

USW@Work

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Volume 21/3

A Powerful Voice for Workers



SOAR LEADERS KEEP EYES ON FUTURE

USW Retiree Organization Supports Agenda of Activism, Growth

SOAR leaders from across the U.S. and Canada came together in Washington, D.C., for the annual SOAR International Executive Board Meeting on July 11-12, followed by active participation in the USW 2026 Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Conference, held July 13-15.

Featured here are SOAR members serving on both the USW and SOAR International Executive Boards, joined by dedicated activists representing their districts as delegates for the conference.

We're STRONGER TOGETHER!



KEN NEUMANN
SOAR President

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Leading Forward: *A Message from the SOAR President*

As your new SOAR President, I am honored to share my priorities, recent activities, and vision for the future of SOAR with you.

Since being sworn in on March 1, my top priority has been to raise awareness that SOAR membership is open to like-minded individuals aged 45 and above. Although our membership rules changed in 2019, the pandemic left many union members unaware of this opportunity. To address this, we are proactively reaching out to union members and supporters about SOAR well before retirement.

We recently concluded our annual SOAR Executive Board Meeting in Washington, D.C., with a focus on strategic planning for SOAR's future.

Building on that momentum, we then took part in the **USW 2026 Rapid Response, Legislative & Policy Conference**, where SOAR board members and other district SOAR activists joined USW's advocacy efforts by lobbying on Capitol Hill.

Our discussions centered on three key pieces of legislation aimed at supporting retired and working families nationwide. Summaries of each bill appear below, with more details about the **USW Rapid Response Action Call** included on page 12.

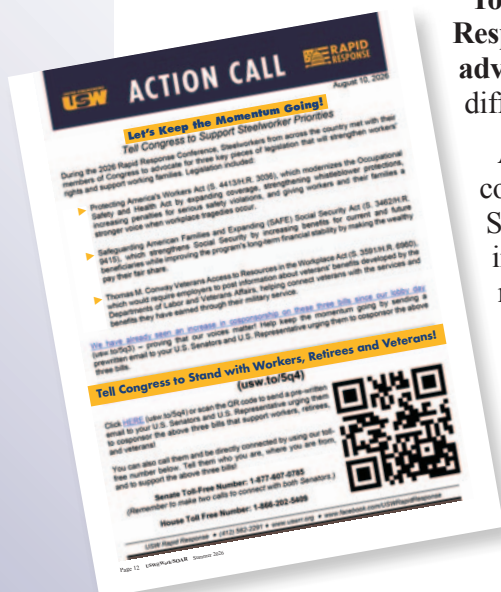
- ▶ **Honoring Those Who Served:** The Thomas M. Conway Veterans Access to Resources in the Workplace Act would require employers to post information about available veterans' benefits in the workplace.
- ▶ **Protecting Worker Health and Safety:** The Protect Worker Health and Safety Act would update our nation's key workplace safety law to meet today's challenges.
- ▶ **Defending Our Hard-Earned Retirement Benefits:** Safeguarding American Families and Expanding (SAFE) Social Security Act would strengthen Social Security benefits and address the projected 2032 shortfall, protecting the retirement security of millions.

To keep the momentum going, I urge you to participate in this Rapid Response Action Call by contacting your federal representatives and advocating for these vital pieces of legislation. Your voice truly makes a difference in shaping policies that protect working and retired families.

Additionally, I have had the opportunity to speak at several district conferences—including Districts 4, 8, 9, and 10—where I promoted SOAR and our age 45+ membership initiative. I look forward to attending more conferences in the future and hope to have the pleasure of meeting many of you in person.

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 to join.

Wishing you a safe, healthy, and joyful fall season ahead.





FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

SOAR Volunteers Needed for the USW's 2026 Member-to-Member Campaign!

As in recent election cycles, one tactic our union will use during this year's election work is personalized postcards written by USW members and our retirees.

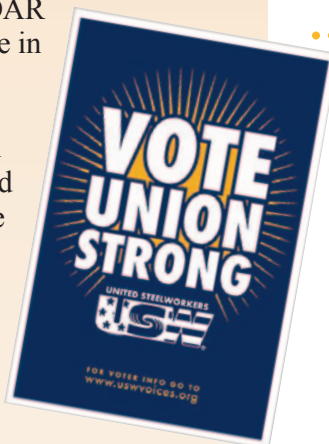
JULIE STEIN
SOAR Director

Whether the message urges someone to register or reminds them to vote, this particular outreach stands out in the mail. It's also a way for SOAR members — no matter where they live in the U.S. — to easily get involved in our work to elect pro-worker, pro-retiree candidates.

SOAR volunteers will receive a package in the mail containing (50) blank postcards, sample messages, and instructions on where to return them. Once we receive your completed postcards at USW headquarters, we will take care of delivering them to USW members who live in the most competitive districts and states in the 2026 midterm elections. It's a small step that can make a big impact.

Please visit the www.uswvoices.org website to get started. Or, call the SOAR office toll-free at 866-208-4420 or email your name, address and phone number to comlor@usw.org

In addition to writing postcards, SOAR members can also join in on these vital efforts by calling or texting voters and participating in neighborhood canvassing. Every action helps to strengthen our Union Voter mobilization campaign!



Protect Your Vote: Check Your Status

Did you know the right to vote has never protected itself?

Across the country, voters continue to face efforts that can make casting a ballot more difficult, from voter roll purges and stricter ID requirements to changes in mail and absentee voting rules, polling place closures, and other barriers that can leave working people confused about when, where, and how to vote.

All too often, people don't realize there's a problem until it's time to cast their ballot.

That's why it's important to check your voter registration status before Election Day, even if you've voted before. A move, a name change, an outdated address, or changes in state election rules can create problems you may not know about until it's too late.

Don't wait until Election Day to find out.

Visit www.uswvoices.org to check your voter registration status and get current information on mail and absentee voting, polling locations, and other important election details.

Our union has always understood that working people have power when we make our voices heard. Make sure your vote will be counted.

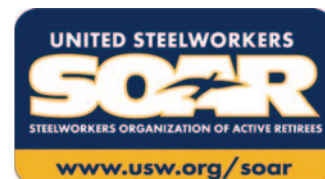
Check your status. Know your options. Make your voice heard!



2026

HAPPY SUMMER!

STAY ACTIVE. STAY INVOLVED. STAY CONNECTED
STRONGER TOGETHER.



facebook.com/groups/uswsoar

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SOAR LEADERS KEEP EYES ON FUTURE

USW Retiree Organization Supports Agenda of Activism, Growth

Leaders of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) built an ambitious agenda of activism for the coming months and years over two days, July 11-12, during SOAR executive board meetings this summer in Washington, D.C.

Former USW Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn attended his first meeting as the newest SOAR board member, replacing Al Polk to represent District 4.

"I can't speak enough about the work that Al did to build the SOAR program," Shinn said.

Shinn said one of his goals was to continue Polk's work to grow SOAR by building more local chapters throughout New York, New Jersey, the New England states and Puerto Rico, and encouraging the chapters throughout the district to work together.

"It's a good idea to bring people together if you have multiple chapters in a certain area, to get them to work in tandem," Shinn said. "The sharing of information and participation in each other's activities, these are important ways to build the program."

Growing SOAR

Encouraging retirees and workers over age 45, who are already active in their local, to sign up and join SOAR is just one step toward growing the organization, Shinn said. SOAR leaders should also be pushing for locals to pay the first few years of dues on behalf of new retirees and to organize active SOAR chapters within their locals, both now and in the future.

"We need people to commit to making this work. If they don't find any activity, they're going to drop off," he said. "That's why we need to stay active and put something out there that makes people want to return."

Shinn also paid tribute to former SOAR President Bill Pienta, who was Shinn's predecessor as District 4 director.

"These folks are all activists," Shinn said. "I admire the work that this team has done in the past, and I look forward to continuing that work."

New President

Replacing Pienta as president was Ken Neumann, former Canadian national director, who took office on March 1.

Throughout this summer's SOAR Executive board meeting, Neumann continued to return to the organization's theme for the gathering, "The Next Level of Activism."

As active USW members confront challenges such as unfair trade, difficult bargaining in steel and other industries, and political challenges like attacks on workers' health and safety and on organizing rights, SOAR members stand ready to fight alongside their USW siblings, Neumann said.

"I look at SOAR as our reserve army," Neumann said. "We want our chapters to be an engine of support that the union can call upon when we're in a struggle and when we need support."

Likewise, active members can provide support to SOAR, he said, by advocating for strong pensions, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

"I know we have challenges," he said. "But we have an opportunity to build our chapters and our movement."

Updates from Leaders

While setting their own agenda for activism, SOAR leaders heard from their colleagues on the USW executive board, including International President Roxanne Brown, who took office March 1 alongside Neumann.

Brown thanked SOAR leaders for serving as mentors to her and other USW members throughout their careers.

"The journey to becoming international president took a lot of mentoring and a lot of learning," she said. "I'm thankful for all of you."

The new international president said that she and other USW leaders recognized the opportunity they have in a moment when trust in the labor movement is near an all-time high, and workers are seeking ways to fight back against greedy corporations and the billionaire class.

That same opportunity also opens the door for SOAR to grow, Brown said.

"People want something better and different," she said. "It's important for us as a union to step up and understand our power in this moment. We have our work cut out for us, but we are committed."

In addition to Brown, several dozen leaders from across the United States and Canada provided updates on SOAR activities in their districts, compared notes about upcoming events, and shared ideas on ways to build a larger, stronger program for future retirees.

Washington, D.C. – SOAR proudly participated in the USW 2026 Rapid Response, Legislative & Policy Conference. On July 15, SOAR members from across the country joined fellow union activists on Capitol Hill, to advocate for the issues that matter the most to retired and working families and ensure every USW voice was heard!



International Vice President Amber Miller, who oversees the Rapid Response program, addressed the group about the actions planned for the upcoming conference, in which numerous SOAR members participated.

Looming Fights

Among the other issues SOAR leaders discussed were the dangers of artificial intelligence, the need for a robust text-messaging system among SOAR members, and the importance of growing the legion of retiree activists in the union.

“Our members are becoming more appreciative of what the SOAR chapters do in our districts,” said Joel Buchanan of District 12, who currently serves as Vice President (West) of the SOAR board. “This is a great opportunity for us to expand SOAR.”

Reducing the age of SOAR membership to 45 will help grow the organization’s ranks, Neumann said. And other leaders said that local unions providing SOAR membership as a gift to retiring members can also help increase the group’s ranks.

Most of all, members must continue to communicate the value of SOAR membership and the importance of remaining active in retirement, leaders said.

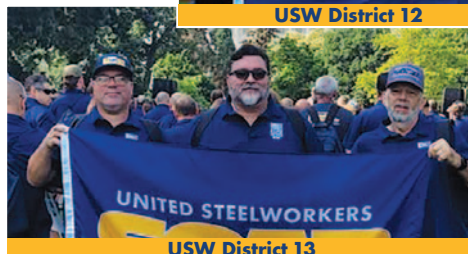
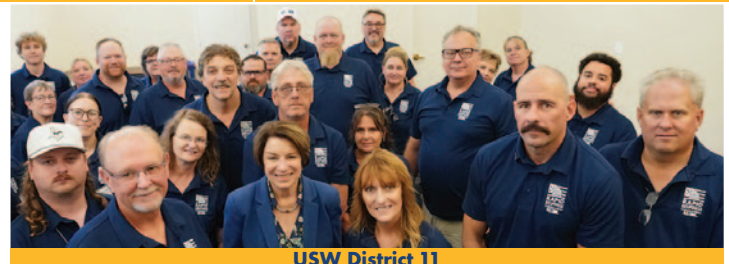
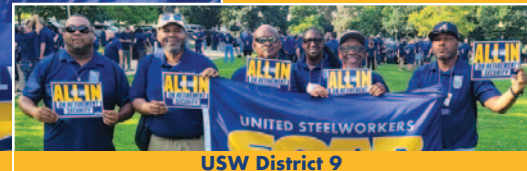
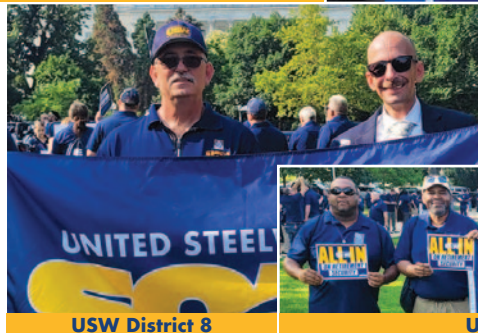
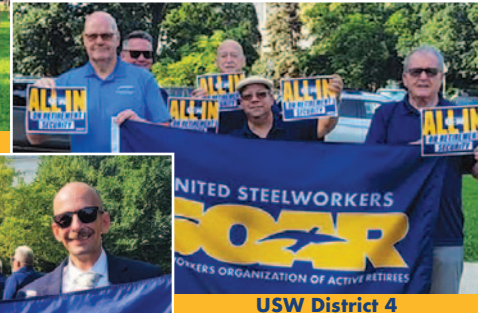
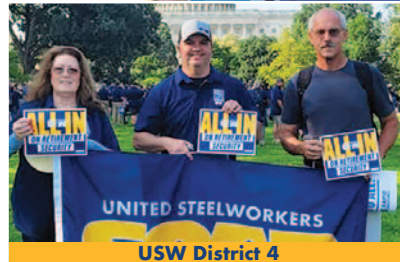
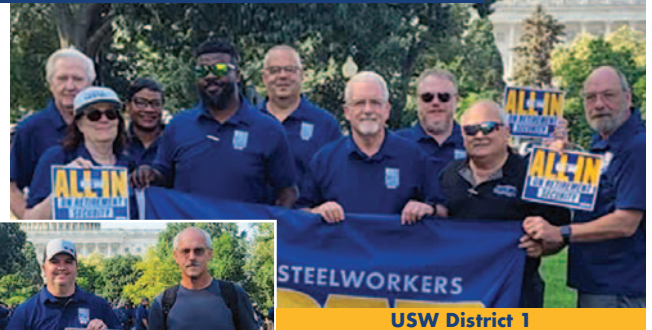
“The more people we have involved, the greater chance we have of winning,” said Scott Marshall of District 7, who serves as an Emeritus Member of the SOAR Board.

SOAR members will continue to be invaluable in the union’s fight against the right-wing, anti-union agenda across North America, the leaders promised.

“As long as I have a voice, SOAR will be there taking on these fights,” said Lena Sutton, who serves as the Canadian national coordinator as well as the District 6 representative on the SOAR executive board.

No matter what fight USW members are engaged in, having a legion of thousands of committed retiree activists to amplify the union’s message is an essential part of the effort, Brown said.

“Every single one of our core values is under attack, so stay tuned,” she said. “We are in the fight of our lives, and we have to fight back. We need you all now more than ever.”





OBITUARY: BEA LUMPKIN 1918 ~ 2026

'Giant' of the Labor Movement, Matriarch of the USW

Beatrice Lumpkin was born in the summer of 1918 —before American women had even gained the right to vote—and went on to devote more than 90 years of her life to the causes of social justice and workers' rights, becoming one of the most well-known and respected activists in the American labor movement.

Born Beatrice Shapiro in New York's Bronx borough on Aug. 3, 1918, Lumpkin died in Chicago on June 14, 2026, at the age of 107.

Known affectionately simply as "Bea" to her extended union family, Lumpkin was a teacher, a writer, an organizer and an activist. She was a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother. To USW members, she was a beloved union sibling, a friend and an inspiration to countless others who followed in her footsteps.

"Everything about Bea radiated a profound optimism," said her friend and fellow SOAR activist Roberta Wood. "She had a deep faith in the working class to build a better world, one that was truly humane."

In addition to being the cherished grande dame of the USW, she was a fixture in the labor movement in Chicago and Northwest Indiana, an integral part of SOAR Chapter 31-9, and a founding member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. She served on the CLUW board for 20 years.

"I have always fought for women's rights," she once said. "By winning equal pay, equal opportunity and respect for women workers, we could strengthen all labor, men included."

Union Organizer

Wood met Lumpkin in Chicago in the 1970s. At the time, women had little to no representation in USW leadership, but they were determined to fight for change.

"She was a mentor to me," Wood said. "Bea was never a big shot—she was an organizer. Organizing is about building relationships with human beings, and that's where she excelled."

Lumpkin's career as a union activist and organizer began when she was still in her teens. She lied about her age to get her first factory job at the age of 14, becoming a member of the Metal Workers Industrial Union. A few years later, she went to work for the Congress of Industrial Organizations, helping to organize 30,000 mostly Black laundry workers in Harlem and the Bronx.

"Organizing was so successful and so exciting," Lumpkin told *USW@Work* in a 2022 interview. "I took a year and a half off college to work with the laundry workers."



In addition to her devotion to the working class, she was an outspoken advocate for peace and nonviolence throughout her life. During her time as a student at Hunter College in the mid-1930s, she was suspended for handing out leaflets in protest of a visit by the ambassador of Nazi Germany. Seventy years later, she would attend peace vigils during the Iraq War.

A Union Town

Lumpkin was raised in a heavily unionized, working-class neighborhood of largely Jewish immigrants in the East Bronx. She grew up, she said, “knowing which side I was on.”

“There were always picket lines for workers on strike,” she said, “or demonstrations to demand food for a hungry family.”

Before she was born, her mother had worked at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, leaving that job before the tragic 1911 fire that killed 146 workers.

Lumpkin said that, growing up, she never had a shortage of meetings to organize or events to attend.

“We worked to bring people together and to raise the money to organize,” she recalled. “And there were also books to read and articles to write.”

Academic Career

While working as an electronics technician in Buffalo in 1946, she met a fellow activist named Frank Lumpkin, the man who would become her husband. The pair moved to Chicago in 1949.

“You could see the love and respect that they had for each other,” said Dorine Godinez, who represents District 7 on the SOAR executive board. “They were a dynamic duo.”

Lumpkin became a math teacher and member of the Chicago Teachers Union at age 47 and later worked as

a professor at the city’s Malcolm X College. She was the author of numerous books, including “Joy in the Struggle: My Life and Love,” published in 2013. On the dedication page of that book, she wrote: “To the young people fighting for a world that puts people before profits.”

As an educator, she developed her own groundbreaking curriculum and teaching resources, publishing books and articles on the multicultural roots of mathematics.

“She helped students see themselves in the history of mathematics,” her son John Lumpkin said in an online post memorializing her. “And she helped broaden understanding of humanity’s shared intellectual heritage.”

‘Bring a Crowd’

During her years as a union organizer, Lumpkin’s work took her to towns in the American South where she witnessed first-hand the injustice of Jim Crow segregation. Alongside her husband, she was an active participant in the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, joining demonstrations with leaders like Paul Robeson and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Her husband, whom she described as her “soulmate,” was a member of the United Steelworkers for 30 years at Chicago’s Wisconsin Steel, until he showed up one day in 1980 to find locked gates that would never reopen.

Together, the Lumpkins responded by leading a year-long fight to regain the pensions, pay and benefits that Frank and 3,200 other workers at the mill had earned. They organized workers, families and community residents into the “Save our Jobs Committee,” which eventually led to almost \$19 million in court settlements.

That effort helped pave the way for the founding of SOAR in 1985, and was the subject of Lumpkin’s book, “Always Bring a Crowd.”

continued on page 9



What Politics Mean to Me AS A RETIREE AND A SENIOR

By Lena Sutton, SOAR Canadian
National Co-ordinator

As I age and lie in bed at night, I have thoughts about the world as we live in it today and what we

are leaving for our children and grand-children.

When I watch the news on TV, whether it's Canadian news or CNN, it is scary to see and hear how corporations, millionaires and billionaires control so many

important aspects of everyday life. This is especially true for seniors, retirees and low-income families' everyday needs such as groceries, affordable housing and most importantly, health care.

The thing that stands out to me in both Canada and the U.S. is how the rich can affect the outcome of our elections—national, provincial, state and municipal—in both countries.

Last week, Shopify's CEO, Tobias Lutke, suggested that poor people and seniors on pensions shouldn't get to vote, while ultra-wealthy people like him should get more votes than everyone else. In the U.S., Elon Musk and other millionaires and billionaires have thrown billions of dollars into elections, and we can see the outcome in the White House and the current administration.

This is even more important with the upcoming U.S. midterm elections and the current administration trying to take away the right to vote for many in numerous states.

During our trip back to Canada from Pittsburgh in May, my husband and I saw a large billboard at the border flashing many different ads mentioning the Canada Health Act as part of the CUSMA trade renegotiations.

This was scary to me at the time and more so now because a few weeks later I had to visit emergency in one of our hospitals on a Sunday morning. I was diagnosed with a serious kidney infection by a doctor in emergency who wanted to keep me as a patient because a kidney infection can go septic into your bloodstream. By promising to have something to eat and to go back the next day for more IV antibiotics. I was thinking after I got home, how lucky I am to live in Canada.

I was seriously ill and all within five hours in emergency, I had seen a doctor, had various blood work, urine testing, EKG, C-scan, clear

fluids and antibiotics by IV, and it cost me nothing.

When I got home, I thought about how if I had been in the U.S., without medical insurance, I probably would have died. This is one of the greatest fights Canadians have right now—to preserve our health care and call on Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to enforce the Canada Health Act. This means we must stop provincial governments in Canada from privatizing our health care.

As SOAR Canadian National Co-ordinator, I am asking our members to join their local health coalitions in this fight. Contact your local politicians to stand against provincial privatization. Let your federal MPs and the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, know that you are counting on them to enforce the Canada Health Act.

Join me in the fight to keep health care public.



UNITED ACROSS BORDERS Canadian SOAR Leaders on Capitol Hill



Washington, D.C.— In July, as part of the USW 2026 Rapid Response, Legislative & Policy Conference, Canadian members of the SOAR Int'l. Executive Board joined the U.S. activists on Capitol Hill, amplifying our collective voices! Featured here are SOAR representatives from USW Districts 3 and 6.



OBITUARY: BEA LUMPKIN 1918 ~ 2026

'Giant' of the Labor Movement, Matriarch of the USW

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A Unique Story

Lumpkin volunteered for countless political campaigns throughout her life, including those of her fellow Chicagoan Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. On the occasion of her 100th birthday in 2018, the former president wrote her a personal letter expressing his gratitude.

"Over the course of a century," Obama wrote, "you've woven your own unique story into the American narrative."

In 2020, during the global COVID-19 pandemic, Lumpkin was featured in national news reports alongside photos of her mailing her presidential election ballot while decked out in personal protective equipment.

"There's so much at stake, more than any other vote I've cast," she explained at the time, "because of the great challenge to the survival of our democracy."

In 2022, she served as Grand Marshal of the Chicago Labor Day parade, leading the 1.3-mile procession through the Windy City's East Side.

"No matter how big the company is, we workers are stronger when we're united," she said.

Wood recalled meetings where young activists would sit in rapt attention as Lumpkin spoke.

"She made young people think that a better world was possible," Wood said. "Her claim to fame should not have been that she managed to live to 107, but rather her ability to bring people into the struggle."

Lumpkin also consistently sought to honor the victims of the 1937 Memorial Day massacre, when police killed 10 unarmed union demonstrators in

Chicago during the "Little Steel Strike." She worked with other educators to make sure the tragedy and other landmarks in labor history were included in the city's high school curriculum.

This past May, newly installed USW International President Roxanne Brown joined Lumpkin and other activists in Chicago for their annual commemoration of the massacre.

"For Bea, that was a special moment, to see a woman of color become the president of the USW," Godinez said. "That visit was a perfect gift for both of them."

An Inspiration

Jesús G. "Chuy" García, who represents the Chicago area in Congress, memorialized Lumpkin from the floor of the U.S. House on July 14.

"She inspired others, including me, to continue fighting," Garcia said, standing beside a photo of Lumpkin dressed in a USW Rapid Response t-shirt. "She was present at every key moment of our labor and civil rights movements for nearly 90 years."

As a centenarian, Lumpkin walked picket lines with Steelworkers, teachers and Starbucks baristas. She showed up consistently at civil and human rights demonstrations. She wrote constantly, and her articles and letters were regularly featured in *USW@Work* and numerous other labor-focused publications.

"Bea Lumpkin was a giant of the labor movement," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "She dedicated her life to proving that when working people stand together, we can change the world."

May she rest as she served; in power, in solidarity and in peace.



District 8 Welcomes a New SOAR Chapter in Virginia

SOAR Chapter 8-495 proudly received its formal charter at the District 8 Summer Institute held at the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA.

On June 1, District 8 Director Larry Ray and SOAR International President Ken Newman presented the charter to Chapter President Michael Everett. The ceremony was also attended by USW International President Roxanne Brown, SOAR Director Julie Stein, District 8 SOAR Executive Board Member Ronnie Watson, as well as current members and retirees of Local 8-495.

Based in Radford, Virginia, USW Local 8-495 represents approximately 850 workers at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RAAP)—the nation's only active military propellant manufacturing center. RAAP produces large volumes of vital rocket and gun propellants for the Department of Defense, directly supporting our nation's warfighters.

Before retiring in September 2025, Michael Everett was an active member of Local 8-495 for 44 years. He led the local's Safety and Environmental Committee since 2008, and served as a District 8 ERT coordinator for ten years.

Joining Everett as the first officers of the SOAR chapter are Vice President Robert Nunn,

Secretary-Treasurer Denise Vaughn, and Trustees Scottie Bevil, Brian Dinkle, and Tony Parcels.

With strong backing from Local 8-495, the chapter will hold monthly meetings at the union hall. At their first meeting, members eagerly embraced community service—launching a canned food drive at the hall and exploring volunteer opportunities with “Sleeping in Heavenly Peace,” an organization that builds beds for children in the New River Valley. The chapter also plans to support local veterans’ organizations going forward.

The local union has pledged to cover first-year dues for its retirees and has provided a \$500 donation

to launch the chapter’s treasury.

Everett stated, “In addition to community service, the chapter will support the work of Local 8-495, while opposing efforts to compromise vital programs like Medicare and Social Security.”

SOAR welcomes our new members from Chapter 8-495. Together, we will continue the good fight for retired and working families. In solidarity!



SOAR Chapter 8-495 Gives Back to the Community!

Congratulations to the members of the newly formed SOAR Chapter 8-495 in Radford, Virginia, who recently completed their first official chapter activity by organizing a food donation drive for the Agape Center of the New River Valley. The chapter delivered its first collection of food donations and plans to continue supporting the effort with an ongoing collection box at the union hall.

This project reflects the spirit of solidarity and service that makes SOAR strong. We are proud to see our newest chapter already making a positive difference in their community.

Thank you to Mike Everett, President (pictured above), and all the members of Chapter 8-495 for leading by example!



The Impact and Future of the Build America, Buy America Act

In 2021, the United States Congress enacted into law the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, which was a major expansion of the domestic procurement rules that govern contracts for federally backed infrastructure projects.

The BABA Act was intended to make sure all federal departments purchased materials and products that were made in America. Prior to BABA, federal Buy America laws were limited in their coverage and eroded by waivers and loopholes. Billions of taxpayer dollars meant for federally assisted infrastructure projects were spent annually on foreign-made products and materials.

The BABA Act came along to limit waivers and close loopholes so that additional federal spending is available to boost our domestic manufacturing sector by creating jobs and strengthening companies across the U.S. industrial base.

The BABA Act has certainly been a success, but now, nearly five years later, the Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM) believes there are additional opportunities to improve its implementation. A fix to the current law would maximize the use of American-made iron, steel, manufactured products and construction materials in all federally funded infrastructure.

Two U.S. Senators, Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) and Jim Banks (R-Ind.), have put forth the Build America,

Buy America Compliance Act, which would require every federal agency to submit annual reports detailing BABA's implementation. The reports must identify all federal financial assistance programs for infrastructure and specify which have fully implemented BABA and which have not.

"The Build America, Buy America Act was enacted in 2021 to ensure taxpayers' dollars spent on infrastructure strengthen U.S. supply chains and support America's workers," said AAM President Scott Paul. "But that promise only works if the law is fully and consistently implemented across federal programs.

"As we approach the five-year anniversary of this important law, AAM applauds Senators Baldwin and Banks for bringing transparency and accountability to the process by requiring agencies to clearly identify where Buy America requirements are being applied and where they are not."

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



California officials didn't abide by Buy America to build the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge, pictured here. It went at least \$5 billion over budget, was completed 10 years late, and has continued to need repairs due to safety concerns. The Build America, Buy America legislation passed by Congress in 2021 aims to avoid such boondoggles in the future.

Photo by Getty Images



ACTION CALL



August 10, 2026

Let's Keep the Momentum Going!

Tell Congress to Support Steelworker Priorities

During the 2026 Rapid Response Conference, Steelworkers from across the country met with their members of Congress to advocate for three key pieces of legislation that will strengthen workers' rights and support working families. Legislation included:

- ▶ Protecting America's Workers Act (S. 4413/H.R. 3036), which modernizes the Occupational Safety and Health Act by expanding coverage, strengthening whistleblower protections, increasing penalties for serious safety violations, and giving workers and their families a stronger voice when workplace tragedies occur.
- ▶ Safeguarding American Families and Expanding (SAFE) Social Security Act (S. 3462/H.R. 9415), which strengthens Social Security by increasing benefits for current and future beneficiaries while improving the program's long-term financial stability by making the wealthy pay their fair share.
- ▶ Thomas M. Conway Veterans Access to Resources in the Workplace Act (S. 3591/H.R. 6960), which would require employers to post information about veterans' benefits developed by the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs, helping connect veterans with the services and benefits they have earned through their military service.

[We have already seen an increase in cosponsorship on these three bills since our lobby day \(usw.to/5q3\)](#) – proving that our voices matter! Help keep the momentum going by sending a prewritten email to your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative urging them to cosponsor the above three bills.

Tell Congress to Stand with Workers, Retirees and Veterans!

(usw.to/5q4)

Click [HERE](#) (usw.to/5q4) or scan the QR code to send a pre-written email to your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative urging them to cosponsor the above three bills that support workers, retirees, and veterans!

You can also call them and be directly connected by using our toll-free number below. Tell them who you are, where you are from, and to support the above three bills!

Senate Toll-Free Number: 1-877-607-0785

(Remember to make two calls to connect with both Senators.)

House Toll Free Number: 1-866-202-5409



Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships

Marking 17th Year of Scholarships

By Doug May, SOAR Activist, Chapter 7-34-2

Granite City, IL—On Monday, May 11, 2026, the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Chapter 7-34-2 hosted its annual Jane Becker Scholarship Award Presentation at the Neighborhood Social Club in Pontoon Beach. This event, attended by nearly 150 union members and their supporters, marked the 17th annual presentation of the chapter's Scholarship and Awards program.

The SOAR chapter awarded \$2,500 college scholarships to four high school students. The winners each wrote an essay about "The Incredible Life of Mary Harris 'Mother' Jones," known as the "Most Dangerous Woman in the World."



Mother Jones, portrayed by Loretta Williams, raising hell in her fiery speech at the SOAR awards.

Labor Tribune photo

Mother Jones, sadly, is lost from the educational curriculum of most schools, including those in the Granite City region that lie within 45 minutes of her final resting place in Mt. Olive, IL. But her name is valued among working people and organizations around the globe.

She is recognized internationally, but even one of this year's scholarship awardees, Aubrey Schaus, wrote, "Upon hearing the name Mother Jones, I had not a single

clue who she was. The truth is, some of the most powerful people in history are not the ones we are taught about, but those whose work quietly shaped the lives we live today. Despite the lack of recognition, it is important now that her story is shared to inspire others and to continue the fight for workers' rights."

Mother Jones reenactor Loretta Williams surprised the high school seniors as the presenter for the awards

while both educating and entertaining us all as she described Jones' history and her influence in organizing the early 20th-century labor movement.



Mother Jones cemetery stone



Scholarship winners, above, left to right: Ava Kelly, Emma DeBruce, Mother Jones (Loretta Williams) Matthew Overby. Aubrey Schaus, at right, could not be in attendance due to her commitment to her education. She had two finals that overlapped the banquet time.



The 2026 Scholarship Recipients

Matthew Overby SOAR Sponsors: Ron and Cindy Overby

Ava Kelly SOAR Sponsor: Ron Gushleff

Aubrey Schaus SOAR Sponsors: Rick and Vicki Schaus

Emma DeBruce SOAR Sponsor: Mike DeBruce

Jones was a young child when her family was forced to flee Ireland at the height of the Irish famine. Tragically, she lost her husband and four children to a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis in 1867, and then lost everything in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

She lost her family but adopted a new one, a huge one: the mineworkers, lifting up the cause of labor. In the process, Mother Jones became perhaps the greatest labor force in Illinois's history, a state no stranger to workers' movements. She was dubbed "the most dangerous woman in America" by a West Virginian district attorney, Reese Blizzard, in 1902, at her trial for ignoring an injunction banning meetings by striking miners. "There sits the most dangerous woman in America", announced Blizzard.

When Mother Jones died at 94 years old, she requested to be buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in Mount Olive, IL.—near the graves of miners who were murdered during the 1898 Virden strike. This historic cemetery is the nation's only union-owned burial ground, a lasting monument to labor's struggle.

Mother Jones's legacy includes her famous inspirational quote, "Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."

The "Jane Becker" scholarship awards program is named after the wife of George Becker, who served as the USW international president from 1993 to 2001. Jane Becker was a key organizer after SOAR was established in 1985, when leadership recognized that valuable energy was going untapped. Retirees had a lot to give back, and our chapter proudly serves as an example.

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SOAR in ACTION



Cleveland, OH—On June 3, SOAR Chapter 1-979 awarded two \$500 scholarships at its monthly membership meeting. Congratulations to the 2026 recipients: Carter Clark, (grandson of member Lou Toth) and Amari Henderson (granddaughter of member Virginia Robinson.)

We wish both of these outstanding students continued success in their educational journeys. May you SOAR to great success!

Pictured are SOAR 979 scholarship winners with family members, including: Lou Toth, left; and Virginia Robinson, right.



Dunkirk, NY—Taking Action for Social Security! During July, the USW Local 2693 Executive Board and members of SOAR Chapter 4-1 united for a letter-writing campaign, urging their Congressman to support legislation that eliminates the earnings tax cap. Their unified message: SCRAP THE CAP!

By raising their voices, they're advocating for a stronger Social Security system and fighting for economic security for working families and retirees alike. Solidarity works!

Pictured left is the Local 2693 executive board, and above are members of the SOAR chapter in their letter-writing campaign.



Latham, NY—On July 28, members of SOAR Chapter 4-17 stood in solidarity with their Brothers and Sisters of USW Local 9265 during a pivotal rally, showcasing the strength of our union family. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who turned out in support, and a special acknowledgment to SOAR Chapter Vice President Gary Cunningham, who reaffirmed SOAR's commitment to USW 9265 in their pursuit of a fair contract. Together, our unity makes us stronger.



Schenectady, NY—Celebrating amazing USW Local 9265 retirees! In June, SOAR Chapter 4-17 members were honored during the local's annual conference at the Rivers Casino in Schenectady, NY. Thank you for your lifelong dedication to the labor movement—you earned this retirement!

On top of that, Chapter 4-17 hosted a joint food drive during the event, raising \$322 in cash and collecting vital donations for the Albany Regional Food Bank. Way to give back to our community!

Pictured above, from left: Blair Burroughs, Nora Higgins, Debbie Niemczyk, along with 9265 President, Kate Stickles.

Picture at right: In the center, Chapter President Priscilla Marco, along with 4-17 members.

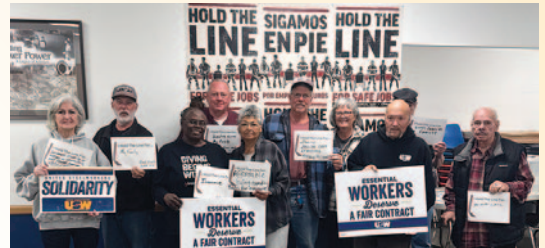


Somerville, NJ—In early July, the spirit of unity and camaraderie shone brightly as five members of SOAR Chapter 4-23 USW North & Central New Jersey (N&CNJ) volunteered to install a gazebo carport for Chapter President Howard Boyer. Their dedication and generosity embody the true essence of SOAR—supporting fellow retirees and looking out for one another.

A heartfelt thank you from Howard to everyone who helped make this project happen. When we work together, we strengthen the bonds that make our union family truly special.

Davenport, IA—On May 7, SOAR Chapter 11-4 (USW Local 105 Retirees) proudly stands in solidarity with USW Local 105 during their contract negotiations with Arconic in Davenport, Iowa.

When one of us fights, we all stand together. Stronger together—always!



Hoyt Lakes, MN—Taking advantage of their new float, members of SOAR Chapter 33-4, the Steelworker Retirees of Aurora, MN, got together on Saturday, July 25, for the 2026 Hoyt Lakes Water Carnival parade.

What started as a city picnic in 1954 has become a 4-day festival that draws thousands of people to Hoyt Lakes and the surrounding communities. It is held annually on the fourth weekend of July. Events include softball, volleyball and bean bag tournaments, a 5K race, turtle races, bingo, a queen coronation, a parade, fireworks, a Shockwaves water ski show, live music and much more! Fun was had by all. There was no shortage of food or candy, either!

Ed Casey serves as the SOAR chapter president. This chapter just keeps "floating" along! Way to go, SOAR!



Reading, PA—A big thank you to Representative Jacqueline Rusnock, who joined Ramon Santiago and members of SOAR Chapter 10-6 (Schuylkill Valley SOAR) to help retirees complete their rent rebate applications. Events like this are vital to ensuring retirees receive the benefits they have worked hard to earn and truly deserve.

We appreciate everyone who participated, and we thank Representative Rusnock for her ongoing support of our retiree community!

Pictured above are SOAR Chapter 10-6 members. Pictured left are: Ramon Santiago, Chapter 10-6 President and Representative Jacklyn Rusnock, PA House District 126.





Bipartisan Support for Scrapping the Cap Grows

By Robert Roach, Jr.

There is growing bipartisan agreement and urgency surrounding the need to strengthen Social Security so it can continue to pay full benefits to current and future retirees.

Two months ago, it was encouraging to see Republican Senator Bernie Moreno (OH) join Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren (MA) in calling for one of the simplest and fairest solutions for addressing Social Security's financial shortfall: making the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share into the system.

Right now, millionaires and billionaires stop paying into Social Security after their first \$184,500 in wages. But everyone else keeps paying in all year long. That's just not right.

If Congress fails to act, the Social Security Trust Fund will only be able to pay about 78 percent of bene-

fits starting in 2032. That translates to a 22 percent benefit cut for Social Security beneficiaries, which for the average retiree will mean \$500 less in income each month.

Protecting Social Security shouldn't be a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It's an American issue. We earned these benefits after a lifetime of hard work.

Senator Moreno deserves credit for understanding that and working across party lines to strengthen and protect Social Security

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.



Steelworker Retirees Award Scholarships

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In addition to the scholarship awards, we also honor our Friends of SOAR and our SOAR Members who contribute to the functioning of our chapter.

The “**Edward Sadlowski Labor Leader of the Year Award**” was presented to **Nick Dodson**, who personally thanked the Mother Jones actress for inspiring his work as the SOAR United Way liaison for the AFL-CIO. “I love being a union activist,” Dodson said. “I don’t have a magic wand, but I can do a lot of things to help others.”

The “**Friend of SOAR Award**” was presented to the **O’Brien Law Firm**.

The “**SOAR Activist Award**” was presented to **Kitty Loepker**. Loepker stated that she tries to quietly help others in need, following Mother Jones’ example. “I don’t do things for recognition, Loepker said. “This is near and dear to my heart.”

The “**Volunteer of the Year**” was presented to **Mike Morrison**, a newer member of our SOAR Chapter, who is always willing to step up and serve our chapter.

“Congratulations and best wishes to the scholarship winners as they embark on their higher education journey,” said Jeff Rains, president of the SOAR chapter. “We also want to express our appreciation to all the SOAR activists who consistently volunteer for our ongoing efforts to make this world a better place.”



Edward Sadlowski Labor Leader of the Year Award
Nick Dodson



Friend of SOAR Award
O'Brien Law



The “SOAR Activist Award”
Kathleen “Kitty” Loepker



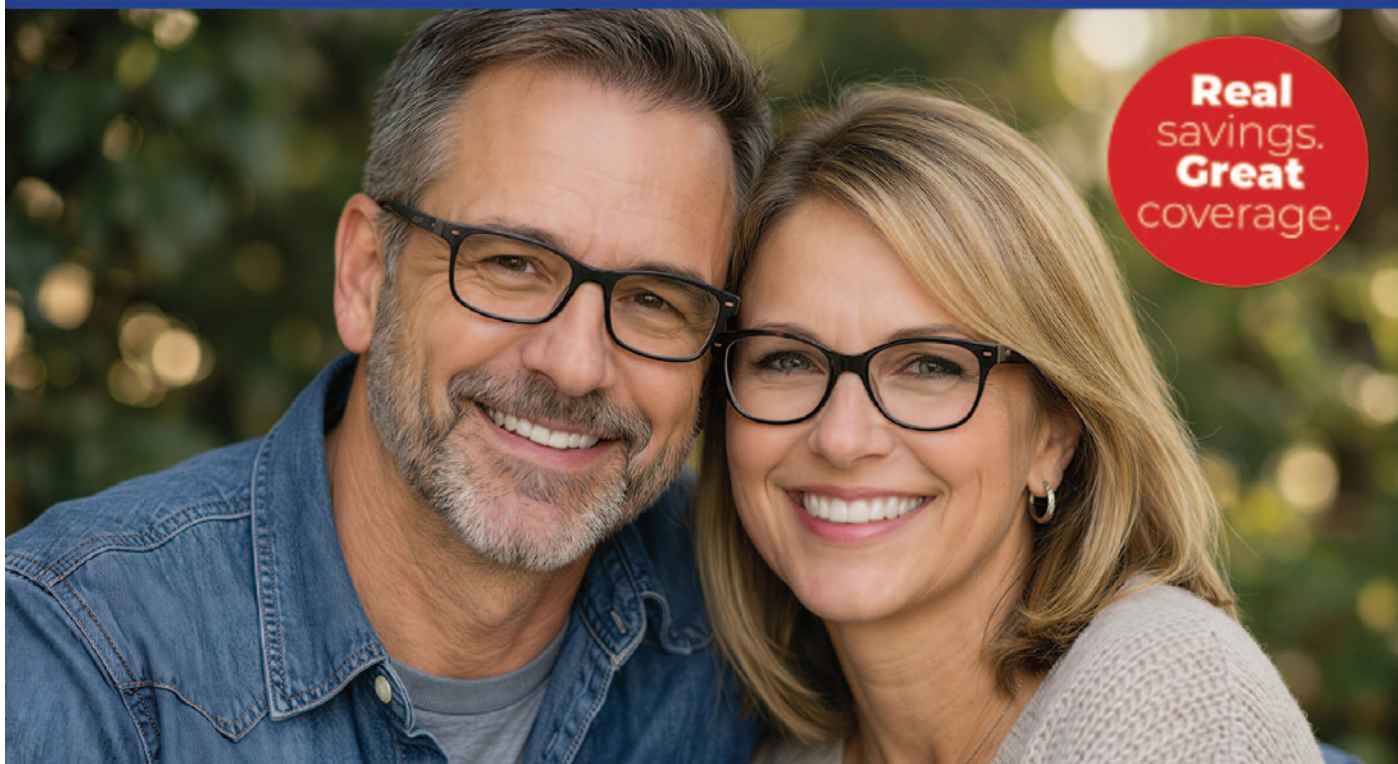
Volunteer of the Year Award
Mike Morrison



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

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