

# The United Worker

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Severe structural and environmental damage (photo above) was levied on the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) by passing Hurricanes Irma and Maria. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Master Sgt. Paul Gorman). In photo at right, the Seafarers-crewed SS *Wright* delivers generators and other relief supplies to St. Thomas, USVI, in late September.



## Hurricanes Devastate U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico Labor Movement Responds With Stepped-Up Relief Efforts

Three hurricanes, one Category 4 and a pair of Category 5s, in less than a month ravaged the communities of working people in the U.S. territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, as well two states in the continental United States.

The UIW, and the labor movement as a whole, has responded to needs of its membership and other citizens in these areas who were victims of the devastation by providing assorted supplies, raising money and establishing a disaster aid fund.

In cooperation with its parent organization, the SIU, as well as other AFL-CIO unions, the UIW so far has secured and provided generators, food, bottled water, flashlights, batteries chainsaws, cleaning supplies including disinfectants and personal hygiene products, and much more to union members in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

The foregoing items, many of which were donated by UIW/SIU-contracted companies, were gathered and packed into shipping containers by UIW/SIU members in California, Texas and Florida. Donations also came from members in other states. After working out shipping logistics with SIU-contracted Crowley, some items in late September were shipped to the USVI aboard the SIU-crewed SS *Wright*. Altogether, more than 30 U.S.-flag ships, many of them SIU-crewed, have carried cargo to Puerto Rico and the USVI. These vessels included ones operated by Crowley and SIU-contracted TOTE, among others.

“We are always there to assist our membership in any way possible, especially after such devastating storms like these,” said SIU Assistant Vice President Kris Hopkins, in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, who played a crucial role in collecting, loading and shipping the relief supplies.

“The show of support by our own brothers and sisters as well as organized labor in general to help the people of the Caribbean get back on their feet comes as no surprise to me,” he concluded. “Helping people out in tough times is what we all are supposed to do.”

“The containers have arrived, but we are waiting to hear from the Crowley representative to work out delivery specifics,” said UIW Vice President Caribbean Region Eugene Irish. “The recovery effort here is going slowly, but at least it is moving along,” he added.

The UIW-affiliated SIU has established a new fund to assist members and retirees living in areas affected by the recent hurricanes (this includes SIU affiliates). The fund’s name is Seafarers Disaster Aid Fund.

To make contributions, donors should go to the SIU home page ([www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org)), and click on the PayPal link. Contributions may be made using PayPal accounts, MasterCard, Visa, Maestro, Amex, Discover or any corresponding debit card. Please note that contributions cannot be accepted from contracted employers.

If donating by check, those making contributions should make them payable to Seafarers Disaster Aid Fund and mail to: Seafarers Disaster Aid Fund, c/o SIU Secretary-Treasurer, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, MD 20746.

The fund will pay out a maximum of \$500 per person. Information on how to apply will be posted on the website. Unlike prior relief funds set up by the union, the plan is to make the Seafarers Disaster Aid Fund a permanent entity. This should help expedite donations and payments in the future.

U.S. Rep. Stacey Plaskett (D-USVI), a member of the House Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, on Sept. 14 announced the immediate availability of \$2 million for the repair or reconstruction of federal-aid highways and roads on federal lands that have suffered serious damage as a result of Hurricane Irma.

“The catastrophic destruction caused by Hurricane Irma demands massive amounts of aid for our territory, if we are to address the overwhelming needs of the countless victims who face the daunting task of rebuilding their lives,” she said. “Today, I am pleased to announce the immediate availability of \$2 million grant to the USVI Department of Public Works for the repair and reconstruction of federal-aid highways and roads on federal lands in the Virgin Islands that have suffered serious damage as a result of Hurricane Irma.”

The congresswoman also commended the timing of the grant, which came when the Virgin Islands faces many extreme challenges. The grant monies will not only facilitate infrastructure improvement efforts, but they will also provide much-needed jobs during the territory’s recovery, she said.

### Job Well Done During UIW Convention



UIW President Michael Sacco congratulates UIW member Ruby Ava Wilson for a job well done during the Sept. 19-20 UIW Convention. In addition to reading the Resolutions Committee report, Wilson, who served as a delegate for the union’s Caribbean & Central American Region, read convention resolutions 1-6, which were quite lengthy. The convention took place at the UIW-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland. For full convention coverage, see Pages 2-6



## From the President

### The Union Edge

*Editor's note: The following text was taken from UIW President Michael Sacco's opening remarks during the union's quadrennial convention at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland.*



Michael Sacco

Our theme, as you know, is The Union Edge. Those words are meant to reflect the fact that when it comes to protecting workers' rights, we've got an advantage.

When it comes to securing good contracts and workplace safety, we've got the vehicle to do it.

When it's time for grassroots mobilization and organizing, our status as a union gives us a leg up, and puts us in positions with opportunities to succeed.

The union edge is solidarity, and strength in numbers, and a proven track record of progress, and legal authority to negotiate contracts that protect our members....

The UIW's affiliations include ones with our parent union, the Seafarers; and with the AFL-CIO.

The AFL-CIO is based in Washington, literally right across from the White House. Their affiliates, including us, have a total membership of 14.6 million people.

Within the AFL-CIO, there are several constitutional departments, including the Maritime Trades Department. I am the president of the MTD, whose affiliates have around 5 million members. And, I'm the senior vice president on the AFL-CIO executive council.

What this all means for the UIW is that we can tap into those networks for support on the issues that are most critical for us. Obviously, we don't win every battle, but I can tell you that when you knock on a door as someone representing millions of workers, the door opens and you at least get a chance to speak.

So, remember that when it comes to promoting economic equality and social justice, we are far from alone.

One of the challenges facing our movement is how to work with the current administration. This is always the case, by the way. No matter who's in power, we always have to prove our worth and state the case for workers' rights.

Nevertheless, I think it's safe to say the current administration has proven to be unique in many ways. When it comes to labor unions, the signals from the White House have been mixed. We'll get into more details in our convention statements, but for now, let me just say that I'm always willing to look for common ground.

And no matter who you voted for, a lot of what Donald Trump says is very consistent with our goals as a union. How much of it turns out to be true is anyone's guess, but as long as he says he's willing to work with us, we have to be ready and willing to try.

There is one thing that hasn't changed across many administrations, and that's the need for labor-law reform. The short version is that our laws have gradually been tweaked and eroded to the point where a traditional organizing campaign is unfairly difficult.

By the strict letter of the law, people can still join or form a union. But in reality, the deck is stacked against them, and it takes a very creative approach to have any chance of winning.

Restoring fairness in those laws has been one of our goals for many years, and even though I'm frustrated at the lack of progress, we won't give up.

One thing we shouldn't forget is that the general perception of unions is better today than it has been in a long, long time. Unbiased polling has shown that a solid majority of Americans believe in unions and support the right to join.

As for us specifically in the UIW, I was reviewing a complete list of our shops prior to the convention, and I truly believe that the diversity in our jobs is a strength. It reminded me of an old saying about monetary investments: diversify or die. Well, we've already diversified, and we're going to be around for a long time.

We've got UIW shops in California, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kansas, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Florida, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We work in manufacturing plants, in office buildings, on the docks, in cafeterias, in casinos, in warehouses, in hotels, in canneries, in delivery services and more.

We've been around for 68 years – since 1949 – and we know how to adapt and overcome.

In short, we've got "The Union Edge."

## UIW National Director Addresses Convention

*Editor's note: UIW National Director Kate Hunt on Sept. 19 addressed delegates and guests during the union's 2017 Convention in Piney Point, Maryland. Following are excerpts from her presentation.*



Kate Hunt  
UIW National Director

"The weather events of the last several weeks have really rocked the soul of our great country. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those impacted by Harvey and Irma.

"We send special recognition to our brothers and sisters in Texas and the Port of Houston who weathered Harvey and were a credit to their community and their union. Also, I'd like to give a shout out to our brothers and sisters in San Juan, Jacksonville and Ft. Lauderdale who rose to the challenges created by these adverse weather events. We are especially grateful to have several members of our delegation from the U.S. Virgin Islands here with us today. My Caribbean brothers and sisters have been battered and beaten, but they are with us and we are so very happy they are...

"As a routine part of conducting this convention, we will spend time looking back at the activities of our last four years since the 2013 convention. But we will also be looking forward to the future.

"One of the very sad events since our last convention is the loss of our previous national director, a staunch trade unionist and good friend, John Spadaro. As you have already heard, John was highly thought of by UIW and SIU colleagues alike and his passing was a great loss to our union family. Rest in peace Brother John and thank you for your service to the UIW.

"I am honored to succeed John and I thank President Mike Sacco and the members of our Executive Board for the faith and encouragement they have shown to me in my new position...

"As with many of our union activities, assuming the UIW leadership has been a baptism of fire! When you work for Mike Sacco, it is always expected that you hit the ground running!

"Within a month of assuming the National Director position, I was out in San Bernardino, California with our UIW members at the Cott Bottling Plant and embroiled in some fairly contentious contract negotiations. We were successful in achieving a fair contract at Cott, but it was hard fought. While in California, I also visited a beautiful old ship, the *Queen Mary II* where UIW members are employed in the service and hospitality arena. VP West Coast Region Herb Perez and I drove deep into the Palm Desert to visit out members who work for Sodexo Services at the U.S. Marine Base in 29 Palms, California. It was quite a trip. I extend thanks to VP Perez and UIW Rep. Laura Lopez for all of their efforts with Sodexo and all of the other West Coast contracts.

"I am happy to report that the UIW just finalized a sister contract for our members at Sodexo Services at the U.S. Marine Base in Quantico, Virginia.

"In late 2016, I made my first visit to the beautiful Caribbean Islands of St. Croix and St. Thomas. And they will be beautiful again! The UIW rep-

resents a large contingent of members in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Our hearts and prayers are with them all at this time. Even before this current crisis, we were confronted with a series of difficult labor issues in the area. Even before Irma, our members were struggling with a stagnant economy and dim prospects for the future.

"Despite the best efforts of our local representatives, we were dealing with an obstinate government and legislation that has effectively suspended collective bargaining for the vast majority of our members. Let me assure our brothers and sisters of the USVI: we will weather the storm. We will continue to make the voices of our members heard at every level of Island government and here in the continental United States. Finally, we will explore every possible strategy to address the on-going stalemate we face on St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John.

"During my last visit to the Islands in May of this year, I had the lovely opportunity to visit with our late Brother Amos Peters, a former UIW VP in the Caribbean Region for many years. Brother Peters was called home just several weeks ago on July 28. The outpouring of sympathy and condolences for Brother Peters was a testimony to a life well-lived. Rest in Peace Brother Peters and thank you for your service to the UIW.

"I have continued to visit work sites throughout the country this year where contracts are pending. Let me tell you how gratifying it has been to visit the hard-working folks the UIW represents. To see first-hand the work of our UIW members at the Brillo Plant in London, Ohio...to witness the day-to-day labor of our brothers and sisters at the Kroger Distribution Plant in Columbus, Ohio...to walk through the manufacturing plant at Sealy Mattress and meet with our members preparing for contract time...it fortified for me why we do what we do as union members and why we pursue the Union Edge: to bring dignity, decent wages, job security and fairness to every job site, every day."



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The official publication of the United Industrial, Service, Transportation, Professional and Government Workers of North America, AGLIW, AFL-CIO, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746. Telephone (301) 899-0675. Direct inquiries to Jim Guthrie, editor.

**Headquarters:** Michael Sacco, president; David Heindel, secretary-treasurer; Kate Hunt, UIW National Director.

**Atlantic Region:** Kermet Mangram, vice president.

**Caribbean Region:** Eugene Irish, vice president.

**Great Lakes Region:** Monte Burgett, vice president

**Gulf Coast Region:** Dean Corgey, vice president.

**Midwest Region:** Thomas Orzechowski, vice president.

**West Coast Region:** Herb Perez, vice president.





# UIW Convention Finds Union on Right Course

## Grassroots Action Reflects Labor Movement's Enduring Power

An impressive cadre of industry leaders, labor officials and union delegates recently converged on the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland, for the UIW's 2017 quadrennial convention.

Conducted Sept. 19-20 under the theme "The Union Edge," the conference saw UIW officials, delegates and labor supporters outline strategies to strengthen the labor movement and generate more good-paying union jobs. The event took place at a facility that employs more than 100 UIW members.

Besides witnessing the re-election of UIW President Michael Sacco and other union officials to office, convention attendees also heard from guest speakers who voiced their views on the state of the labor movement, national politics and what the UIW and its membership can expect in the future.

After calling the convention to order, President Sacco focused his attention on the havoc levied upon the UIW membership and citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands by a recent series of natural disasters. His remarks, in part, follow.

"We have a lot to talk about during these next two days, but I think the only place to start is with the recent hurricanes and the ongoing relief efforts.

"As many of you know, Irma in particular hit us hard in the UIW, specifically in the U.S. Virgin Islands. We mostly made out okay on St. Croix. But, St. Thomas and St. John are a lot worse.

"We've already sent generators to the Virgin Island and Puerto Rico, along with other supplies and equipment. We're working on setting up our own relief funds. We're also working with the state AFL-CIO in Texas for Harvey relief, and we're reaching out to our brothers and sisters in Florida, too.

But this operation goes way beyond the UIW and the SIU. Recovery is going to take years, and it's going to cost tens of billions of dollars.

"Nevertheless, brothers and sisters, we've been through these situations before, and we've always bounced back. I know we need a lot more than a pep talk at a time like this, but please be assured that we're not just sending thoughts and prayers to our members who are hurting. We're active every day with gathering information and planning the most efficient ways to continue sending relief supplies and donations and whatever else might help."

Sacco then addressed the status of the UIW with respect to membership. "I'm happy to report some good news," he said. "Some of you may recall that when we gathered here in 2013, I reported that in the previous dozen years, we had seen our membership decline by almost one-third.

"Well, brothers and sisters, today I can state that in the four years since our last convention, our total membership has remained very steady, and our overall numbers are basically unchanged.

"Now, don't get me wrong," he continued. "We would rather be celebrating giant gains. But all things considered, I think we've done well to keep our numbers the same.... That's including our members from Alaska who do seasonal work. This is a decent start and it's something we can build on."

Addressing the overall health of unions in the United States today, Sacco said, "One thing we shouldn't forget is that the general perception of unions is better today than it has been in a long, long time. Unbiased polling has shown that a solid majority of Americans believe in unions and support the right to join.

"As for us specifically in the UIW, I was reviewing a complete list of our shops



The election of officers was one of many significant orders of business accomplished during the UIW's Sept. 19-20 convention in Piney Point, Maryland. Those elected to office, incumbents with two exceptions, were sworn in by SIU Chief Counsel Leslie Tarantola shortly before the convention recessed. Taking their respective oaths of office (above, from left) were: (front row) David Heindel, secretary-treasurer; Chad Partridge, VP Midwest Region; Kate Hunt, UIW National Director; Michael Sacco, UIW President; Dean Corgy, VP Gulf Coast Region; (back row) Kermet Mangram, VP Atlantic Region; Eugene Irish, VP Caribbean and Central American Region; Monte Burgett, VP Great Lakes Region and Herb Perez, VP West Coast Region.

prior to the convention," he continued, "and I truly believe that the diversity in our jobs is a strength. It reminded me of an old saying about monetary investments: diversify or die. Well, we've already diversified, and we're going to be around for a long time."

Sacco told the audience that the UIW has shops in California, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kansas, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Florida, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"We work in manufacturing plants, in office buildings, on the docks, in cafeterias, in casinos, in warehouses, in hotels, in canneries, in delivery services and more," he said. "We've been around for 68 years – since 1949 – and we know how to adapt and overcome.

"In short, we've got 'The Union Edge,'" Sacco concluded.

In addition to Sacco, four guest speakers addressed the convention. These included Brian Schoeneman, SIU Legislative Director; Daniel Duncan, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Maritimes Trades Department; Steve Loeffler, Kroger Company Senior Director of Labor Relations; and Valerie Cole, Union Plus Union Services Coordinator. Schoeneman and Cole spoke to delegates and guests during the opening day of the convention while Duncan and Loeffler gave presentations during day two

### Brian Schoeneman

Schoeneman brought those in attendance up to date on the current political climate in Washington, D.C. and its implications for the national labor movement. His wide-ranging presentation touched on a myriad of pertinent issues, but focused primarily on the transformation in the way business is conducted since President Trump took office and the aftereffects of the same.

"Times, they are a changing really puts what's going on in Washington these days into perspective," he said in his opening remarks. "Normally when friends ask me what's going on in Washington, I tell them the same thing, different day. But that's not true anymore."

With the election of President Donald Trump, Schoeneman said, the American people have made it abundantly clear to everybody in Washington that business as usual is not usual anymore. Americans, he said, have also let it be known that they don't like it and want to see a change.

Referring to one of the president's foremost goals, that of draining the so-called swamps in Washington, Schoeneman offered, "I can say for myself as well as my colleague (longtime union political consultant) Terry Turner that the swamp is still there. And it's still hot and it's still wet, but things are different." He added that this transformation has forced him and Turner to contemplate formulating different ways of approaching and doing their jobs and figuring out exactly the best ways to stand up for America's working families, he said.

In a call for action to the audience, Schoeneman said, "What we need to make sure we do as union families, as activists and as union leaders in the UIW and Seafarers is ... to hold these folks accountable. We need to make sure that they know we are watching and that we expect them to fulfill the promises they have made or at the very least listen to us when we tell them what the impact of legislation is going to be on working families, on our membership."

Commenting on the recent legislation which extended the nation's debt limit and provided relief to victims of Hurricane Harvey, Schoeneman said, "That deal was not cut the way they (deals) normally are cut. The normal way it's done is that Republicans sit in a room with no Democrats there, and they decide what they are going to do. Then they come out and tell everybody what they are going to do and then they go do it. And that may or may not be a good thing for us, but it's different this time."

This deal, he continued was not reached between U.S. Representative Paul Ryan and Senator Mitch McConnell, or by another group of Republicans sitting in a room. Instead, it was made by the President with Democrats in a room at the White House.

"That's the first time we've seen this kind of bi-partisanship in a long time and that's a good thing," he said. "And I think if the president continues to do what he has been doing, which is going around traditional ways of doing things in Washington to get things done ... that's actually for good for us and I think that's something we can look forward to positively."

Schoeneman said that working families have reason for optimism: "We've heard all the reports from people (UIW delegates) all around the country; the UIW is doing very well and the union movement in general is doing better than in the past.

"Unemployment is down to 4.4 percent," he continued. "That is the lowest it has been since the turn of the century. June 2001 was the last time we saw unemployment this low. For the last two years, we had median income growth, which is a first. We have not seen that in a long time; working families are seeing more money in their pockets coming home. And that's after inflation. That's a good thing."

Schoeneman stated that while he didn't think Washington had anything to do with those "good things," he felt that Washington could do a lot to stop it. "And that's one of the things Terry, I and the rest of our political team do every day we are on the hill, explaining to people what the impacts of these actions will do to everybody."

He warned that we as Americans and union members will probably see more of the same in the coming year. "Everybody is still trying to figure out what the new normal, which changes every day, is in Washington. The administration is sitting on more vacancies in Senate-confirmed positions than I have seen in the last three administrations.

"Part of it is because the president is not nominating people, and part of it is that the Senate is dragging its heels," he continued. "So that when Mike (UIW President Michael Sacco), Augie (SIU Executive Vice President Augie Tellez), Terry or I call over there, we're not sure if the people we talked to last week are there this week. That makes it difficult to get anything done, and it makes it tough for us to do our jobs. And that is different because this is not something any of us have had to deal with before."

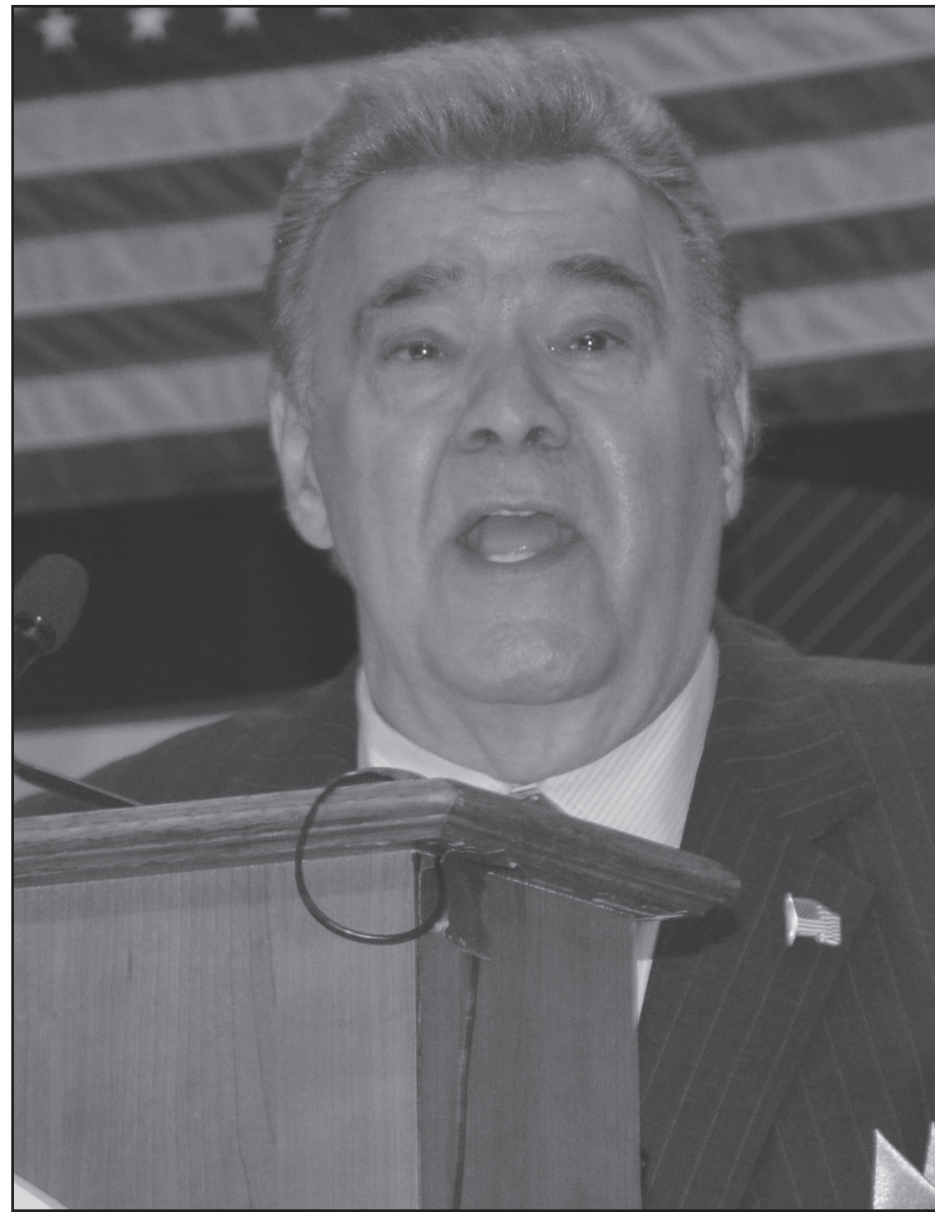
Another situation is that next year's congressional and senate races are beginning to take shape. "We're starting to see primary fights, we're starting to see a lot of folks getting edgy about their positions," Schoeneman said. As a result, he expects to see candidates who are more engaged and energized than usual. Moreover, he said it's worth noting that more than half of Congress is new and has not been around for the last 10 years (partly due to retirements).

In Schoeneman's view, the UIW's starting point in dealing with these candidates is not writing them checks, but rather becoming involved in grassroots action. "Where it starts is you guys out in the field working with these folks before they are elected to office. That's where this stuff starts, that's

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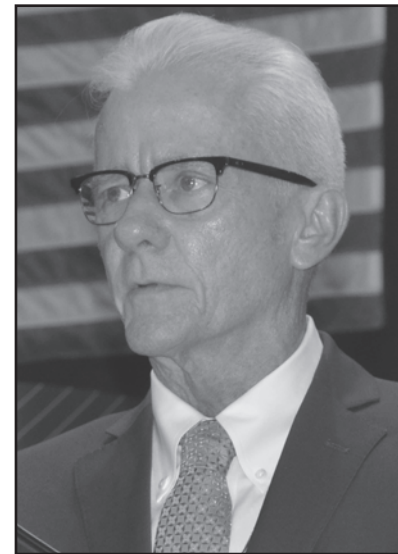
# UIW Officers and 2017 Quadrennial Convention Guest Speakers



Michael Sacco  
UIW President



Kate Hunt  
UIW National Director



Dean Corgoy  
VP, Gulf Coast Region



Thomas Orzechowski  
VP, Midwest Region



Kermett Mangram  
VP, Atlantic Region



Herb Perez  
VP, West Coast Region



Eugene Irish  
VP, Caribbean & Central  
American Region



Monte Burgett  
VP, Great Lakes Region

## Grassroots Involvement Ensures that UIW Remains on Proper Course

Continued from Page 3

where it matters the most," he said.

"You may not think so, but a \$25 check in a local race could mean as much as a \$10,000 check does in a national level race," Schoeneman continued. "Spending 15 minutes on the phone talking to your neighbor saying get out and vote and vote for these union-friendly candidates matters more than a lot of the stuff folks will be spending a lot of money doing over the course of a single campaign."

He told the audience that as union members we have the ability to have an over-sized impact on what happens politically, not only in Washington, but also in state capitals and localities around the country because we are involved in our communities.

"So, get involved," Schoeneman said. "It's not enough just to vote! Absolutely vote, but take the time to get involved. Get to know the people on the local level because they are the ones that are going to be rising up to the higher levels and then ending up in Washington someday. Get to know them now and they will remember you forever."

### Daniel Duncan

Duncan provided a brief history on the Maritime Trades Department, which is comprised of 22 different international unions—the Seafarers International Union of North America (SIUNA) being one of them—and 21 port councils. Eighteen of these port councils are in the United States and three are located in Canada.

"But why is the Maritime Trades important to you?" he asked. "We all know that the UIW has several thousand members who are very vibrant, strong and hard-working," he said. "But what does several thousand union members get you in the grand scheme of things?"

In Duncan's view, it's all as simple as arithmetic. The UIW is part of the SIUNA, which has 82,000 members who are led by UIW/SIU President Michael Sacco. Sacco is also president of the MTD, whose affiliates represent approximately 5 million members.

"So, when he goes in to speak to a member of Congress or a person in the administration, or a person in the White House, he's not speaking just for the couple thousands of people from the UIW, he's not speaking for the 82,000 in the SIUNA, he's speaking on behalf of the 5 million members of the MTD," Duncan said. "That gets you clout, that gets the doors open."

"And if that's not enough, he (Sacco) is also the senior vice president of the AFL-CIO; that's 12 million members," he continued. "So, when President Sacco goes in and says I'm here to talk on behalf of my members, he's talking for 12 million members and that's how we have clout, how we have influence."

But Duncan told the audience that clout alone is not really what gets things done. "What does it is what you do. It's how you get involved. It's how you can get things moving. It's something called grass roots," he said.

Duncan then focused his attention on something that once was said by Walter Reuther, a great labor leader who once headed the United Auto Workers. According to Duncan, Reuther said, "There is a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls."

"We are seeing that each and every day," Duncan said. "These guys, the Koch brothers, really don't like us ... they do everything in the world to try to push workers down in the fight."

To bolster his point, Duncan said so-called right to work (RTW) has been part of the laws in Virginia since 1947. But the Koch brothers, he said, decided that RTW being a part of Virginia laws wasn't quite enough, so they funded an effort in Virginia last year to change the state constitution and add it.

"In January of last year, the labor side was losing 66-23; that was in

January," he said. "The way Virginia law is written, constitutional amendments are only proposed when they think it is needed. Therefore, you cannot raise money to stop it. You cannot form a PAC to stop it. You can only go out and knock on doors and make phone calls. The right-to-work people thought they had this one won, they thought they had it in the bank."

"But they came up against the Virginia AFL-CIO and our allies, Duncan said. "We were able to raise the legal limit of \$5,000 for a statewide campaign. We knocked on doors, we made phone calls, we attended meetings and we visited with folks."

"And what does grassroots do brothers and sisters?" he asked the audience. "Grassroots stopped the right-to-work constitutional amendment." According to Duncan, the final margin of victory was 53.5 to 46.5.

In another example of grassroots clout, Duncan cited the RTW fight that recently was waged in Missouri. "Once again, the right-to-work people thought they had it won," Duncan said. "It was a done deal with the governor, a done deal with the legislature."

"And then there was a little twist in their constitution that said if people put together a petition and get 100,000 signatures, you could put it on the ballot for next year," he continued. "The Missouri AFL-CIO took on this challenge and there were some people from this organization (UIW) involved in it. They didn't get 100,000 signatures, they did not get 200,000 signatures, they got 310,000 signatures from voters in Missouri and its going on the ballot next year."

Duncan told the audience that the reason he shared this story was because many more such fights are coming.

"Brothers and sisters, don't let them roll you over; don't let them say because we want it, it's done," he said. "We have the power, we have the ability, and if we all work together we can get it done. That can happen anywhere in this country and we are going to be doing it."

Turning his attention to upcoming political contests, Duncan reminded those present that elections will be held in Virginia and New Jersey in November.

While not telling members of the audience whom to vote for, he appealed to everyone to exercise their right to vote. "Tell your members to get out there and study the candidates and study the issues and find out what works for you at your shops, what works for you at your docks, what works for you wherever you work and what helps your family, what improves your schools," he said. "It doesn't matter if they are Republican, Independent or Democrat, look for the person who is going to stand up and do the right thing for working people and your families. When you get back home, be sure to tell your folks to get registered to vote. You still have time before the elections because most voting registration ends 30 days ahead of time."

Duncan also reminded everyone that more than 30 governorships will be up for election next year. "We can talk about federal legislation all we want," he said. "But it's the state houses and the governor's chairs that make the difference in what you do at work every single day. If you don't get out and get involved, then you see what happens. We've got to fight to get things back."

Duncan told convention attendees that in addition to political grassroots actions, there are other types. One kind, he said, involves the countless union members who have gone out and done things that practically nobody knows about. As an example, he cited union members who have assisted victims of the natural disasters in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

"They've gone out in their boats and rescued people; they've gone out and chopped fallen trees; they've done other things like this to help their brothers and sisters, to help their neighbors," he said. "Grassroots are what we are all about in the labor movement. We are one family, we work together, we don't ask questions, we don't ask where you go to church, we

don't ask how much money you have, we ask if you need help. And that's part of what we do; it's a very important job and we get out there and we get the job done."

Another type of grassroots involves union pride, Duncan said. "I urge each and every one of you to become involved in this. Each of you received a cap and a T-shirt when you registered for this convention. Don't let them sit in a drawer or a closet and collect dust. Wear them and let your neighbors know, let your family know, let your community know that you are a union member and you're damn proud of it," he said. "We shouldn't have to hide who we are, we shouldn't have to cower, we are union! We're the ones who make sure people have a better life, wages, pensions and better working conditions. Show it, be proud of it! It's something that we can all benefit from."

Duncan's final type of grassroots activity entailed publicity. He encouraged everyone to back and support the union's communication's department by regularly supplying materials for the union's publications.

"Each one of you have a little grassroots tool, I think they call it a cell phone," he said. "When you go home, take pictures of your fellow co-workers, take pictures of what you do around your community and send it to our communications department. You guys need to be proud of what you do."

### Steve Loeffler

Loeffler's presentation centered on partnerships and how the UIW and its parent organization, the SIU, have set themselves apart from other unions over the years. A former federal mediator, Loeffler has arbitrated labor disputes in the public and private sectors and has been a union advocate.

"My roots were with the firefighters union," he said. "And being brought up in the fire houses and the whole public-sector labor strife we experienced in Ohio and other states is very similar to the political morass that we all find ourselves in today with right-to-work and such. And that's a two-edge sword for a lot of states and a lot of companies and a lot of unions."

"But coming up through that struggle and now looking back at it, you folks stand out," Loeffler continued. "I make no bones about it, that this (UIW/SIU) is the finest organization I've known in my 40-year career. From leadership on down, you folks get it, you understand that you must have a successful employer to have a successful union. That's what had been embodied in my dealing with you all."

Loeffler added that he often thinks about the UIW/SIU when interacting with leaders from other labor unions. "So, you folks really need to be proud of what this (your union) embodies," he said.

Speaking specifically about labor/employer relationships, Loeffler said that when he is at the bargaining table, his labor union counterparts often express desires to be his partner or to form partnerships.

"Partnerships are opportunistic in nature," he said. "In the legal profession, you see partnerships form out of opportunity. And when you see them break, they break ugly.... I've never seen a friendly breakup of a legal partnership."

"I don't want a partnership, I want a marriage," Loeffler continued. "And there are two kinds: one ends in until death you part and the other ends in divorce."

When you think about a divorce in labor-management relationship, he said, the only way you can get a divorce is either the company goes under and goes out of business, or the union decertifies. "And when it comes to that, the failure of us being able to work together is demonstrated.... There is no more opportunity, people lose jobs, people lose their livelihoods," he said.

"So, I want a marriage," Loeffler said. "I want to come back and fight again another day. There will be good times, bad times, and there will be some bumps in the road," he said. "There will be times that we stray from

the end goal. But if the marriage is true and strong, it will get back on track and get to where it needs to go and it stays together, and hopefully it thrives."

### Valerie Cole

Cole provided a brief history of Union Plus as well as an overview of the Union Plus programs available to members of participating unions. Union Plus was founded in 1986 by the AFL-CIO. Its mission, according to Cole, is to provide valuable consumer benefits to union members and their families, improve the quality of life for working families through the organization's unique products and services and to strengthen members' ties to their unions.

The organization started out creating a pathway for union members to obtain credit and loans to finance all of the things they work for during their lifetimes including a home, an education and time with their families. Through the buying powers of millions of union members, Union Plus is able to offer valuable discounted products and services from nationally known companies exclusive to union families, Cole said.

"We know that members who benefit from union discounts feel more connected to their unions," Cole said. Today, more than 2 million union members actively participate in Union Plus programs.

Among the programs which Cole discussed were: three types of credit cards, scholarships, home mortgages, cell phone discounts, auto/home insurance, car rental and entertainment discounts, debt consolidation loans and hardship grants.

In addition to guest speakers, the audience heard from UIW Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel and UIW National Director Kate Hunt. Both provided convention attendees with perspectives on where the UIW stands when viewed from their respective areas of responsibility.

Each of the UIW's regional vice presidents (Kermett Mangram, Atlantic Region; Eugene Irish, Caribbean Region; Monte Burgett, Great Lakes Region; Dean Corgoy, Gulf Coast Region; Thomas Orzechowski, Midwest Region; and Herb Perez, West Coast Region) addressed the convention. Each briefed the body on their regions' respective accomplishments over the past four years. They also outlined goals that would facilitate continued progress and prosperity for the union membership.



Brian Schoeneman  
SIU Legislative Director



Daniel Duncan,  
Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
Maritimes Trades Department



Steve Loeffler  
Senior Director of Labor Relations  
Kroger Company



Valerie Cole  
Union Services Coordinator  
Union Plus



David Heindel  
UIW Secretary-Treasurer



# UIW Convention Committees



**Auditing Committee** - (Seated from left) Adam Cordle, Chairman Tiffany Blake, Sue Plourde, (standing), David Heindel and Dawn Taliford. Also on the committee, but not pictured were Karim Robles and Kapiolani Bess.



**Convention Arrangements & Public Relations Committee** - (From left) John Wiegman, Juan Carlos Guerrero and Chairman Dean Corgey. Also on the committee, but not pictured was Bruce Heath.



**Resolutions Committee** - (From left) Ruby Ava Wilson, Chairman Herb Perez and Bonnie Johnson. Also on the committee, but not pictured was Kendrick Griffin.



**Civil Rights Committee** - (From left) Chairman Monte Burgett, Jeff Harris and Ivan Rodriguez. Also on the committee, but not pictured were Addison Powell and Lewis Nichols.



**Credentials Committee** - (Seated from left) Arturo Olguin, Chairman Terry Holter, Kate Hunt, (standing) Kermet Mangram, Tina Corbin, Sue Plourde and David Heindel. Also on the committee, but not pictured were Neta Christopher and Jose Lopez.



**Constitution & Legal Committee** - (Seated from left) Chairman Dennis Wiese, Gina Patino, Ray Adkisson, (standing) Leslie Tarantola and Kermet Mangram. Also on the committee, but pictured was Linda Leblanc.



## Former UIW VP Caribbean Region Passes Away in U.S. Virgin Islands

Former UIW VP Caribbean Region Amos Peters, 76, passed away July 17 at his residence in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). Peters became vice president of the UIW in 1989 after joining up with the affiliate of the Seafarers International Union in 1973. He retired Nov. 30, 2001 following more than 25 years on the front lines and in the trenches of the labor movement in the USVI. Peters is pictured below addressing delegates and guests at a UIW convention



during his early days as regional vice president. In the photo at right, he is pictured with his widow, Marion during his 2001 retirement gala in St. Thomas, USVI. An in-depth article on Peters' passing will be published in the next edition of *The United Worker*.



## Gone But Not Forgotten

### PATRICIA CAVENAS

Pensioner Patricia Cavenas, 69, passed away August 1. A native Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, Sister Cavenas signed on with the union in 1975. She spent her entire UIW career working at A&E Products. Sister Cavenas went on pension in 1993 and resided in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania.

### FRANK CUCUZZA

Pensioner Frank Cucuzza, 83, died May 31. Brother Cucuzza signed on with the UIW in 1958. The Brooklyn, New York native was a military veteran and spent his entire union career working at American Casting. Brother Cucuzza retired in 2005 and made his home in Staten Island, New York.

### MARTIN LASTRA

Pensioner Martin Lastra, 95,

died June 11. A native of Arroyo, Puerto Rico, Brother Lastra joined the UIW in 1958. During his career, he worked at Armand Edward Metal Products as well as Chuck Gurdin, Inc. He retired in 1984 and lived in Brooklyn, New York.

### JOHN MARTIN

Pensioner John Martin, 96, passed away June 5. Born in New York City, Brother Martin served in the U.S. Armed Forces from 1944-1946. He signed on with the union in 1978 while working at American Casting. He started receiving his union pension in 1988 and was a resident of Oyster Bay, New York.

### LEE RHODES

Pensioner Lee Rhodes, 73, died June 22. A native of Sunbury, Pennsylvania, Brother Rhodes came under

the union umbrella in 1967 while working at Paulsen Wire Rope. He began receiving retirement stipends in 1982 and resided in his native city and state.

### GEORGE STODDART

Pensioner George Stoddart, 91, passed away July 17. Brother Stoddart joined the UIW in 1978 while working at Victory Refrigeration. Born in St. Catherine, Jamaica, he went on pension in 1991. Brother Stoddart made his home in Port Charlotte, Florida.

### DOSSIE WILLIAMS

Pensioner Dossie Williams, 89, died May 18. Born in North Carolina, Brother Williams signed on with the union in 1966. He spent his entire UIW career working at Plymkraft, Inc., and went on pension in 1990. Brother Williams was a resident of

Newport News, Virginia.

### RICHARD WINTER

Pensioner Richard Winter, 83, passed away May 7. A native of Windsor, Colorado, Brother Winter became a member of the union in 1992 while employed at Progressive Driver Services. He spent his entire union career working at this company and retired in 2000. Brother Winter called Fort Collins, Colorado, home.

### JOHN YOST

Pensioner John Yost, 65, died June 9. Born in Shamokin, Pennsylvania, Brother Yost donned the UIW colors in 1972. His initial years as a union member was spent at A&E Products, where he later moved to Paulsen Wire Rope. Brother Yost retired in 1988 and resided in Northumberland, Pennsylvania.

## UIW Directory

### HEADQUARTERS

5201 Auth Way  
Camp Springs, MD 20746  
(301) 899-0675

### ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

721 Sesame St.  
Suite 1C 99503  
(907) 561-4988

### BALTIMORE, MD

2315 Essex St. 21224  
(410) 327-4900

### COLUMBUS, OHIO

2800 South High St.  
P.O. Box 07770, 43207  
(614) 497-2446

### HONOLULU, HI

606 Kalihi Street 96819  
(808) 845-5222

### HOUSTON, TEXAS

625 N. York Street 77003  
(713) 659-5152

### JACKSONVILLE, FL

5100 Belfort Rd. 32256  
(904) 281-2622

### JERSEY CITY, NJ

104 Broadway  
Jersey City 07306  
(201) 434-6000

### JOLIET, IL

10 East Clinton St. 60432  
(815) 723-8002

### NEW ORLEANS, LA

3911 Lapalco Blvd.  
Harvey LA 70058  
(504) 328-7545

### NORFOLK, VA

115 3rd St. 23510  
(757) 622-1892

### OAKLAND, CA

1121 7th St. 94607  
(510) 444-2360

### PHILADELPHIA, PA

2604 S. 4th St. 19148  
(215) 336-3818

### PINEY POINT, MD

P.O. Box 75, 20674  
(301) 994-0010

### ST. CROIX, USVI

4200 United Shopping Plaza, Suite 24  
Christiansted, USVI 00820  
(340) 773-6055

### ST. LOUIS, MO

4581 Gravois Ave. 63116  
(314) 752-6500

### ST. THOMAS, USVI

201-3A Altona & Welgunst  
Suite 101  
St. Thomas, USVI 00802  
(340) 774-3895

### TACOMA, WA

3411 S. Union Ave. 98409  
(253) 272-7774

### WILMINGTON, CA

510 N. Broad Ave. 90444  
(301) 549-3920



## New Pensioners

**Dhomic Barcelon**  
Del Monte Corp.  
Long Beach, California

**Veronica Browne**  
Pralex Corp.  
Tampa, Florida

**Socorro Contreras**  
Save The Queen, LLC  
Long Beach, California

**Burten Fiester**  
Crown Cork & Seal  
Milton, Pennsylvania

**Jamie Flores**  
American Casting  
Brooklyn, New York

**Jody Geist**  
A&E Products Group  
Zion Grove, Pennsylvania

**James Hedden**  
Victory Refrigeration  
West Berlin, New Jersey

**Harry Hampton**  
East Wind Industries  
Dover, Delaware

**Marie Hawkins**  
Plymkraft, Inc.  
Hampton, Virginian

**Arthur Magrann**  
Victory Refrigeration  
Barrington, New Jersey

**Antonio Mendoza**  
Crown Cork & Seal  
Houston, Texas

**Michael Munyan**  
Franklin International  
Lancaster, Ohio

**Susana Padilla**  
Victory Refrigeration  
Camden, New Jersey

**Celia Paginag**  
Save The Queen, LLC  
Long Beach, California

**Devra Roberts**  
Franklin International  
Ashville Ohio

**Victoria Robertson**  
Severson Group  
Twentynine Palms, California

**Milford Robinson**  
Progressive Driver Services, Inc.  
Valley Falls, New York

**Santiago Rodriguez**  
Juanitas Foods  
Long Beach, California

**Angel Rosado**  
American Casting  
Bronx, New York

**Donald Shellabarger**  
Armaly Brands  
Hudson, Florida

**Loretta Tyler**  
Plymkraft, Inc.  
Hampton, Virginia

**John Wiseley**  
Contanda Terminals, LLC  
Norwood, Pennsylvania

**Rubin Wood**  
Crown Cork & Seal  
Montgomery, Texas





## Trumka Says President Trump Not Keeping Promises

*Editor's note: The following piece was jointly written by Mark Gruenberg and John Wojcik, PAI Staff Writer and People's World editor, respectively.*

One, of several, messages organized labor is carrying to workers and voters nationwide is that Donald Trump isn't keeping his promises.

In an October 22 press conference previewing the AFL-CIO convention in St. Louis, federation President Richard Trumka ran down a list of promises the Manhattan mogul-turned-GOP president uttered on the campaign trail last year, from more construction spending to blasting so-called free trade.

"We give them the facts," said Trumka of Trump. "Here's what he's promised. Here's what he's done. And his promises left people in the lurch."

Unions are already carrying that message to their members and families, Trumka said, and will continue to do so through the rest of this year and the 2018 election campaign.

"He promised infrastructure. Nothing. He promised bringing manufacturing back. Didn't happen."

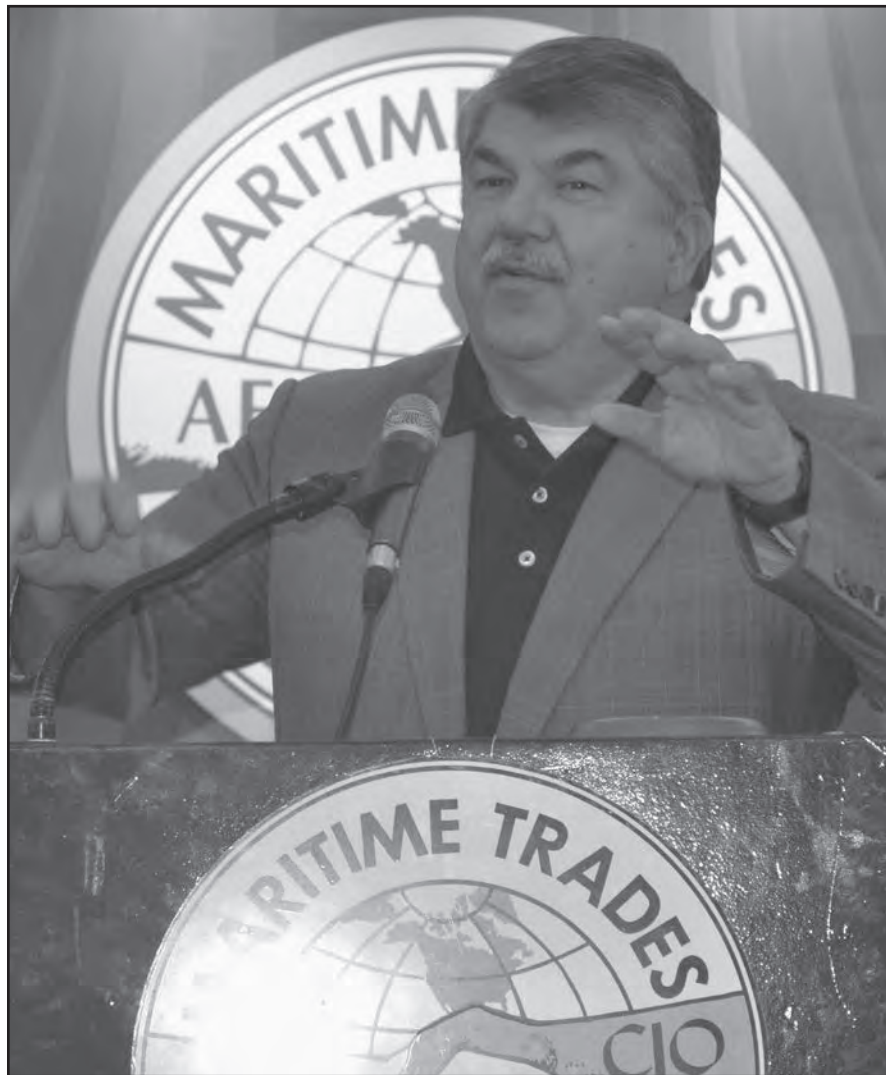
Instead, what Trump brought factory workers was the "Christmas wish list," from CEOs of major firms, who were briefly Trumka's colleagues on a short-lived manufacturing advisory council for Trump, before they all quit over his response to the fatal neo-Nazi riot in Virginia.

The corporate wish list is being granted, in such things as delaying job safety and health rules curbing worker exposure to silica and beryllium, both cancer-causing substances. And their wish list is being granted, Trumka said, also by rolling back the Obama-era increase in eligibility for overtime pay.

"That sobering education gets people to come back across the bridge," says Trumka, citing evidence through public opinion polls showing Trump, just 10 months in office, has record unpopularity ratings, while 61 percent of those questioned support unions.

But whether such an education campaign will succeed is still up for grabs. Trump's supporters are die-hards, surveys and questionnaires show, regardless of many facts. And there's another hurdle, Trumka admitted: Rising bitterness against a system that workers feel, rightly, is tilted against them.

Repeating statistics he often cites, Trumka pointed to a survey of millennials by Harvard University. They're the first generation who has seen their parents suffer lost homes, pay and pensions,



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka addresses delegates and guests during the UIW-affiliated Maritime Trades Department's Convention (MTD) Oct. 20 in St. Louis.

and who toil in a globalized worldwide economy with limited prospects.

Only 30 percent of those polled believe democracy is important, Trumka said, and 24 percent think it's bad for them. "They're beginning to equate democracy and capitalism with poverty, low wages and insecurity," he added.

"So we're talking about changing the rules so everybody gets a chance and we deflect that point" about having the economy no longer working for workers.

But the message isn't a top-down one, Trumka contended. He said it's a product of "thousands and thousands" of conversations the federation had with its members. "We say: 'This is your union. What do you need us to do?'"

The answer that came back was to create an economic platform that is so strong, and hold politicians to it, that

it would make the national right-wing push to enact so-called right to work laws – which labor and workers call "right to work for less" laws – "irrelevant."

One way is also through collective action, Trumka contended. He cited recent mass movements for Fight for 15 and women's right to choice. Workers and unionists were large shares of those movements, and sponsors of Fight for 15. While the massive women's march did not explicitly put workers' rights as a top goal, the AFL-CIO group there carried signs declaring: "Union woman. Will strike if provoked."

People "will understand that when we come together, we'll be stronger," Trumka said.

"Collectivism is on the rise in the U.S...Whether it's political action or collective action, you'll see a unity" that

did not exist before, he added.

That unity will also be manifest in a political platform Trumka said labor will adopt at the convention and then present to political hopefuls. Those who support it will get workers' support. Those that don't, won't.

The labor movement has been deeply involved in national and local election campaigns throughout its history. Trumka was asked whether this will be the case in 2018 when the entire House is up for reelection along with a third of the Senate. If Democrats tip either the House or the Senate they can block any legislation supported by President Trump, seen as the most anti-labor president in recent U.S. history.

Trumka did not commit to labor's automatic support for Democrats opposing Republicans. "We are developing and going to put forward a Workers Bill of Rights," he declared, "and our support will only go to people who back that bill of rights. If a candidate, regardless of party, can't do that we'll say 'That's nice, good luck' and move on to support someone else."

Trumka said this week many union members who are running for office on all levels are coming forward at the convention. "We are going to push hard to increase the number of workers elected to office," he said after the press conference.

Also asked afterwards if the federation would reject people who backed perhaps nine out of ten of labor's issues but not all of the points on the bill of rights, his answer, with a smile was "We'll push them on the tenth."

Trumka did not elaborate, but said labor's 2018 election push would be "unprecedented in breadth, scope and unity. We will approach these elections more united than ever before," concentrating on the issues, he said. In the past different unions have sometimes supported different candidates.

Trumka attributed the large Republican vote among workers as a whole to anxiety and fear among workers over their stagnating wages and their inability to make gains while Wall Street and the wealthy were doing so well. "Some people," he said, "were willing to try anything to see if things would get better." But, he added, "Many who backed Trump are realizing now the huge gap between the promises he made and the reality of his policies."

"Our basic approach is to put forward our workers' agenda and fight to have people come over to that agenda," he said, "and that is what we see happening."

## Labor Unions Need To Fight Against Income Inequality

*Editor's note: The following piece was written by John Wojcik, editor in chief at Peoplesworld.org. It was edited slightly to conform with local style.*

Income inequality and the wage gap are far more than simply unfair according to Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO. In a talk with labor commu-

nicators in St. Louis in late October at the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) convention just before the opening of the AFL-CIO's convention, Trumka said income inequality is "tearing apart" not just the United States but the entire world.

A big part of the solution, he said, is to guarantee that people have the right to come together to form unions and that unions themselves be strengthened. He said this solution will work for all workers, union and non-union and that the mission of the labor movement is to fight back against the forces responsible for widening the income gap.

He issued a call to reject the idea

that individual initiative will automatically triumph over all problems and instead reminded people that for the 99 percent working class majority collective action is the way to go when it comes to solving the income gap.

"Workers never get more by acting alone. They get more by acting together," he added.

Trumka took on the issue of the right to work wave sweeping states all over the country.

"We'll do more than just simply fight back" Trumka told the ILCA discussion of right to work, held in a state – Missouri – where unionists successfully petitioned a RTW law onto

a referendum ballot next year, thus delaying it.

"We'll use these fights" on right to work "to fight back internally, by encouraging our members to build power," he said. "That's how we lift each other up and make right to work irrelevant."

AFL-CIO staffers and officials are also working to change the way language is used when it comes to important issues. They have been emphasizing that so called right to work threatens the freedom to organize, while in Missouri unions have emphasized the question, "Who wants to work for less money?"