.

It is not just locally made cars we should be purchasing, but we should be looking at the label of every purchase we make: food, clothing and appliances. We should be carefully checking the label of everything we purchase.

Before my wife Lena's and my wedding in 2003, my daughter and I went to Moore's at Centre Mall to purchase a suit. I asked the salesperson to show me the suits that were Canadian-made. My daughter and I chose a nice Canadian-made suit (which I still have) and went for a nice lunch while the alterations were made. If we all tried to purchase locally manufactured products our economy would be so much better.

When I was just old enough to read, there was a small, round white sticker on my dad's 1951 Chevy's windshield that read "Buy Canadian, Keep Canadians Working." I remember that sticker very well and have always tried to honour that message.

# SOAR Activist Honored for Lifetime of Labor and Social Justice Advocacy

On Sunday, December 14, 2025, Scott Marshall was honored at the People’s World Awards Gala in Chicago, IL, as a vital leader in the fight for freedom of the press, union rights, and as a trail-blazer in supporting the LGBTQ movement.

The evening celebrated his unwavering commitment to workers’ and retirees’ rights and the broader struggle for human dignity through his dedicated work with the USW and the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. He was joined by his wife, Roberta, his children and grandchildren, and friends, including fellow SOAR members.

Among those celebrating Scott was Beatrice Lumpkin, now 107, SOAR District 7’s most renowned member and shining star. A veteran of every major labor movement fight, she continues her advocacy to this day.



Archive photo— Pictured are SOAR Chapter 31-9 members: Scott Marshall, at far left, Linda Ruxton, holding the “We need a budget now!” sign, and next to her, Jim Lange, while picketing then-Governor Bruce Rauner to negotiate for a state budget. (June 2017)

Scott has served as SOAR’s Executive Board member for District 7 and as Vice President of SOAR’s International Executive Board. His leadership has spanned from statehouses to congressional offices, from door-knocking and phone banking to writing postcards, and from joining picket lines and rallies whenever needed. We are deeply grateful for his leadership,

friendship, and unwavering dedication to workers and humanity worldwide. Congratulations, Scott!

SOAR congratulates Brother Scott on this well-deserved recognition. His work exemplifies how Steelworkers lead the struggle to improve lives for retirees, working families, and communities everywhere. Thank you, Scott, for all you do!



Friends and fellow SOAR members celebrate Scott Marshall at the awards gala.

Pictured, back row are Jesus Godinez, SOAR 31-1; Lillie Harris, SOAR 7-7; Jeff Rains, SOAR 34-2; Kitty Loepker, SOAR 34-2; Scott Marshall, SOAR 31-9; and Sharon Perkins, SOAR 31-5.

Sitting at the table are Lucy Harder, SOAR 31-1; Dave Harder, SOAR 31-1; Bea Lumpkin, SOAR 31-9; and Dorine Godinez, District 7 SOAR Executive Board member.



Archive photo— Chicago, IL—SOAR Chapter 31-9 members supported Starbucks Workers United during their cross-country, “The Union is Calling” bus tour. Pictured holding the SOAR flag, from left: SOAR activists Scott Marshall, Bea Lumpkin, and NextGen Activist and Scott’s grandson, Levi. (July 2023)



Pictured left to right, USW Local 9309 members: Brandon Nance, Eric Raw, USW District 1 Sub District 3 Director Brian Sealy, SOAR Chapter 1-9309 President Al “Bones” Caldwell, USW LU 9309 President Fred Silver, Nate Hawk, Dave Carey, and Jasper Eric Lovett.

## USW District 1 Launches First SOAR Chapter in Years

*Honoring the Legacy of Brother David Lee Caldwell with “SOAR DLC Chapter 1-9309”*

In a historic and meaningful moment for the United Steelworkers District 1, which encompasses Ohio and Michigan, and with the support of District 1 Director Donnie Blatt, established the first SOAR Chapter in nearly two decades. The Chapter was officially launched on December 4, 2025, in celebratory fashion, in Lithopolis, Ohio.

The launch event brought together union leadership, members, and supporters to celebrate both the formation of the chapter and the enduring values of Brother Caldwell, whose birthday fell on December 4. The event was made possible through the dedicated efforts of USW District 1 Local Union 9309 President Fred Silva, new Pro-tem President and LU 9309 member Al “Bones” Caldwell—son of the chapter’s namesake, Dave Caldwell—and numerous Local Union Officers, Members, and Retirees.

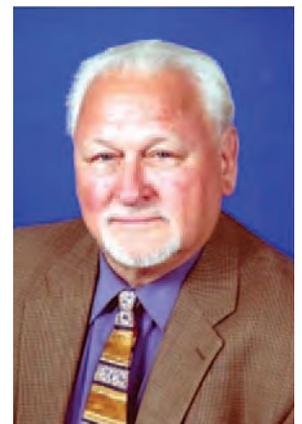
The newly chartered chapter, SOAR DLC Chapter 1-9309, stands as a proud symbol of renewed strength, unity, and commitment to retirees and active members alike. Even more significantly, the chapter is honored to bear the name of a respected union brother whose legacy continues to inspire.

Brother Caldwell was a dedicated union activist and served faithfully as an assistant to the director in District 1, known for his passion, integrity, and unwavering commitment to the labor movement. He touched countless lives through his service. Though Brother

Caldwell left us far too soon in 2016, his spirit, leadership, and dedication live on. It is the hope of this Chapter, which bears his initials, will carry his legacy forward forever through the work and mission of SOAR DLC Chapter 1-9309.

The formation of DLC Chapter 1-9309 represents more than a new beginning; it represents continuity, remembrance, and renewed dedication to the principles of solidarity and service. Through this chapter, Brother David Lee Caldwell’s legacy will continue to guide future generations of union members in District 1.

USW District 1 proudly welcomes SOAR DLC Chapter 1-9309 and looks forward to the positive impact it will have on SOAR “Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees,” the United Steelworkers, and the labor movement as a whole.



Brother David Lee Caldwell, for whom the SOAR DLC Chapter 1-9309 is proudly named.

Pictured, right to left: SOAR Executive Board Member Ronnie “Pup” Wardrup, a retiree and former District 1 Staff Representative, presents the official charter to SOAR Chapter 1-9309 President Al “Bones” Caldwell. Also pictured: USW District 1 Sub District 3 Director Brian Sealy, USW LU 9309 President Fred Silver, member Kenny Shelton, and USW District 1 Staff Representative Randy Basham.



# America Needs **STRONGER TRADE ENFORCEMENT** and **BUY AMERICA** Regulations

**Representatives of America’s steel industry and the United Steelworkers testified before the Congressional Steel Caucus on Wednesday, Jan. 14, urging members to do more to strengthen trade enforcement and bolster Buy America policies.**

Current Section 232 tariffs on steel imports have worked well in slowing global steel overcapacity but witnesses at the hearing told the bipartisan group of Members of Congress that they must remain diligent when it comes to protecting domestic steel.

You may recall that when the Section 232 steel tariffs were implemented in 2018, idled steel mills in the United States came back online and furloughed steelworkers were called back to their jobs.

“Tariffs work,” U.S. Steel Corporation President and CEO David Burritt told the Caucus. “They must remain strong. And tariffs on steel-intensive goods, expanded just last year, are game-changers. They protect jobs, preserved domestic capacity and support investments we’re making for customers across automotive, energy, construction and manufacturing.”

U.S. Steel, which celebrates its 125th anniversary in February, has announced plans to invest \$11 billion in its growth and create more than 100,000 jobs across the U.S.

Though Section 232 has staved off unfair competition in the U.S. Market, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that excess steel capacity will rise to 721 million metric tons by 2027.

In particular, the OECD highlights China’s role in this global overcapacity, a crisis of China’s making that

extends beyond the steel market. China has hit its largest trade surplus ever, but U.S. tariffs are staving off this flood of unfairly subsidized goods from distorting our market and crushing our manufacturers.

“While the American steel industry still operates below acceptable levels of capacity utilization, the trade actions implemented by President Trump’s administration are moving us in the right direction, said Cleveland-Cliffs Chairman, President and CEO Laurenco Goncalves. “Due to Section 232 steel tariffs, imports are down significantly, accounting for 16 percent of the market in October 2025. This 16 percent number represents a significant improvement over the 25 percent to 30 percent import penetration levels of the recent past.”

USW District 7 Director Mike Millsap told the Caucus members that, “We cannot let our market be the dumping ground of other countries’ steel in an effort to keep their unemployment rate low. We will defend the American steel industry from anyone who seeks to close our plants and make our country less secure.”

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.), who co-chairs the Caucus with Rep. Rick Crawford (R-Ark.), highlighted the role Section 232 has played in countering excess capacity while stressing that the Steel Caucus continues to work with the White House to strengthen the measures.

“Global steel overcapacity continues to grow as countries such as China flood domestic markets with heavily subsidized—and often, unethically produced—steel products,” said Mrvan.

Millsap urged the Trump administration to leave no room for transshipment in the United States-Mexico-

Canada Agreement (USMCA), which comes under formal review this July, and for Congress to pass bills like the SHIPS for America Act, which aims to rebuild America’s shipbuilding capacity.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing has also called on the Trump administration to close loopholes in the trade deal that allow China to circumvent tariffs.

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



USW District 7 Director Mike Millsap testifying at the Congressional Steel Caucus hearing on January 14, 2026.





CHAPTER 4-21 ~ GROTON, CT



CHAPTER 30-15 ~ LOUISVILLE, KY



CHAPTER 30-18 ~ PLYMOUTH, IN



CHAPTER 4-23 ~ SOMERVILLE, NJ



Chapter 11-5 ~ Duluth, MN

# SOAR and USW Rapid Response Join Forces for Retirement Security



CHAPTER 33-7 ~ MINNEAPOLIS, MN



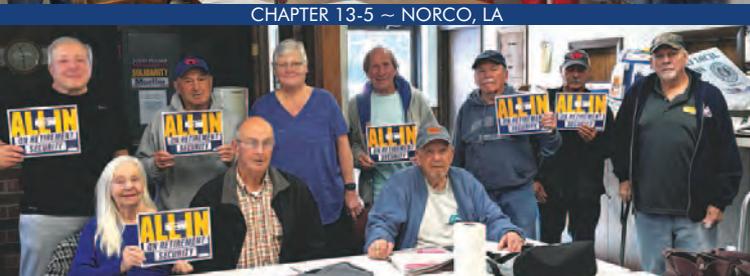
CHAPTER 2-6 ~ WAUKESHA, WI



CHAPTER 13-5 ~ NORCO, LA



CHAPTER 4-URI ~ TONAWANDA, NY



CHAPTER 4-1 ~ DUNKIRK, NY



CHAPTER 7-4 ~ COATESVILLE, PA



CHAPTER 1-979 ~ CLEVELAND, OH

# SOAR in ACTION: USW Core Values Are Under Attack



*As Steelworker retirees, you've spent a lifetime building this union, strengthening our industries, and fighting for the core values that lifted generations of working families. Today, those values are once again under attack, and that is exactly why SOAR remains so vital.*

*The rights, protections, and benefits you fought for did not happen by accident. They were earned through solidarity, sacrifice, and collective action. The Balancing the Scales initiative was launched to defend those gains and ensure they are not taken away. Through SOAR, retirees continue to play a powerful role by gathering petitions, sharing stories, and reminding elected officials that Steelworkers are watching and expect action.*

## **Domestic Economic Issues**

The rising cost of living hits retirees especially hard. Fixed incomes are stretched while everyday necessities, from groceries to utilities, become more expensive. We count on elected officials to make decisions that protect working people and retirees alike. When they fail to do so, SOAR members step in to remind them that these choices have real consequences for people who have spent their lives contributing to this economy.

## **Collective Bargaining**

We have already seen federal workers lose collective bargaining rights and face significant workforce reductions. These attacks should

concern all of us. Retirees know better than anyone that what is won at the bargaining table can be undone with the stroke of a pen. Weakening one group of workers puts every worker and retiree at risk. Laws like the Protecting America's Workers Act (HR 2550/S 2837) are essential to preserving the rights and protections you helped secure.

## **Retirement Security**

Retirement security is not an abstract issue. It is personal. Nearly half of today's workers have nothing for retirement beyond Social Security. At the same time, Social Security itself faces funding challenges that lawmakers continue to ignore. All indications are that seven years from now Social Security will be taking in 70-80 percent of what it distributes out. Retirees understand the importance of protecting and strengthening this program, not just for yourselves, but for your children and grandchildren.

## **Job Security and Trade**

Strong domestic manufacturing protects jobs, pensions, and entire communities. Sectors like shipbuilding support countless Steelworker jobs, from fiber optics to valves, and must be defended against unfair trade practices. That's why our union is supporting the SHIPS for America Act (HR 3151/S 1541) along with our allies.

## **Safety and Health**

Too many workers are still injured or killed on the job every year, something retirees know all too well. Federal spending on workplace safety remains shockingly low,

despite more than 5,000 workplace fatalities and millions of injuries annually. The Protecting America's Workers Act (HR 3036) would strengthen enforcement and accountability. Retirees' stories carry enormous weight in showing why these protections matter.

## **Health Care**

Health care has long been one of the toughest issues at the bargaining table. With Affordable Care Act subsidies set to expire, costs will rise even further for retirees and working families alike. A health care system that is already expensive and confusing will only become more burdensome unless we act. SOAR members play a critical role in pushing elected officials to protect access to affordable, quality care.

## **Stand Up, Fight Back**

Steelworkers have always understood that solidarity does not end at retirement. Employers and politicians continue to test our resolve, hoping to divide us by age or sector. SOAR has consistently shown that retirees remain engaged, informed, and ready to act. Your participation through lobbying, coordinated actions, and grassroots advocacy strengthens every fight we take on as a union.

Thank you for your continued leadership, your experience, and your unwavering commitment to standing up and fighting back for the values that define the Steelworkers. The fight for fairness, dignity, and security did not end when you retired, and with SOAR, it never will.

# SOAR in ACTION



New Bedford, MA—Over 200 people, including members from USW SOAR Chapter 4-16, attended a Labor Standout on January 23, 2026, in solidarity with Minneapolis residents protesting ICE’s harmful and fatal enforcement actions. The event was sponsored by the Greater South-eastern Massachusetts Labor Council under the banner “Stand with Minnesota.”

Pictured are Robert Giusti and Donald Rei, SOAR Chapter 4-16 members.



Modesto, CA—On December 3, 2025, SOAR Chapter 12-11 (Gallo Glass Retirees/SOAR Retirees of Local 17) held a successful sock drive during their December holiday meeting. Stephen Talbott, president of the chapter, sends a special thank you to all the members who contributed to the drive, which will benefit the Salvation Army and its mission to assist those in need in the Modesto area.

Pictured, top photo: Howard Bogar, Chapter 12-11 recording secretary, after loading donations for delivery to The Salvation Army Haig & Isabel Berberian Shelter & Transitional Living Center in Modesto.



Fayetteville, NC—On December 18, 2025, SOAR Chapter 9-UR8 (Fayetteville SOAR Retirees) made their 6th annual Christmas donation to the Manna Dream Center. The organization, which supports those affected by homelessness, hunger, and everyday life challenges, received \$700 in cash along with donations of socks and underwear.

Pictured left to right: Dan Boliaris, treasurer; Eddie Evans, president; Mr. Cartwright, Manna Dream Center Director; and Walter Blue, vice president.

Wyandotte, MI—On December 17, 2025, the Grinch tried to steal earned benefits at the SOAR Chapter 29-4 holiday event at the P.L.A.V. Post 74, but our members stood their ground! Nearly 80 attendees proved they are “All In On Retirement Security.”

Right photo, pictured from left, SOAR coordinators Jay McMurrin, Tony Pascarella, the Grinch, and Art Kroll led the charge, securing 65 signatures for the “Balancing the Scales” petition. We won’t let anyone take away what our retirees have earned!

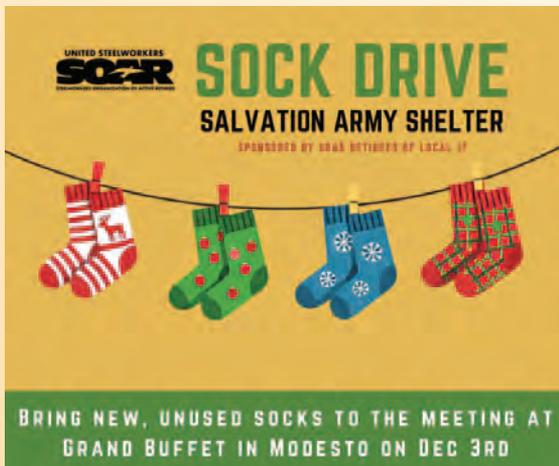


## *In Solidarity!*



Pueblo, CO—On December 16, 2025, SOAR Chapter 38-3 (Albert “Al” Becco SOAR Chapter) members delivered hundreds of pairs of socks, gloves, and underwear to the Cooperative Care and Share Center in Pueblo. The donations were collected at the chapter’s annual holiday luncheon, a longstanding tradition that provides essential items to those in need during the holiday season.

Pictured from the left: SOAR Chapter 38-3 members Gary St. Clair and Joel Buchanan delivered items collected from the annual sock drive to staff of the Cooperative Care and Share Center in Pueblo.





# Social Security Administration Customer Service Crisis Keeps Getting Worse

By Robert Roach, Jr.

**It's clear that the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ability to serve the public has been significantly diminished due to staffing cuts and policies implemented in the past year.**

Nearly 7,000 workers, about 12 percent of the SSA workforce, have been forced out of the agency since January 2025. As a result, the remaining workforce has struggled to keep up with the agency's workload.

An analysis from the *Washington Post* found record backlogs. Six million cases are pending in SSA processing centers and an additional 12 million field office transactions are waiting for resolution. It's not much better on the phones: an estimated 25 million beneficiaries are either getting disconnected or never receiving a callback, and there is only one field office employee for every 4,000 beneficiaries.

The impact of the staffing crisis also varies from state to state. Wyoming, Hawaii, New Mexico, West Virginia, and Oregon all had staffing losses close to or higher than 20 percent.



Retirees paid into Social Security with every paycheck. They earned their benefits and pay for the operation of the SSA, so they deserve better than this. I urge every member of Congress to pass strong legislation to fully staff SSA and keep field offices open before the damage escalates even more.

*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).

## Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr. and What He Did To Uplift Workers

On Monday, January 19, we celebrated the birth of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and the work he did to advance social justice for marginalized and underrepresented communities in the United States—including workers.

He emphasized labor's importance for the civil rights movement in a January 1962 letter to Amalgamated Laundry Workers, writing: "As I have said many times, and believe with all my heart, the coalition that can have the greatest impact in the struggle for human dignity here in America is that of the Negro and the forces of labor, because their fortunes are so closely intertwined."

"Many people do not know that Dr. King's legacy involved unions. He understood that the labor movement



was—and always will be—a powerful tool in the fight for equality and justice," said Robert Roach, Jr., President of the Alliance for Retired Americans. "He understood that civil rights and labor rights are not separate issues. We should follow his example by remembering this connection and lifting up workers whenever we can."



USW Membership Department  
60 Blvd. of the Allies  
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