

USW@Work

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Volume 21/2

A Powerful Voice for Workers

USW International President David McCall swears in Ken Neumann as SOAR International President, March 1, 2026.



NEW PRESIDENTS TAKE THE HELM



Roxanne D. Brown steps up to the podium after being sworn in as the 10th USW International President.



KEN NEUMANN
SOAR President

Honoring the Past, Building the Future

A Message from SOAR's New President

On March 1, I was proudly sworn in as President of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR)—and it was a day I will never forget. That same day, history was made when Roxanne Brown became the first woman ever elected President of the United Steelworkers. Being sworn in alongside her and this historic new Executive Board is an honor I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Throughout my tenure as the National Director of Canada, I was proud to champion the SOAR program alongside our late International President Leo W. Gerard. Leo was a fierce defender of retirees' rights and a towering figure in the labor movement — someone who understood that our obligation to Steelworkers does not end when they leave the shop floor.

This role is both a personal milestone and a continuation of my lifelong commitment to the labor movement — and I do not take it lightly. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of my longtime mentor, the late Lynn Williams, the fifth International President of the United Steelworkers and a decade-long SOAR President whose tireless dedication to retirees set the standard for this office. Every decision I make will be guided by the values he embodied: solidarity, service, and an unwavering commitment to our members.

As President, my focus will be on expanding SOAR's reach — growing chapters across every district, deepening solidarity with local unions, and ensuring every retired Steelworker feels seen, heard, and supported. Engaging members aged 45 and older, along with like-minded allies, and inspiring them to step up in their chapters and communities will be central to that effort. This organization's strength has always come from its people, and I am committed to building the connections that keep it alive and growing.

For over four decades, SOAR has served as a vital bridge between active and retired Steelworkers — and I am committed to making that mission stronger than ever. Together, we will fight for the issues that matter most to our members, defend the dignity they have earned through a lifetime of hard work, and build an organization that future generations of Steelworkers will be proud of.



Roxanne Brown Becomes First African-American Woman to Lead United Steelworkers

On March 1, Roxanne Brown was installed as the 10th International President of the United Steelworkers (USW), making history as the first African-American woman to lead North America's largest industrial union.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, and raised in White Plains, N.Y., Brown, a USW member for 27 years, was elected last fall and succeeds David McCall.

"Working people are at a crossroads in this country," Brown said at her swearing-in ceremony at Pittsburgh's Station Square, attended by about 1,000 Steelworkers and guests. "Too many families work harder yet are forced to settle for less because of the greed and indifference of Wall Street, corporate America, and the politicians who do their bidding.

"It's our job in the labor movement to meet this moment—to organize, to educate, and to lead the fight for real economic justice," Brown continued. "Workers are hungry for real and lasting change, and our union stands ready to help them deliver it."

"I am deeply honored to serve as the USW's president," said Brown. "I'm committed to the work ahead, and pledge to uphold the trust our members have shown in me. Together, we will build an economy that works for all of us—a system that rewards workers rather than corporations, and a bright future for generations to come."



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

SOAR Members Are Watching and Speaking Up!

Throughout April and May, current and retired USW members participated in the USW's 2026 Your Union, Your Voice (YUYV) virtual town halls and gave feedback in their responses to the USW's online membership survey.

JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

While our YUYV virtual townhalls have concluded, our online membership survey will remain open through the end of June, and can be found at www.uswvoices.org.

Don't pass on the chance to share your thoughts, because the feedback USW members and retirees have given through the YUYV effort has helped shape action across the union since the program started in 2020.

Guided by your input, our union has made historic progress on our core issues and is leveraging our solidarity to defend workers and retirees from an Administration that clearly doesn't share our values.

While the administration is backed by the likes of Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and the rest of the billionaire class, we have PEOPLE power!

In late April, I joined national leaders of the Alliance for Retired Americans for its 2026 membership meeting in Las Vegas, where we received important updates on how the Trump administration's cuts to federal agencies are harming retirees' access to Medicare, Social Security, and other critical programs.

For example, in January, the Trump administration launched a pilot program using artificial intelligence to determine our eligibility for routine care that seniors receive through Medicare. Hearing a growing number of reports that this pilot program has resulted in seniors enduring longer wait times and, in some cases, being denied what is usually routine care, retiree advocates have forced congressional hearings to bring light to the growing crisis.

We also discussed the unfortunate reality that the current majority in Congress has failed to offer solutions for retirees facing skyrocketing prices for groceries, gasoline, heating oil, health care, and other everyday necessities.

This is clear when we review the Alliance for Retired Americans' new 2025 Congressional Scorecard, which scores each U.S. Senator and Representative on the most pressing issues facing America's retirees.

Before you vote in your state's primary election, and certainly before you head to the polls this fall, make sure to go to www.retiredamericans.org to find out whether your federal lawmakers have been standing up for retirement security or voting lockstep with the administration's anti-retiree agenda.



For quick access to the ARA's 2025 Congressional Scorecard, simply scan this QR code.



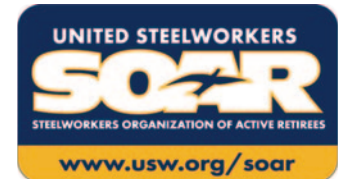
Lastly, I encourage you to visit www.uswvoices.org to complete the USW's YUYV membership survey and to receive updates as we near Election Day this November.



2026

HAPPY SPRING!

STAY ACTIVE. STAY INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED.
STRONGER TOGETHER.



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Former Director for Canada Ken Neumann Takes Office as SOAR President

In his 33 years of service on the USW executive board, Ken Neumann was known for delivering detailed reports to his fellow officers, after which he usually added, “one more thing.” Now, Neumann is adding one more thing to his distinguished career as an international labor leader, stepping into the role of president of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

“It’s my honor to continue to serve the union,” Neumann said following his swearing in on March 1 alongside the newly elected slate of USW leaders. “I’ve never ever wavered.”

Neumann served as the USW’s national director for Canada from 2004 to 2022, after 15 years as director of District 3. He succeeds retired District 4 Director Bill Pienta, who had served as SOAR president since 2013.

“I witnessed Bill’s leadership in many capacities,” noted Neumann, who was the longest-serving member of the executive board upon his retirement. “When he said his farewell, Bill said that one of the highlights of his career was the work that he’s done with SOAR, and I hope that I can say the same thing.”

Early Activism

Born and raised in rural Saskatchewan, Neumann was 18 years old when he joined Local 5890 in Regina. He later worked as a miner and a member of Local 6166 in Manitoba before returning to his hometown as a member of 4728 at Westank-Willock, where he became local president. He joined the USW staff in 1977.

As District 3 director and later as national director for Canada, Neumann played a key role in the union’s negotiations with major employers across a variety of sectors, including telecommunications, railways, mining, forestry and manufacturing. He led members through difficult negotiations with corporations such as Teck Cominco, Fording Coal, Inco/Vale, and Ipsco Steel.

As national director for Canada, Neumann was instrumental in the USW merger with the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada in 2004, a move

that brought 50,000 new members into the union. He also

Archive photo – From left: Canadian directors Harry Hynd (D6), Lawrence McBrearty (D5), Leo Gerard (National Director), and Ken Neumann (D3) at an August 1991 news conference in Toronto.



spearheaded the merger with the Telecommunications Workers Union in 2015, which brought 13,000 new members.

Under Neumann’s leadership, the union also formed strategic alliances with other unions and built international ties to strengthen solidarity at multinational employers. He negotiated alliances with ACTRA National (the Alliance of Canadian Television and Radio Artists), the Canadian Region of the Communications Workers of America, Environmental Defence, UNITE HERE, the Canadian Football League Players’ Association and the Ontario Taxi Workers Union, as well as creating many international alliances, such as Workers Uniting — with Unite the Union in the U.K. and Mexico’s Los Mineros union.

Neumann also served as a vice president of the Canadian Labour Congress for 18 years and as president of the Steelworker Humanity Fund, which supports international development social justice projects and provides humanitarian aid around the world.

Aiming for Expansion

Neumann said his goal is to expand the membership of SOAR and provide more opportunities for USW retirees and their families to remain involved in the labor movement.

“We will continue to assist members in the fight for a better life for working people,” Neumann said, noting the large number of retired USW members across the United States and Canada. “It’s a huge benefit to take all that talent, utilize it and work for a better society.”

Being sworn in alongside the members of the USW executive board, including new International President Roxanne Brown, provided SOAR with exposure that Neumann said he hoped would boost the organization.

SOAR, as Neumann pointed out, is not just for retired Steelworkers, but for anyone over 45 years of age who supports the work of the USW.

“It’s not just members, but it’s like-minded individuals,” he said.

THING

Archive photo – District 3 Director Ken Neumann and Canadian National Director Leo Gerard at the union’s Health & Safety Conference, March 1991.



Lasting Relationships

Even before taking the reins of SOAR, Neumann had maintained close ties to the union in his retirement. He was a close friend and confidant of late International President Leo W. Gerard, who passed away in September 2025, and acted as Gerard’s liaison to the union’s leadership.

Neumann was part of a team that raised more than \$3.5 million to establish the USW/Leo Gerard Chair in Labour Studies at the University of Toronto, intended to promote research into workers’ rights and industrial relations.

“That has kept me occupied, and has been a tremendous feat,” he said.

‘Significant Journey’

When the call came in July of last year from then-International President David McCall, asking him to serve as SOAR president, it didn’t take much convincing for Neumann to accept the idea.

“I’ve seen the work that SOAR has done, and the support they’ve given to locals and communities, and it’s tremendous work,” Neumann said.

As he looked to the future for the union’s retiree organization, Neumann recalled the words of another longtime Canadian labor leader, Lynn Williams, who served as the president of SOAR after 11 years as USW international president.

“Lynn often said, ‘I may have retired from a job, but I haven’t retired from life,’” Neumann said. “This has been a significant journey for me, and I want to carry on that vision.”

It’s a vision that Neumann hopes will lead to a bright future for SOAR and the entire USW.

“Wherever we go, we should talk about the importance of what SOAR does,” he said. “I’m excited to grow the membership and continue to assist members.”



SOAR WAS THERE! Third NO KINGS Rallies Held Across the U.S.

Millions of protesters rallied in cities, suburbs, and small towns across the nation on Saturday, March 28, protesting what they called the Trump administration’s authoritarian overreach. Organizers of the NO KINGS rallies claim the protests included more than 3,300 events across the country that drew a estimated 8-9 million people—the



Davenport, IA—At LeClaire Park, the message couldn’t have been clearer: NO KINGS! Thank you to everyone in Davenport who came out to stand in solidarity and make their voices heard. USW District 11 SOAR Executive Board member Bonnie Carey proudly held her sign at the center of the rally, exemplifying our collective spirit.



Somerville, NJ— Howard Boyer, President of SOAR Chapter 4-23, was out in the streets of Somerville on March 28th, standing shoulder to shoulder with fellow activists at the NO KINGS rally outside the Somerset County Courthouse. He stood up for the rule of law and advocated for the rights of every working family in North and Central Jersey.

Retirees aren’t just “active” in name — we are leading the charge for a fairer, more just future.

largest single-day protest in American history. Attendees marched, sang, and spoke out against President Trump’s actions and policies, the rising cost of living, and in opposition to a “senseless war” with Iran.

This marks the third wave of large-scale NO KINGS protests. Last year, millions joined two days of peaceful demonstrations. In the months since, Trump’s nationwide immigration enforcement blitz has disrupted life in several major cities, especially Minneapolis. Now, Americans are also grappling with surging gas prices and a faltering economy linked to the ongoing war.

Source: Nokings.org

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LIVING HISTORY

Union Hall from 1980s Strike Becomes Center of Maine Labor Community

Linda Deane has been a trailblazing paper worker, a proud Woman of Steel, a labor organizer, a political activist, and an educator. And last fall, she added another title to that list: working class hero.

The Maine AFL-CIO presented Deane with the organization's 2025 Working Class Hero Award for her efforts to organize fellow workers during the International Paper strike of 1987 and 1988, and for developing the vision to remake the former Local 14 union hall, the hub of that work stoppage nearly 40 years ago, into a center for labor education, community and learning.

Paper Pioneer

For 100 years, beginning in the 1880s, paper was the dominant industry in rural Maine, defining the social and economic landscape and building middle-class lives for workers in the region.

Deane started her career as a pioneer in that industry, going to work in 1977 at the International Paper (IP) mill in Jay, in the southwestern part of the state. She was the first woman at the mill to work on a paper machine.

The job was not without its struggles in those early days.

"The feeling among the men was that we were just getting hired to meet the quota of women and that women shouldn't be on paper machines or working in the maintenance department," Deane recalled. "Chauvinism was quite rampant... you had to have broad shoulders and let things roll off your back if you wanted to keep your job."

She worked at the flagship IP mill for 10 years until, in 1987, she and 1,200 of her union siblings went on strike. The workers, members of the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), walked out after the company refused to back down from its demands for wage cuts, increased health care costs, and the elimination of paid holidays, among other drastic concessions.

Work Stoppage

During the work stoppage, which stretched from June 1987 to October 1988, the Local 14 union hall in Jay became a 24-hour hub of activity for Deane and other striking workers, their families, and supporters throughout the community.

"For 16 months, this place was booming," Deane said. "When the strike came, we all had important jobs to do. There were no cell phones, so getting the word out meant phone banks and mailings to keep people updated on what was going on."



Linda Deane received the Working Class Hero Award at the Maine AFL-CIO Annual Convention on October 23, 2025, presented by former USW Local 14 and then Local 11 member Randy Berry.

Nearly 40 years after the strike, the union hall—now known as the Local 14 Solidarity Center—remains a vital part of the Maine labor community, serving as the home to the Western Maine Central Labor Council, of which Deane is the president.

National Attention

The IP strike eventually expanded to include another 1,100 union workers at IP mills in De Pere, Wis., Lock Haven, Pa., and Mobile, Ala., and Deane and some of her fellow striking workers traveled through the northeastern United States, raising awareness and seeking help for their cause.

Deane said she and her fellow striker, Cindy Bennett, traveled throughout the northeast, raising awareness and raising money for their cause.

“We had long days,” Deane said. “We’d come home from setting up some major rally and just wash our clothes and repack them because we knew we would be sent to Rhode Island or Massachusetts at another local the next day.”

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Baptist minister and civil rights activist who sought the Democratic nomination in the 1988 presidential election, visited Jay and drew a crowd of 4,000 in a town where the population barely exceeded 5,000.

In a fiery address met with numerous ovations, Jackson called for unwavering solidarity among all workers in the face of corporate greed.

“We must build our democracy from the bottom up, not the top down,” he declared. “And we must pay the American worker.”

“The things he said then,” Deane noted, “are still so true today.”

Lifelong Bonds

Although International Paper ultimately replaced the striking workers with scabs, the union members never lost touch with the solidarity and fellowship they built during the lengthy work stoppage.

“People still wanted to come here,” Deane said. “If you went by the union hall during the day, there would be 40 or 50 people here.”

Some of the workers were recalled to the Jay mill, some retired, and some went to work at other union jobs in the area. Deane took a job at another paper facility in nearby Rumford.



Front row: Mike Shink, John Ladd, Bob Boyle, Linda Deane (Financial Secretary), and Bob Roy. In the back row: Paul Litalien (Treasurer, holding the SOAR flag), Randy Berry, Bruce Bryant (President, holding the charter), Gary McGrane (Recording Secretary, holding the SOAR flag), and Jimmy McHugh (Trustee).

In 1999, the UPIU merged with the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union to form PACE, which became part of the USW six years later. Deane emerged as a proud Woman of Steel and went on to coordinate the program for the USW in the state of Maine.

Strike Aftermath

Even after the IP strike ended and the local union was decertified, workers continued to congregate at the union hall, meeting there regularly to play pool or cribbage or watch television and discuss current events.

The former strikers also regularly pitched in to make sure they could keep the lights on and pay the bills at the building.

“These guys, they paid what they called union dues,” Deane said. “Some of them still do. That’s what kept us going.”

Over the years, as more factories closed and more workers retired, paying the bills became more difficult. Deane and others eventually conceived the idea of converting the union hall into a home for labor throughout the region.

The Western Maine Central Labor Council bought the building in 2023 and began the process of converting it into a center for solidarity, labor history and learning, with the agreement that former strikers could keep coming by to hang out.

“You kept this place going, it’s your place,” Deane recalled telling the workers.

Living History

When they started cleaning out and restoring the building, reminders of the strike were everywhere. “It was like it had just ended,” Deane said.

Volunteers sifted through boxes of documents and photos, deciding what should be kept and what could be

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Reflections on the Power of One!

By Doug Macpherson
Vice-President of SOAR

I have been thinking lately what we SOAR activists have in common, and have concluded that there is one attribute that binds us all together. We all engage in what the late John Lewis called “good trouble.” Lewis defined it as the need to engage in necessary trouble when we see or hear an injustice. We are not satisfied with the status quo. Lewis used “good trouble” to represent non-violent, peaceful protest and activism aimed at fighting injustice.

We all engage in that, and we use the union as the vehicle to accomplish this. This is the one thing we all have in common. Don't underestimate the power of one!

For example, if you were a steward or Grievance Committee person, you may have had to file a grievance on behalf of a co-worker whom you believed had been unjustifiably discharged, and through the grievance procedure you won their job back.

Of course, your intervention has an impact on that member, but also their spouse and family, and their bank manager, mortgage holder, mechanic, grocery store clerk and owner, gas station attendant and owner, municipal employees, fire,



Hundreds gathered in Hyannis, MA, on July 17, 2025, to take part in the “Good Trouble Lives On” national day of action in honour of civil rights leader and Democratic U.S. Congressman John Lewis (1940-2020).

police and on and on. All of whom benefit from the members' ability to earn and spend their paycheck, because you filed a grievance. Your intervention has benefitted literally hundreds of people in that community. Never underestimate the power of one!

Now if you were lucky enough to be on the union staff or a negotiating committee and bargained improvements in wages and benefits for hundreds of members, then you can see from the foregoing how quickly this translates into literally thousands of people in a community.

I remember back in the 1970s when my union negotiated a dental plan for members and families. My dentist told me his life and practice were forever changed.

Prior to the plan being initiated, his practice had been largely dependent on emergency fillings and extractions.

Now he had whole families making appointments for preventative check-ups and cleanings. He and his family's wellbeing was forever changed because of the union's work. Never underestimate the power of one!

We in SOAR continue to make “good trouble” when we see any and all injustice.



At a SOAR-sponsored fundraiser for an immigrants' support group in Pittsburgh, newly installed International President Roxanne Brown pledged support for workers and their families who are newcomers living in a climate of fear and mistrust.



USW Supports Community Center for Latino and Other Immigrants

Brown took the stage in support of Casa San Jose, a non-profit community center for Latino and other immigrants, a few weeks after taking the oath of office as the USW's 10th International President.

"It's important that we work together," Brown told the activists in attendance, noting that Casa San Jose is "literally doing God's work" in providing food and medical assistance, educational programs and immigrant rights advocacy for the growing Latino community in Pittsburgh.

The non-profit community resource center is marshaling volunteers to help immigrants, both legal and undocumented, who are afraid to leave their homes for work and school because of aggressive detention actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.

Casa volunteers help detained immigrants regain their freedom and reunite with their families through a bond fund. They provide medical care, English lessons and help feed families who are too afraid to go to the grocery store.

Luz Blandon, chief operations officer for the Casa San Jose Resource Center, said ICE arrests in Pittsburgh continued after the tragic deaths of protestors in Minneapolis, but are done more quickly and quietly than before to attract little attention.

Embracing the USW's longstanding mission of being a collective voice for the voiceless, Brown pledged the union's support for the center, founded in 2013 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden, Pa., and the activists who volunteer their time and resources.

"It's a reminder that even in darkness, there is so much light," Brown told the fundraiser, held in a packed meeting room in the suburban Wilksburg, Pa., borough building and billed as a celebration of St. Patrick's Day. "There is so much light in this room."

Brown, who was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and grew up in White Plains, N.Y., emigrated with her mother at age 2. She credited a community organization like Casa with helping her become a citizen at age 18. Union-represented jobs helped her family break into the middle class, a transformative experience that inspired her career to help other working people.

Brown pledged that the USW and organized labor overall will engage in the necessary fights for workers' rights on the job and in society at large, and will help to rebuild what has been lost when the time comes.

"We need to fight because the fight is more important than ever," said Brown, a former International Vice President and legislative and policy advocate for the USW. "We are here. The union is here. It's important that we don't forget that the union is not just for economic uplifting; we are also a vehicle of social change."

The event was co-sponsored by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), SOAR Greater Pittsburgh Area Chapter 20-15, the Pittsburgh chapter of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) and the Pittsburgh chapter of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA).

Given the fundraiser's connection to St. Patrick's Day, attendees were treated to Irish music, green cupcakes and a history lesson on earlier immigration from Mark Barrett, a Pittsburgh lawyer and historian for the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 32 in Carnegie, Pa.

Irish immigrants first came to western Pennsylvania in the 18th century to flee British oppression, Barrett said. The potato blight in Ireland in the 1840s brought a second wave of immigration, mostly poor rural farmers seeking survival and drawn to work in Pittsburgh's mines and mills.

He drew parallels to the immigrant experience faced in Pittsburgh in the 19th and early 20th century, when the phrase "No Irish Need Apply" reflected intense discrimination in industry, with the immigrants today who face ICE raids and arrests. The Irish assimilated over time, and so will immigrants today.

By the late 19th century, Irish Americans were well represented in the city's Democratic Party and in the region's coal and steel industries. Philip Murray, an immigrant coal miner, helped build the United Mine Workers and the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC). He served as the first president of the United Steelworkers of America from 1942 until his death in 1952.



Milford, MA— On February 5, 2026, new SOAR Chapter 4-25, also known as SOAR of Massachusetts – Chapter 1, received their official charter while at the LM Conference in Milford, MA. Pictured from left to right: Sub Director John Buonopane, LU 12325 President Rick Thilbault, SOAR Chapter Recording Secretary Chris Benham, SOAR Chapter President Mike Ferriter, USW District 4 Director Dave Wasiura, SOAR Chapter Financial Secretary John Roache, and District 4 SOAR Executive Board Member Al Polk.

District 4 Welcomes a New SOAR Chapter in Massachusetts

SOAR members in western Massachusetts proudly celebrated the official chartering of their SOAR chapter by the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.

On February 5, 2026, SOAR Chapter 4-25, SOAR of Massachusetts—Chapter 1, was presented its official charter by USW District 4 Director Dave Wasiura at the district’s LM Conference in Milford, MA.

The chapter’s formation was fueled by the passion and solidarity of retirees from amalgamated Local 12325 of Western Massachusetts, representing Berkshire Gas workers. This effort was further strengthened by essential support from District 4 SOAR Executive Board member Al Polk, District 4 staff representatives, and SOAR international leadership.

The First Officers of SOAR Chapter 4-25

- President** ~ Michael Ferriter
Vice President ~ Jeffrey Reopell
Recording Secretary ~ Chris Benham
Financial Secretary-Treasurer ~ John Roche
Trustees ~ Frank Austin, Neil Miller and Tom Stefanik

Collectively, the leadership team brings over 140 years of experience in local union roles, reflecting a deep commitment to the labor movement. As active members, they have:

- ▶ Organized over 200 teachers’ aides.
- ▶ Navigated a nine-month workplace lockout.
- ▶ Coordinated with the international union on state and federal elections.
- ▶ Led the Rapid Response “train the trainers” program.
- ▶ Supported informational pickets and other unions in need.
- ▶ Lobbied effectively at the state level.

The chapter’s mission reaches beyond its own membership, aiming to connect with other locals throughout Massachusetts who have yet to form their own SOAR chapters.

During its formation, the group recognized that some retirees may not have the numbers or desire to start their own chapter. Still, across Massachusetts, many retired members continue to make an impact at every level—local, city, and state. While union meetings once fostered connection and information sharing, retirement can bring a sense of isolation. The chapter is determined to rebuild that community spirit and restore the vital flow of information among retirees.

At the LM conference, chapter leaders engaged with local union presidents and international representatives to gauge interest in connecting with retired members. Bylaw amendments were proposed, requiring a three-vote approval to cover dues for those wishing to join the chapter. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the chapter received strong support from the international.

The chapter is committed to maintaining strong ties with locals across Massachusetts and to offering support whenever needed. Drawing on decades of experience in organizing, advocacy, and solidarity—from picket lines to legislative and political campaigns—the chapter’s leadership believes that expanding membership and uniting retirees statewide is essential to advancing shared goals.

Ferriter stated, “We are excited to collaborate with retirees across the state and look forward to expanding our chapter and its impact in the future!”

SOAR welcomes our new members from Chapter 4-25, and together, we will continue the good fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!

Third Time's the Charm?

FIXING the FLAWS in USMCA



When the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect in 1994, its primary purpose was to eliminate trade barriers and tariffs between the United States, Canada and Mexico.

It failed miserably, eventually hurting workers of all three countries.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), implemented in 2020, replaced NAFTA to modernize trade and support manufacturing. It was supposed to be an improvement on NAFTA, but has also come up short when protecting American manufacturing in the steel and auto industries and the manufacturing workers in those fields.

So, will the third time be the charm?

A statutory review of the USMCA is mandatory by July 1 of this year to determine whether to extend the agreement's 16-year term or make changes by improving labor standards, addressing auto rules of origin and strengthening agricultural trade.

The Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM), along with the United Steelworkers, supports changes to the agreement that would raise wages in both the U.S. and Mexico and further restrict China from using Mexico as a shipping hub for its products.

The U.S. trade deficit with Mexico has widened since the USMCA took hold, which suggests Mexico is not living up to its labor obligations under the agreement. Mexican workers are underpaid, and that environment encourages companies to manufacture in Mexico rather than in the U.S.

The USMCA's rules of origin and rules governing foreign direct investment (FDI) by "foreign entities of concern" are way too permissive and must be tightened. Products and goods that were once being imported from China now appear to be coming from Mexico, and that is not an accident.

Between 2011 and 2021, Chinese FDI in Mexico rose from \$38 million to \$385 million, making China the fastest source of foreign investment in Mexico. China's greenfield FDI capital expenditures there increased from \$267 million in 2018 to \$5.6 billion in 2023, with \$3.5 billion directed to auto manufacturing alone.

These numbers strongly suggest that genuine production is not being onshored from China to North America. Rather, content and parts are being rerouted through Mexico as Chinese firms try to claim USMCA preferences to access the U.S. market.



Photo by Keverne Denahan via Pexels

"The union (USW) believes that the opportunity to open USMCA and renegotiate the agreement is a sensible and necessary approach," said USW Legislative Director Roy Houseman. "Our free trade agreements, which have a dramatic impact on the lives of hundreds of millions, should be continuously improved. Over \$1.5 trillion spent in trilateral trade every year demands it."

AAM believes the U.S. should withhold support for extending the USMCA if the foreign direct investment and rules-of-origin loopholes are not addressed. AAM President Scott Paul wrote in a Detroit News opinion that "forcing (the domestic auto industry) into competition with vertically integrated rivals that are focused on seizing market share would, from an employment perspective, trigger a disaster on par with the China Shock of the 2000s."

Paul has consistently argued that allowing heavily subsidized Chinese automakers into the U.S. market would be "an extinction-level event" for the U.S. auto industry, which would destroy U.S. manufacturing jobs and supply chains.

AAM asks all SOAR members to contact their representatives in Congress and let them know that changes must be made in the USMCA. You can reach your U.S. Senators or U.S. House of Representatives members at their district offices or by calling the U.S. Capitol switchboard at **(202) 224-3121** and asking to be connected to their Washington, D.C. office.

Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing in Washington, D.C.



Greater Madison County Federation of Labor Honors Leaders at Annual Awards Dinner

East Alton, IL —The Greater Madison County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, hosted its annual Awards Dinner on Thursday, March 26. The event brought together union members, community leaders, and volunteers to celebrate achievements and strengthen solidarity within the labor movement.

Themed “Working Together for Labor and the Political Fight,” this year’s dinner at Julia’s Banquet Center highlighted the unwavering dedication and service of local labor leaders, while also looking ahead to the upcoming election season.

Federation President B. Dean Webb led the ceremony, honoring labor leaders and volunteers whose exceptional contributions have fortified the labor movement and inspired broader involvement.

One of the evening’s honorees was SOAR activist Jeff Rains.

The Karen Brown Heart of the Community Award was presented to Rains, president of the Granite City SOAR Chapter 7-34-2, by Nick Dodson, United Way Labor Liaison. Dodson praised the generosity of the SOAR membership, noting their support for local charities, their stocking of food banks, and their hosting of community BBQs—all in service of neighbors whose needs continue to grow.



Jeff Rains accepts the Karen Brown Heart of the Community Award on behalf of SOAR Chapter 7-34-2, located in the tri-state area of Granite City, Illinois. He delivers remarks after being honored by the Greater Madison County Federation of Labor for his work with SOAR, as Federation President B. Dean Webb looks on. — *Labor Tribune* photo

LIVING HISTORY *continued from page 7*

discarded. Much of the material went to the library at the University of Maine.

Much of the history remained. A hand-painted mural depicting the stories of Local 14, which had graced the entrance of the building, was carefully repaired and restored and moved inside. It now decorates two large walls of the union hall.

The recall list from the 1987 work stoppage was carefully preserved and remains on the wall today, a reminder of the workers and families who were affected by the strike.

“We’re preserving a lot of the history that’s in this building,” Deane said. “Everyone still has that feeling of solidarity here. And when they come here, you can feel it.”

For her part, Deane hasn’t stopped working to inspire future labor leaders. Since she retired from working at the Rumford mill, she went to work at the Scontras Center for Labor and Community Education at the University of Southern Maine, and hopes to work with the university to bring labor history classes to the former union hall in Jay.

“We’re hoping it will be a place to educate and inspire future generations,” she said. “We want it to be a place where they can learn their rights.”

Nearly 40 years after the strike ended, the lessons are still relevant, Deane said.

“Our strike was more than a strike, it was a movement,” she said. “There’s still a vibe here, it’s a solidarity vibe. We never gave up. The mill is gone, but we’re still here.”

To help sustain this spirit of solidarity, Deane was also instrumental in founding the Western Maine SOAR Chapter—the state’s first—which was officially chartered in July 2025. Many of its SOAR activists are also the dedicated volunteers working to restore the hall, transforming it into a historic gathering place for the labor community and a welcoming home for the chapter.



Securing Social Security: Facts, Fairness and the Path Forward



Social Security as the Backbone of Economic Security for Working Families

Social Security plays a vital role in keeping millions of Americans out of poverty, especially the workers who spend their entire careers paying into the system. It lifts more people above the poverty line than any other program in the nation, and without it, an additional 23 million people would be pushed into poverty. This includes many seniors who rely on Social Security for most of their income. For those nearing retirement age, particularly in demanding jobs or fields with limited employer-sponsored retirement plans, Social Security becomes the most reliable and steady source of income. It is the foundation of security they deserve after years of hard work, a truth that SOAR members understand firsthand.

A Fair and Sustainable Path to Securing Social Security's Future

According to the 2025 Social Security Trustees Report, if no action is taken, Social Security will only be able to pay about 77 percent of promised benefits by 2033. This shortfall stems from payroll tax revenues not keeping pace with the program's growing needs. Making matters worse, the current maximum taxable earnings cap is \$184,500. This means that a worker earning \$92,000 pays Social Security taxes all year, while someone with a \$369,000 income stops paying halfway through the year. This disparity is both inequitable and a major contributor to the program's solvency challenges.

Unlike Social Security, Medicare payroll taxes apply to all earnings—there is no cap—ensuring that everyone pays their fair share, regardless of income. To protect Social Security for future generations, Congress should take similar action by reforming the payroll tax cap so that high earners contribute at the same rate as others. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that raising the taxable income threshold to \$305,100 would generate \$728 billion and close 21 percent of the program's 75-year solvency gap. Eliminating the cap altogether, according to the Social Security Administration, would generate \$3.2 trillion over ten years and reduce the long-term deficit by 53 percent. Ensuring all earners contribute their fair share is the most effective way to strengthen Social Security and secure full benefits for all SOAR members—now and in the future.

Legislation has already been introduced to remove the cap: The Safeguarding American Families Expanding Social Security Act (SAFE Social Security Act, S. 3462) aims to ensure fairness and strengthen the program's foundation for everyone.

Protecting a Promise Made to Working People

Social Security is a solemn promise: after a lifetime of contributing to our nation's economy, every worker deserves a secure, dignified retirement. For USW members, this commitment is rooted in decades of demanding work that requires strength, skill, and sacrifice. We cannot allow Social Security to be undermined in ways that would threaten the well-earned retirement security of working people.

To ensure Social Security's strength for another century, we must first safeguard the benefits workers have rightfully earned. This requires standing firm against proposals to cut benefits or raise the retirement age—measures that would disproportionately harm those least able to afford it. Just as importantly, it calls for updating Social Security's funding so that high earners contribute fairly and the trust fund remains strong into the future. For working families, Social Security is the bedrock of retirement security. Protecting it is not just prudent policy; it's a moral obligation to those who build and sustain our nation.

As a union, we stand firm in our belief that Social Security must be strengthened – not compromised. Our SOAR members have earned their benefits, our active members contribute with every paycheck, and future generations deserve the same level of protection. Social Security is a pledge this nation has made to its workers, and together, we must make sure that promise endures.

Rapid Response Conference

Join us for the USW 2026 Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Conference, taking place July 12–15, 2026, in Washington, D.C. Register today at [USW.org](https://www.usw.org) and be part of the movement to strengthen Social Security and advocate for working families on Capitol Hill.



SOAR in ACTION



Cleveland, OH—On April 28, members of SOAR Chapter 1-979 stood in solidarity, supporting doctors in their call for union recognition and their commitment to prioritizing patients. United voices create stronger care!



Newport News, VA—Big congratulations to SOAR Chapter 35-1, the Steelworker Retirees of Local Union 8888, for celebrating its 36th anniversary on February 18, as an active, growing, and thriving SOAR chapter. Here's to many more!!



Columbus, OH—On April 14, 2026, SOAR members actively participated in the ARA Conference, staying informed and advocating for retirees' interests. Seated left to right are Dave Janiszewski (D1 SOAR Coordinator), Ronnie Wardrup (D1 SOAR Executive Board Member), and Jeff DeLong (D1 SOAR Coordinator), as they absorbed valuable insights on key retiree issues. Strong voices, shared knowledge, and continued solidarity!



Jacksonville, FL—April 21st was an outstanding day for USW District 9. Members turned out in strong numbers for an engaging SOAR presentation during the District 9 President's meeting.

The focus was on staying connected, remaining active, and continuing to champion the rights of our workers—past, present, and future. ALL IN on Retirement Security!



In Solidarity!

Whiting, IN—SOAR has stood in steadfast solidarity on the picket lines during the illegal BP Refinery lockout. Members from SOAR Chapters 31-1 (Inland Steel), 31-5 (LTV Locals), and 7-1 (SOAR Retirees of 7-1) continue to support their union siblings throughout this challenging time. USW Local 7-1 members have been locked out since March 19.

When one of us fights, we all fight!

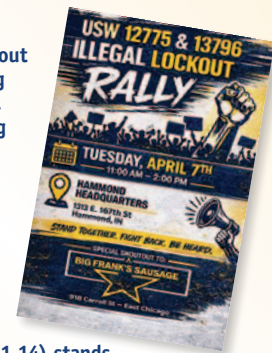
Sylvia "Sue" Cabrales (31-1), Jesus Godinez (31-1), Dorine Godinez (President, 31-1), Sharon Perkins (Recording Secretary, 31-5), Yolande Sobkowicz (31-1), Lillie Harris (Recording Secretary, SOAR 7-1), and Fabian Araiza (1st Vice President).

Officers of SOAR Chapter 31-1: Dave Harder, Lucy Harder, and Dorine Godinez.



Hammond, IN—On April 7, SOAR members rallied in support of the locked-out USW Locals 12775 and 13796 at NIPSCO.

The United Steelworkers (USW) strongly criticized Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) for locking out about 1,600 union members from Locals 12775 and 13796, calling the action a serious threat to worker safety and labor rights. Employees who maintained vital energy services were willing to continue working, but on April 2, NIPSCO chose a lockout amid disputes over contractor use, mandatory overtime, and continuity of work during outages—raising major safety concerns.



Hammond, IN – Solidarity truly is a family affair. Dave and Lucy Harder of SOAR Chapter 31-1 (Inland Steel) stood unwaveringly in support of their son, Kevin, and all members of USW Locals 12775 and 13796 throughout the NIPSCO lockout. Their determination paid off: the "One day longer, one day stronger" spirit led to a tentative agreement on April 16, 2026. USW Local 12775 (field employees) returned to work on April 28, and USW Local 13796 (clerical employees) followed on May 5.

Pictured from left to right: Dave Harder (Vice President, 31-1), Kevin Harder (Member, USW Local 12775), and Lucy Harder (Financial Secretary, 31-1).



Hammond, IN—On April 7, Annette Jones (SOAR Chapter 31-14) stands alongside Clarence Thornton of Next Gen USW Local 1014 at the NIPSCO lockout rally—a perfect example of SOAR and Next Gen coming together to support our union brothers and sisters when it matters most. Working side by side, across generations, is how our union stays strong.



Big Technology Corporations Are Profiting from Online Consumer Scams

By Robert Roach, Jr.

Last month, the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) released “The Scam Economy,” a report examining the prevalence of online consumer scams in the United States. Meta platforms—which

own Facebook and Instagram—are fertile ground for these scams, many of which are powered by artificial intelligence. Fifty-seven percent of all online scams originate on Facebook.

The losses are staggering. CFA’s report estimates that Americans lose an average of \$119 billion to online scams each year, more than seven times higher than previously estimated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

But these scams threaten more than our wallets. These scams threaten older adults’ financial security, privacy, and peace of mind. That’s why the Alliance has launched a year-long public education campaign to help older adults stay safe online, share their experiences,

and demand stronger protections.

It’s clear that the sheer size of this problem cannot be solved through education alone. Legislators must take action to create stronger safeguards and implement regulations that hold technology corporations like Meta accountable when they profit from rampant online scams. And corporations like Meta need to do more to prevent the scams that are proliferating on their platforms—and which are helping their own bottom line.

Learn more about our scam prevention work at retiredamericans.org/stopthescam.

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

For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.



SOAR WAS THERE! Third NO KINGS Rallies Held Across the U.S.

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Michigan, Cincinnati, and Chillicothe, OH — A big thank you to District 1 SOAR coordinators Art Kroll and Jeff DeLong (with Kelly Nedro of AFT), and District 1 Executive Board member Ronnie “Pup” Wardrup for their spirited participation in NO KINGS rallies across multiple states and cities.

Your commitment, visibility, and solidarity continue to drive our movement forward. By standing up and speaking out together, we are creating real, positive change for working families everywhere.



Cleveland, OH — We never get tired of seeing our SOAR chapters in action! Members of SOAR Chapter 1-979 stood united and strong on the front lines during the March 28 NO KINGS rally in Cleveland. That’s what solidarity looks like!



LaPorte, TX—Labor is off the bench and in the game! SOAR Pasadena, TX Chapter 13-PC-3 members were out on NO KINGS Day, rallying behind one of our own, USW Staff Representative Marcos Velez, in his campaign for Texas Lieutenant Governor. Let’s keep up this momentum through the May 26 runoff and ensure our voices are heard at the polls!



Washington, DC/Silver Spring, MD—The energy from District 8’s SOAR Coordinator, Mike Zielinski, on March 28 was undeniable! He captured some great shots of our SOAR banners in action during the NO KINGS rallies in Washington, DC and Silver Spring, MD.

From the Memorial Bridge to the streets of Maryland, the message was clear: Power belongs to the people, not any one individual. Seeing millions show up nationwide for the largest single-day protest in U.S. history is proof that our democracy is alive and well.



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