

The United Worker

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House Passes Bill to Strengthen Labor Law

Federation Leader Hails Action as 'A Win for Workers Everywhere'

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called it "the most significant step Congress has taken to strengthen labor laws in the United States in 85 years and a win for workers everywhere."

The U.S. House of Representatives on Feb. 6 passed the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (HR 2474), with bipartisan support. The final tally was 224 in favor and 194 against.

Also known as the PRO Act, the bill would change some of the nation's labor laws by penalizing companies that retaliate against workers who try to organize. The bill aims to strengthen collective bargaining rights, and to weaken state-enacted right-to-work (for less) laws.

For example, there are currently no penalties on employers and no compensation for a worker when an employee is fired or faces retaliation for trying to organize a union. As passed, the PRO Act would call for fines for violations of the National Labor Relations Act. It would require the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to go to court for an injunction to reinstate workers if the NLRB believes they illegally have been retaliated against for union activities.

The PRO Act also establishes a timely process for gaining a first contract – including mediation and, if needed, binding arbitration. The bill would permit unions and employers to reach a "fair share" clause requiring all workers covered by a collectively bargained contract to contribute towards the cost of bargaining and administering the agreement in all 50 states.

Among its reforms, the PRO Act would repeal the section of the Taft-Hartley Act that permits states to enact so-called right-to-work laws. It also would outlaw "captive audience" meetings where bosses can force workers to listen to anti-union presentations, often from outside consultants (better known as union-busters).

The bill will also tighten the definitions of independent contractor and supervisor, making sure that eligible workers can organize if they so choose. The legislation would prohibit employers from permanently replacing strikers.

At a press conference in the U.S.

Capitol on Feb. 5 conducted by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Trumka let others know the importance of the bill: "Those who would oppose, delay or derail this legislation, do not ask us – do not ask the labor movement – for a dollar or a door knock! We won't be coming!" he said.

Pelosi said, "I am so proud to stand here with Richard Trumka, the president of the AFL-CIO; Chris Shelton, president of Communication Workers of America; Jennifer Dornig, president of Department for Professional Employees of the AFL-CIO; John Samuelson, president, Transport Workers Union; Jim Slevin, president, Utilities Workers Union of America; Tim Driscoll, president, International Union for Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers; and representatives of many other unions who are here with us today."

Also speaking at the press conference were House Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-Virginia), U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-Florida), U.S. Rep. Donald Norcross (D-New Jersey), U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington) and U.S. Rep. Andy Levin (D-Michigan).

"We all want to talk about a seat at the table," Pelosi said. "The most important table to us is America's kitchen tables, where families come together to make decisions about their families. And we don't want them to have to struggle unnecessarily, when there is an opportunity for them to do better. And I want to thank the AFL-CIO and all in the labor movement for what they have done to make the future better for so many families in America."

She added, "This is so important to America. It's so important to our economy. Nothing is more important to our economy than the education of our children and also to have purchasing power on the part of the middle class. That can only happen when workers get respected for the work that they do and receive the wages and salaries that they deserve. And so, the PRO Act is a vehicle in that direction."

"I know how important it is to give workers a voice and protect them from unfair labor practices because I lived it," said Norcross, a former business agent for



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-California) promotes the PRO Act during a Capitol Hill press conference Feb. 5 in the House Rayburn Room. Behind her are (from left) U.S. Rep. Donald Norcross (D-New Jersey), U.S. Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Virginia), AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, U.S. Rep. Andy Levin (D-Michigan) and U.S. Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-Florida). The congressional representatives all belonged to unions.

the IBEW Local 351 and president of the Southern New Jersey AFL-CIO. "I fought for New Jerseyans at the negotiating table for decades. Workers win when they can band together and collectively bargain for safer workplaces, higher wages and better

benefits. Today, my colleagues and I took a major leap forward in restoring fairness to an economy that's rigged against workers. I urge the Senate to act swiftly and pass the

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Union, UIW Plans, Legal Dept. Jointly Release COVID-19 Precautions for Employees

Editor's note: Union officials as well as representatives from the UIW Plans and Legal Departments recently drafted and released correspondence to UIW members regarding the COVID-19 novel coronavirus. Following are excerpts from that correspondence that apply to all UIW members, regardless of location.

As the novel coronavirus, a.k.a. COVID-19, outbreak continues to expand, so have all of our concerns. At this early stage of the outbreak in this country, the best thing to do

is stay informed and be prepared to alter plans when needed.

At this point in time, there are several common-sense precautions that can be taken to reduce the risk of becoming ill with COVID-19 or of spreading the virus to others. Those precautions include:

- Know the symptoms of COVID-19: fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The symptoms seem to begin 2 to 14 days after an exposure.

- If you develop symptoms, call your health care provider for advice

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State Government Orders Address Change for UIW/SIU Headquarters

The UIW's parent organization, the Seafarers International Union (SIU), and Seafarers Plans are not relocating their headquarters operations – but they're getting a new address, effective April 20, 2020.

Only the street name is changing; the building number designation and servicing post office location will remain the same. This change also affects the UIW since its headquarters and pension plan are located at the same address.

Because of a Maryland State government-ordered change, the new address will be:

5201 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, Maryland 20746

The old address (since 1982, when

the SIU relocated from New York) was 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746. All phone and fax numbers for the building remain unchanged.

The union and Seafarers Plans did not seek this change and, in fact, petitioned against it, to no avail. Other organizations along the same street in Prince George's County also are being forced to comply with the alteration.

The street itself already had been named Capital Gateway Drive beyond the Seafarers building, which is next to a subway station.

Mailings will be sent from headquarters to UIW pensioners and other interested parties, alerting them of this change.

From the President

Stay Informed and Support Each Other

As this edition went to press, the coronavirus pandemic continued wreaking havoc with everyday life in the United States and indeed across the globe.



Michael Sacco

I encourage all UIW members and their families to take the situation seriously, but don't panic. Stay informed, be good neighbors, and remember we're all in this together. A crisis of this magnitude should unite us.

PRO Act

While we in the labor movement aren't kidding ourselves about the prospects of the PRO Act quickly advancing in the Senate, the House's passage of this pro-worker bill is still quite noteworthy. It establishes an important building block and lets us see where legislators stand on labor law reform and workers' rights.

The surest way to grow the middle class is through collective bargaining and union representation. Government data and other studies consistently show that union members earn more money and enjoy better benefits than their unrepresented counterparts. Union apprenticeships (many of which are done in partnership with employers) often provide a clear path to rewarding careers, too.

Management also benefits from strong unions. When workers have a voice on the job and are compensated fairly, they're much more likely to be reliable and efficient and to stick around, thereby reducing turnover and its associated costs. Unions provide accountability on both sides as well.

By any reasonable measure, many of America's labor laws are broken. More often than not, the deck is stacked against workers who seek to join or form a union – and there's no recourse against employers who violate their employees' rights in union organizing campaigns and elections.

The PRO Act is good for workers and good for America. The UIW stands behind it and will work to overcome any obstacles to it becoming law.

Ongoing Relief Efforts

As our relief efforts for Puerto Rico continue, I thank every individual and every organization that has stepped up. While the earthquake-induced damage in the territory is extensive, so too are the collective responses of labor and management. We're committed to helping, as much as possible for as long as needed.

One of the most uplifting aspects of the current outreach is that we all sprang into action – labor and management, together – without being asked. Unfortunately, that need remains significant, mostly in the territory's southern region. Homes, businesses, schools and roads were damaged or destroyed. There are no quick fixes, but we're taking steps to bring as much relief (and restore as much functionality) as possible. Stay tuned.

Election Day Approaches

Election Day will be here before we know it, and it's definitely not too soon for UIW members to make sure you're registered to vote. Go online or check with your union rep if you need assistance. Every vote counts, and that's not a cliché. It's the truth.

Back when we were heading towards the winter holidays, someone forwarded me a message that said, you can save money on Christmas gifts this year by making it a point to talk about politics at Thanksgiving dinner. I laughed and shook my head at the same time.

Civility can be in short supply when engaging in political action or political discussions, but it doesn't have to be a lost art. I encourage everyone to remember that we all want what's best for our great nation, and while there's nothing wrong with strongly felt disagreement, we can all benefit from focusing on facts and maintaining respect for each other.



Richard Trumka
President, AFL-CIO

Trumka: 19-Year High In Big Strikes Shows 'Sea Change in America'

U.S. workers are increasingly irritated. And as a result, 25 times their bosses forced at least 1,000 of them to strike last year. That was a 19-year high.

And that doesn't include the lockout of approximately 400,000 federal workers for the whole month of January and the last week of December 2019.

This wrathful conclusion came from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka after the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its strike figures for 2019. Trumka called the rising number of mass strikes evidence of "a sea change in America."

"In 2019, nearly half a million workers sacrificed the comforts of today for the progress of tomorrow. These strike statistics represent nothing less than a sea change in America," the AFL-CIO chief said Feb. 11.

"Working people — completely fed up with an economic and political system that does not work for us — are turning to each other and using every tool at our disposal to win a better deal. Because of the courage of every worker who said enough is enough, we all stand on a stronger foundation today. Solidarity works. And we're just getting started," he vowed.

BLS said there were 25 work stoppages last year, compared to a yearly average of 15 in the decade before. In those 25 cases, bosses forced 425,500 workers to walk — just below the 485,200 who were forced to strike in 2018, but in fewer stoppages (20). In 2019, workers lost 3.244 million days off the job, or 0.01% of all work time, the same share as in 2018.

The longest 2019 strike, according to BLS, was when GM CEO Mary Parra forced 46,000 United Auto Workers to walk for 49 days late in the year. That job action alone took up 1.34 million workdays for all those workers.

But teachers and support staffers were 63% of last year's workers who were forced to walk, BLS said. They had to hike off the job when cities and states — such as Chicago, Los Angeles and Denver — wouldn't remedy lousy conditions, low pay for support staff, aging books and lack of funding for public schools.

Teachers and staffers also accounted for the largest strikes of the last two years, BLS said. Interestingly, those strikes involved teachers in so-called "right to work" states, including one, North Carolina, that legally bars public union strikes of all kinds.

Some 123,000 North Carolina Association of Educators workers had to strike against the stinginess of the heavily republican state legislature in 2018, followed by 92,700 last year. And

the Arizona Education Association's "#RedforEd" walkout, with enormous community support, made national headlines when 81,000 of its members had to strike from April 26-May 3, 2018. That strike revealed schools' leaky roofs, buckled floors and 25-year-old textbooks.

It also forced the republican governor and legislature to provide more funds for the schools.

While the GM strike lasted 49 days and involved tens of thousands of workers, it — and other stoppages involving more than 1,000 workers each — was much smaller, combined, than cases of management forcing workers to strike before 1981, historical BLS data show.

The peak year for large management-forced strikes was 1952, with 470 strikes involving 2.75 million workers out for a combined 48.82 million workdays, 0.38% of all working time.

In terms of length, frequency and number of workers, such strikes sharply declined after 1981. Not coincidentally, President Ronald Reagan arbitrarily fired the nation's 14,000 air traffic controllers that year. The controllers, members of PATCO, were forced to strike for safety reasons.

Reagan permanently replaced all of them — and private-sector bosses saw his success against the union as a signal for "open season" on workers and strikers ever since. Large strikes hit their nadir in 2009, the first full year of the financier-caused Great Recession: five walkouts, involving 12,500 workers for a combined 124,100 days.

The BLS statistics cover only one side of the worker-boss story, however. They include times bosses forced workers to strike — worker self-help, in labor law terms. They don't include bosses' "self-help": Lockouts.

They also don't include the federal government.

If the data did include both lockouts and feds, the 2019 figure would be enormous.

That's because almost 400,000 federal workers were locked out starting on Dec. 22, 2019 and continuing through all of January. Another 400,000 or so, including Transportation Security Officers — the airport screeners — had to toil without pay.

Federal workers are still trying to recover from the stoppage, which cost them five weeks of pay. They later got their back pay. But thousands more — security guards, cleaners and fast food workers among them, many of them unionized — didn't. They worked for federal contractors, not the government itself.



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UIW Members Assist in Puerto Rico Hurricane Relief Effort



A host of Jacksonville, Florida-based union members have assisted in efforts to provide relief supplies and other cargoes to residents of Puerto Rico who are recovering from a series of earthquakes. Included were UIW members as well as brothers from their parent organization, the Seafarers International Union. These photos capture the action of a recent effort beginning with the arrival of a container-carrying crane (top left), then moving to the arrival, unloading and loading of the container (top right, right center and bottom right photos, respectively) and finally to the arrival and unloading of the relief supplies at the SIU hall in Puerto Rico (photo below). The supplies and other cargoes were donated by a host of entities and organizations. The Jacksonville union members participating in this effort included: Port Agent/UIW Rep Ashley Nelson, Patrolman Adam Bucalo, Patrolman Eddie Pittman, UIW Shop Steward Tony Brown, UIW members Joseph Overton and Brion Wilson; and GUDEs Erris Jackson and Dennis Morallo. The individuals pictured immediately below are members of the Seafarers International Union in San Juan who volunteered their time to make sure the supplies were delivered to needy families.



PRO Act Benefits Working People

Continued from Page 1

PRO Act to level the playing field for American workers and their families.”

Levin, vice chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, made the following remarks on the House Floor after voting in favor of the bill: “I have spent most of my career helping workers form unions and bargain collectively. The power of workers to unite and demand fair wages, better benefits, and safer working conditions is truly inspiring, and it’s essential for working families simply trying to get by. Right now, corporate profits are skyrocketing while the share of health care costs paid by employers is falling. Worker productivity is at its peak, yet wages are stagnant. The gap between the rich and the poor is the highest ever recorded. It should be no surprise that while all this is happening, union membership is at its lowest point in decades. The PRO Act is about reversing these trends so workers can enjoy their fair share in the economy that they help create. Recent studies have shown that in cities where union

membership is strong, children in low-income families go on to ascend to higher income levels than their parents. Isn’t that what every parent wants? Creating a pathway to a better life – that is the American dream, and that is the power of a union.

“The PRO Act is about that most American of ideals: freedom,” he continued. “All we are doing today is allowing workers to decide on their own, free of harassment and intimidation, whether or not they wish to form a union and bargain collectively, and to access their other rights under the NLRA. When we pass the PRO Act today, we say loud and clear that we are not on the side of the special interests. We stand proudly on the side of working families.”

In a press release, Trumka (a longtime friend of the UIW) said, “I applaud the U.S. House for passing the PRO Act. America’s labor laws are no longer an effective means for working people to have our voices heard. The long-overdue PRO Act will provide significant protections for workers exercising our legal right to form a union, a right that’s been trampled on for decades by union-busting consultants and anti-worker politicians.”

He recently pointed out that unions are now more popular than ever, saying, “A Gallup poll found that 64 percent of Americans approve of unions and research from MIT shows nearly half of non-union workers – more than 60 million people – would vote to join today if given the opportunity. Twenty-five years ago, only one-

third of workers said the same thing. What explains the gap between desire for union representation and existing union representation? Simply put, unscrupulous employers and outdated labor laws have created an environment where it has never been harder to form a union.”

He continued, “Despite the unrelenting attacks, 2019 was a year of undeniable progress in the labor movement. Nearly 50,000 UAW members at General Motors fought on the picket line for 40 days over better pay and benefits. Thousands of public-school teachers – proud AFT members – went on strike across the country to demand smaller class sizes, higher wages and better conditions for their students. Thousands more media workers, sick of layoffs and budget cuts, unionized through voluntary recognition. Now these workers are demanding changes in our labor law.

“In short, unions are good for our economy and our society. With the PRO Act, lawmakers can finally make the life-changing promise of a union available to all those who want it. It’s time,” Trumka said.

With the bill’s passage in the House, the PRO Act heads to the U.S. Senate for consideration. *The Washington Post* reports the chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee), has said the measure will not be considered this year. Despite this stoppage, the passage of the bill in the House is a crucial first step on a road to becoming law, one that will continue beyond this important upcoming election year.

Unions, Lawmakers, Safety Net Program Defenders Blast Proposed Budget Cuts

Unions, congressional Democrats, progressive groups, and defenders of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid all blasted President Donald Trump's proposed budget cuts for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

According to Mark Gruenberg of Press Associates News Service, leading the charge were the Treasury Employees and the Teachers, whose president, Randi Weingarten, said the administration's cuts harm kids as well as their parents.

Meanwhile, Government Employees (AFGE) delegates, in town for their annual legislative conference, headed to Capitol Hill with a briefing book full of critiques, including opposing cuts in Social Security's staffing – cuts the union said harm recipients as much as workers.

And the AFL-CIO linked the red ink and Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid cuts with the president's 2017 tax cut for the rich and corporations.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, (D-California), summed up Trump's spending blueprint: "The budget is a statement of values and once again the president is showing just how little he values the good health, financial security and well-being of hard-working American families." Other lawmakers, along with union leaders, were more caustic.

Cuts Across the Board

The president's \$4.8 trillion spending plan, including a \$1 trillion deficit, proposes an 8% hike, to \$780 billion, in spending for the military and cuts just about everywhere else: Food stamps, Social Security (-\$30 billion in disability benefits spending), Medicaid (-\$700 billion-\$1 trillion over 10 years) and Medicare.

Trump's Medicare cut would be \$478 billion over a decade. His Medicaid cuts would both throw people out of the program and cut the payments the federal government makes to states for those who remain. Reiterating a long-time Republican Party goal, the president wants to make Medicaid payments into block grants and cap them. States can then use – or not use – the money as they please. Block grants would let red states cut benefits even more than they already have.

AFT's Weingarten Weighs in

"This budget proposal tells the American people everything they need to know about President Trump's priorities, because the things that matter most to Americans — like providing their families a path to a better life, economic security and a voice in democracy — are on the chopping block," AFT's Weingarten said.

After listing Trump's cuts to health care, Social Security, housing, higher education, worker training, his plan to block grant public education money and his slashes at food stamps, she asked: "And for what?"

"Further tax cuts for the wealthy, money" – \$2 billion – "for Trump's border wall, and a \$5 billion voucher scheme to funnel taxpayer money out of public schools and into private schools. Trump's values aren't the people's values."

As workers' wages are being squeezed, "This budget cuts every social safety net program that would help...



The President's FY 2021 Budget was released February 10.

reflecting the president's political war on the federal safety net."

Treasury Employees President Tony Reardon said the president not only offers the nation's two million federal workers only a 1% raise, he's taking it away with the other hand – by forcing them to contribute 1% more of their pay for their pensions, on top of prior hikes to help close past federal red ink.

NTEU, AFGE Wants Hikes, Not Cuts

The administration also wants to freeze pension payments and eliminate cost-of-living hikes, he said. Both NTEU and the Government Employees (AFGE) are lobbying lawmakers for a 3.5% hike in 2020, with no cuts to COLAs.

The pension cuts come on top of prior slashes under Trump, angering AFGE Secretary-Treasurer Everett Kelley.

"The federal workforce vehemently opposes losing up to half of their retirement benefits and AFGE members will be fighting this proposal at every turn," Kelley said. "The administration's rhetoric about affordability is laughable. The federal retirement system is modest, fully funded, and is the only aspect of federal employee compensation that meets private sector comparability."

Social Security Administration Cuts

"Since 2010, the Social Security Administration endured deep budget cuts that have severely hampered employees' ability to help ensure financial security and stability to Americans in old age and disability, and survivors in times of crisis," AFGE's briefing book for its delegates said.

"Through 2019, nearly 70 field offices and all SSA contact stations were closed, and all remaining offices reduced hours to the public, resulting in record high backlogs in claims, appeals and wait times on the national call-in line and a loss of over 2,000 field staff."

"Meanwhile, the demand for in-person services increases as the baby boom

generation continues to reach retirement age. AFGE is encouraged the FY 2021 funding bill included language specifying \$100 million in funds to restore funding for field staff, reduce or end field office closures and support front-line operations." It wants Congress to repeat that hike.

AFGE wants lawmakers to back HR2901, by Rep. Gwen Moore, (D-Wisconsin), "to require the Social Security Commissioner to operate and staff sufficient field offices and employ adequate staff to provide convenient and accessible services to the public and minimize wait times."

ALF-CIO Sounds Alarm

"The people responsible for wasting trillions of dollars on tax giveaways to the rich tell us we have no choice but to cut Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, education and infrastructure. There always seems to be plenty of money for millionaires and big corporations but never enough money to do anything for working people," AFL-CIO Deputy Policy Director Kelly Ross wrote in a blog after the budget blueprint's release. "Now those predictions" of cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid "are coming true."

"The president proposes to cut \$2 trillion from safety net programs, which is about the same amount as the cost of the 2017 tax bill. His budget plan would cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid and subsidies for the Affordable Care Act," Ross's blog added. "The Labor Department gets whacked by \$1.3 billion. Assistance for people who lose their jobs to imports is slashed by nearly \$400 million, and a program to help U.S. manufacturing companies create jobs is eliminated. The budget plan also eliminates subsidized student loans and the public service student loan forgiveness program."

"While supporters of the 2017 tax bill promised it would benefit working people, almost all of its benefits have

gone to corporations and the wealthy, and very little has trickled down to working people. Paychecks are still flat, and too many working people still have to work more than one job just to make ends meet."

Slashing staff is not the president's sole Social Security cut. He wants to chop Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) dollars by forcing disabled people to reapply for benefits every six months.

Trump vowed in his State of the Union address the previous week he would not cut Medicare or Social Security, but was silent about Medicaid, which aids the poor and the disabled. The month before, in Switzerland, he advocated cutting all three. His budget does that. And his prior SSDI cut drew protests the week before from the Alliance for Retired Americans and the Union Veterans Council.

More Budget Cuts

Other Trump cuts would hit the Labor Department (-11%), the Environmental Protection Agency (-26.5%), federal education aid (-8%) and a wide range of other domestic programs, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program and federal student loans. The administration even wants to cut the Centers for Disease Control by 9%, just days after that agency told lawmakers it needs more money to help battle the coronavirus.

Trump also wants to cut the National Labor Relations Board by 10%, or \$27 million, to \$247 million, for the year starting Oct. 1. And its employment would stay flat.

By contrast, within the DOL budget, the president wants an 18% increase in the Office of Labor Management Standards – the office that rides herd on unions, ordering them to disclose spending on everything from paychecks to paper clips. Harvard University's

See *Mixed Coalition*, next page

UIW Members Ring in Holidays in Jacksonville, Florida

The union's tradition of hosting winter holiday events for members and their families at hiring halls dates back to the days of the UIW's founding. That tradition continued late last year at the Jacksonville hall as UIW members gathered to celebrate the holidays. Pictured in the photo at left during the gathering (from left to right) are UIW Shop Steward Anthony Brown, UIW Shop Steward Addison Powell, SIU Patrolman Adam Bucalo and SIU Safety Director Joseph Koncul. Pictured in the photo at right are VP of Operations for Patriot Rail David Bevins and Manager for Patriot Rail Kevin Morales. Patriot Rail replaced PORTUS as the company that employs UIW members in Jacksonville.



BLS Union Numbers Don't Tell Whole Story

Last year, the percentage of wage and salary workers who were members of unions in the United States – the union membership rate – was 10.3 percent, down by 0.2 percentage point from 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported Jan. 22 in its 2019 Union Members Summary.

The number of wage and salary workers belonging to unions, 14.6 million in 2019, was little changed from 2018, the agency added. In 1983, the first year for which comparable union data are available, the union membership rate was 20.1 percent and there were 17.7 million union workers.

According to the AFL-CIO, the foregoing numbers reflect the tremendously difficult barriers workers continue to face while seeking to form a union. Additionally, they reveal the unmatched resilience of working people in their desire to win bargaining power on the job.

Despite the latest report, federation officials labeled 2019 as a year of undeniable momentum for collective action and collective bargaining. They listed the following as just a few examples of the extraordinary ways

that workers stood together in 2019 to fight for our workplaces and communities:

Following 2018's notable year of teacher activism, thousands of teachers went on strike in states including Colorado and West Virginia. In Chicago, CTU-AFT members walked out for a historic 11 days, winning a 16% salary increase over five years.

More than 30,000 Stop & Shop workers and UFCW members in New England fought and won a three-month battle for better pay and benefits.

Nearly 50,000 UAW members at General Motors Co. walked off the job on Sept. 16, starting one of the longest and largest automotive strikes in decades. After 40 days on the picket line, GM workers secured a contract with higher pay, no change to their health care plan, a defined path for temporary workers and improved time-off policies.

20,000 CWA members in the Southeast went on strike to protest unfair labor practices at AT&T, winning a new contract with higher wages and additional job security.

Graduate student employees across

the country fought for basic workplace protections. Early this year, at Harvard University, thousands of recently organized student employees and UAW members went on strike as they sought a first contract.

Unions used collective political power to expand organizing rights in 2019. The labor movement has elected thousands of union members to public office after passing a 2017 convention resolution, and it continues to pay off.

For example, labor won public sector collective bargaining in Nevada (similar efforts are underway in Colorado and Virginia), farmworker collective bargaining in New York, and logger and wood hauler collective bargaining in Maine.

Moreover, in California, AB 5 is a landmark law to prevent the misclassification of employees as independent contractors that will protect the rights and improve the working conditions of more than 1 million workers.

Meanwhile, public approval of unions continued to rise in 2019, reaching a nearly 50-year high. This comes at a time when union activists in unorganized workplaces are gain-

ing momentum, specifically in the hospitality, electric bus manufacturing, technology, videogame and media industries. It's worth noting many of these dozens of campaigns in digital news have yet to be ratified – meaning there are hundreds, if not thousands, of new union members unaccounted for.

And all of this forward progress is despite a federal government that is actively making it harder to form a union. According to the federation, a highly politicized National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is abandoning its mission to uphold and protect workers' right to form unions and bargain collectively, as employers are violating the law in more than 40% of all union election campaigns. This comes on the heels of the Janus decision allowing workers a free ride to be covered by union protections without paying dues, throwing out 40 years of legal precedent in an effort to undermine collective bargaining in the public sector. Despite these unprecedented attacks, many of the AFL-CIO's public sector unions still grew in 2019.

Mixed Coalition Rails Against Administration's Budget Cuts

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OnLabor blog also notes that office has a big workers' center in Houston in its sights, investigating whether it should declare such centers as unions and order them to disclose all their spending details.

And the *Washington Post* reported Trump's Labor Secretary wants that office to investigate more alleged union "corruption," a constant charge from the so-called National Right To Work Committee. There is no similar office in the government going after corporate corruption as its prime responsibility.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, (I-Vermont), had the sharpest words for the administration's spending plan – and he posted them on his Senate website, not through his presidential campaign. "Immoral," was his summary about

an intensely political document that is likely dead on arrival in Congress.

"The Trump budget is an immoral document. It is a budget that takes our collective resources and hands them to the wealthiest families and largest corporations in this country and ignores the needs of the most vulnerable among us," said Sanders.

"The Trump budget for 2021 is a budget of, by, and for the 1%," said Sanders. "It reflects profoundly unethical priorities and shows the president is — and it gives me no great pleasure to say this — a liar."

"What kind of unbelievable moral framework allowed this White House to propose \$182 billion in cuts to nutrition assistance from needy families, when nearly one in seven households with children are food insecure?" the Vermonter added.

As top Democrat on the Senate

Budget Committee, Sanders could have some say on what type of budget lawmakers eventually produce – one that would largely ignore Trump's spending blueprint, if, that is, lawmakers can get their act together and produce a spending plan of their own.

Groups defending women, children and the elderly also panned the budget.

"This budget foreshadows a broader attack on seniors' earned benefits that President Trump hinted at in a recent interview, when he said that cutting 'entitlements' is 'the easiest of all things.' Our most vulnerable citizens should not be expected to pay for policies that favor the wealthy and big corporations, most notably the Trump/GOP tax cuts of 2017," said Max Richtman, president of the National Committee To Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

His group pointed out the president would not only cut Medicare and Social Security, which the elderly depends upon for income and health care payments, but would – again – eliminate heating aid for

low-income people, including low-income elderly.

"One would hope that in an election year when politicians like to put forward their most popular ideas, the President would understand the benefits of protecting our most cherished income and health security programs. It's time he delivers what the American people have been asking for, as indicated by poll after poll, and not the dangerous proposals of his fiscal axe-men," Richtman said.

"Year after year, President Trump's budgets have sought to inflict devastating cuts to critical lifelines that millions of Americans rely on. Less than a week after promising to protect families' health care in his State of the Union address, the president is now brazenly inflicting savage multi-billion-dollar cuts to Medicare and Medicaid – at the same time he is fighting in federal court to destroy protections for people with pre-existing conditions and dismantle every other protection and benefit of the Affordable Care Act," Pelosi added

UIW Directory

HEADQUARTERS

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

ANCHORAGE, AK

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

BALTIMORE, MD

2315 Essex St. 21224
(410) 327-4900

COLUMBUS, OH

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

HONOLULU, HI

606 Kalihi Street 96819
(808) 845-5222

HOUSTON, TX

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

45353 St. George's Avenue 20674
(301) 994-0010

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

659 Hillside St, Summit Hills
San Juan, PR 00920
(939) 204-0337

ST. CROIX, USVI

4031 Estate La Grande Princess Suite 37
Christiansted, USVI 00820
(340) 773-6055

ST. LOUIS, MO

4581 Gravois Ave. 63116
(314) 752-6500

ST. THOMAS, USVI

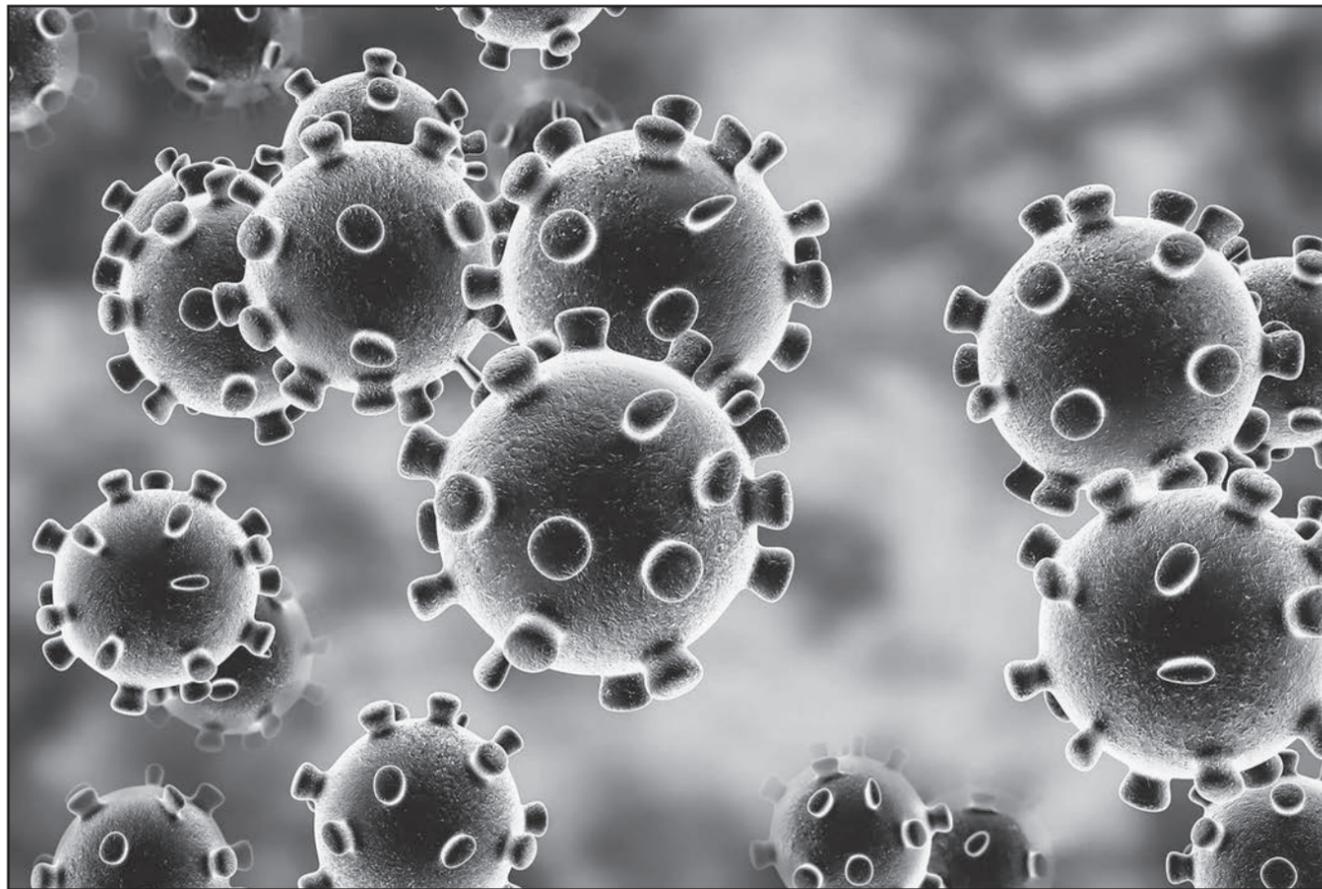
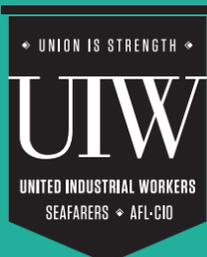
201-3A Altona & Welgunst
Suite 101
St. Thomas, USVI 00802
(340) 774-3895

TACOMA, WA

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

WILMINGTON, CA

510 N. Broad Ave. 90444
(310) 549-3920



UIW Releases Coronavirus Precautions

Continued from Page 1

rather than stopping by their office where you may infect other patients and the providers themselves.

- Notify HR and your supervisor if you are ill or if someone you live with has been confirmed as having COVID-19.

- If you have had a known exposure to someone who has been confirmed to have COVID-19 or is quarantined, quarantine yourself for 2 weeks.

- As the situation evolves, depending on local conditions, it may become important to avoid crowded settings, and, if you must be in a crowded setting, reduce your time there.

- Use basic hygiene and social distancing precautions, including:

- Stay home if you are sick. If you have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, follow the CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/sick-with-2019-nCoV-fact-sheet.pdf> If you are unable to confirm whether you have COVID-19, but you do have upper respiratory infection symptoms, do not return to work unless you have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60% alcohol. It is especially important to clean your hands before eating food or touching your face. Frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizer can cause your hands to become very dry or cracked, so use lotion to keep your hands moisturized. Soap and water remain the best method for cleaning in part because of the mechanical action of rubbing your hands. There are health concerns about chemical additives in hand sanitizers, so use it when soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching your nose, mouth, or eyes, especially if your hands have not been cleaned.

- Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your upper sleeve. Dispose of tissues in no-touch receptacles. Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with people who are ill.

- Avoid shaking hands.
- If you have been wearing gloves, wash your hands after removing them because they may have been contaminated.

- Keep frequently touched common surfaces or objects in the workplace clean, especially in break rooms.

- If you can, avoid using co-workers' phones, computers, offices, pens, work tools, or equipment.

In addition to the foregoing precautions, the following facts have been released about the coronavirus by the CDC:

- The disease can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity. People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

- Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19. People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure.

- Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people. For up-to-date information, visit the formerly referenced CDC website.

Bipartisan Relief Package Becomes Law

President Donald Trump on March 18 signed into law a \$100 billion coronavirus relief package.

Titled the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, the law is a byproduct of a compromise between House Democrats, the administration, and House Republicans – which led to the bill's original provisions being scaled back.

The wide-ranging measure, among other important components:

- Includes funding to support workers who get sick as well as those who have to care for children who are out of school because of the coronavirus response.

- Includes money intended to expand programs for workers who have been laid off from their jobs, including additional funding for states' unemployment programs.

- Bolsters unemployment insurance

including nutrition assistance and guarantees free diagnostic testing for the coronavirus.

- Provides up to 10 days of paid sick leave for some workers. It caps the amount for companies with 500 employees and would allow for those with fewer than 50 to apply for a waiver.

The economic relief bill marks the second such aid package to become law in a matter of weeks and comes at a time when the Trump administration is negotiating with Senators on an economic stimulus package to assist small businesses, American workers and specific sectors such as the airline industry impacted by the coronavirus. The White House has proposed a \$1 trillion stimulus package, which would include sending direct cash payments to Americans.

The passage of this bill signals major progress in Congress's response to the

coronavirus, though there are still many gaps it does not address.

When this edition of the *United Worker* went to press, the coronavirus had—among other things—infected more than 14,000 Americans, caused 218 deaths, shuttered schools across the country, forced restaurants and other businesses to close, and caused airlines to significantly cut back on flights.

In a related development specifically for UIW members, Union Plus has made an important announcement regarding hardship grants. Those enrolled in Union Plus credit card, mortgage, loan or insurance programs who have been affected by layoffs due to the COVID-19 may be eligible for these grants that range up to \$500. Inquiries about this benefit may be directed to Kristy Clements, Union Plus Liaison, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746, phone (301) 702-4432.

Union Workers Are More Likely to Have Access to Paid Sick Days, Health Insurance

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the vast inequalities in the United States between those who can more easily follow the Center for Disease Control's recommendation to stay home and seek medical attention when needed and those who cannot.

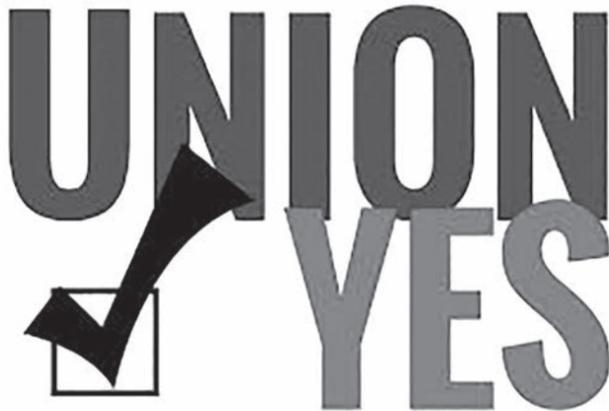
According to the Economic Policy Institute, high-wage earners are more likely to be able to stay home and have health insurance to seek medical care than low-wage earners. And, those in certain sectors—e.g. information and financial activities—are more likely to have paid sick days or can work from home than those in other sectors—e.g. leisure and hospitality. COVID-19 also sheds light on another difference in economic security and access to medical care among workers: the benefits to being in a union.

Union workers are more likely to have access to paid sick days and health insurance on the job than nonunion workers. Only two-thirds of nonunion workers have health insurance from work compared to 94% of union workers.

Having health insurance means workers are more able to seek and afford the care they need. We know in that the United States, millions of people delay getting medical treatment because of the costs. Without health insurance, many do not have a regular source of care and simply won't go to the doctor to get the attention and information they need to not only get better but reduce the spreading of disease.

Union workers are also more likely to be able to stay home when they are sick because they are more likely to have access to paid sick leave. Eighty-six percent of unionized workers can take paid sick days to care for themselves or family members while only 72% of non-union workers can.

Having a union allows workers and their families access to more tools to help them withstand the coronavirus pandemic. Union workers are more likely to be able to stay home and seek medical care, which will help strengthen their communities by being less likely to spread the virus



Gone But Not Forgotten

BRIAN DARKER

Brother Brian Darker, 47, died October 19. Born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, Brother Darker became a member of the UIW in 1996. He was employed by A&E Products. Brother Darker was a resident of Schuylkill, Pennsylvania

HALLIE ELLISON

Pensioner Hallie Ellison, 81, passed away December 3. Sister Ellison came under the union umbrella in 1978, joining while working at Plymkraft. She began receiving stipends for her retirement in 2004. Sister Ellison made her home in Manakin-Sabot, Virginia.

THOMAS ESPY

Pensioner Thomas Espy, 75, died December 8. Born in New York, Brother Espy joined the UIW in 1982 while working at Progressive Driver Services. He retired and went on pension in 2004. Brother Espy resided in his native state in the city of Ballston Spa.

MICHAEL FIORE

Pensioner Michael Fiore, 77, passed away January 19. Brother Fiore donned the UIW colors in 1964 while working at Independent Cordage Co. Born in Staten Island, New York, Brother Fiore began receiving retirement stipends in 1989. He resided in Manhattan, New York.

NILS HANSEN

Pensioner Nils Hansen, 87, died January 13. A native of Norway, Brother Hansen joined the union in 1960. He spent his entire UIW career working at Atlantic Cordage and retired in 1995. Brother Hansen made his home in Brooklyn, New York.

WILLIAM HOLLENBACK

Pensioner William Hollenback, 66, passed away October 29. Born in Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, Brother Hollenback donned the UIW colors in 1973 while working at A&E Products. He started receiving retirement stipends in 2004. Brother Hollenback lived in Mantao, North Carolina.

CLAIRE KALENKOSKI

Pensioner Claire Kalenkoski, 64, died January 14. A native of Somerset, Minnesota, Sister Kalenkoski came under the union umbrella in 1977 while working at A&E Products. She retired and went on pension in 2003. Sister Kalenkoski resided in her native state in the city of Rochester.

CHYEON LEE

Pensioner Chyeon Lee, 80, passed away October 28. Born in Korea, Sister Lee signed on with the UIW in 1981 as a member of the Fish Cannery Union. She retired and went on pension in 1994. Sister Lee was a resident of Los Angeles.

JAMES MOYER

Pensioner James Moyer, 66, died February 3. A native of Pennsylvania, Brother Moyer joined the union in 1973. He spent his entire UIW career working at Paulsen Wire Rope. Brother Moyer called an end to his career in 1988 and went on pension. He resided in his native state in the city of Sunbury.

CHARLES OLIVER

Brother Charles Oliver, 64, passed away Oct. 14. A native of Schuylkill, Pennsylvania, Brother Oliver signed on with the UIW in 1977. He worked at A&E Products. Brother Oliver lived in his native city and state.

IMOGENE RATLIFF

Pensioner Imogene Ratliff, 94, died February 27. Born in Ohio, Sister Ratliff donned the UIW colors in 1980 while working at Church & Dwight. She went on pension in 1988. Sister Ratliff resided in her native state in the city of London.

CLAUDE SMITH

Pensioner Claude Smith 73, died November 11. Brother Smith joined the UIW in 1982 while working at Progressive Driver Services. A U.S. Military veteran, he retired and went on pension in 2000. Brother Smith made his home in Ocala, Florida.

GLENFORD STOWE

Pensioner Glenford Stowe, 72, passed away October 30. A native of Rosedale, New York, Brother Stowe signed on with the UIW in 1976 while working at Seatrain Ship Building. He retired and went on pension in 2013. Brother Stowe made his home in Wisconsin.

RUAL TRISTAN

Pensioner Raul Tristan, 65, died November 22. Born in Mexico, Brother Tristan donned the union colors in 1976 while working at Crown Cork & Seal. He began receiving retirement stipends in 2007. Brother Tristan resided in Houston, Texas.

NATALIE ZINK

Pensioner Natalie Zink, 87, passed away December 25. A native of Pennsylvania, Sister Zink came under the UIW umbrella in 1977 while working at the Retail Clerks Union. She began receiving stipends for her retirement in 1986. Sister Zink made her home in Philadelphia.

UIW Pensioners

Rafael Aguilar
Juanitas Foods
Long Beach, California

Wilson Bachert
A&E Products
Ringtown, Pennsylvania

Linda Buchanan
Superior Services
Victorville, California

Carmen Estrada
Save The Queen
Long Beach, California

Craig Foster
Dist. 1-PCD MEBA
Reeds Springs, Missouri

Michael Glick
Franklin International
Johnstown, Ohio

Patricia Haney
Plymkraft
Newport News, Virginia

Robert Harkins
Victory Refrigeration
Mantua, New Jersey

Craig Hassinger
Paulsen Wire Rope
Sunbury, New Jersey

Diego Hernandez
Portus
Aventura, Florida

Roxane Jackson
Church & Dwight
London, Ohio

Warren Kissel
Lyon Shipyard, Inc.
Moyock, North Carolina

James Moyer
Paulsen Wire Rope
Sunbury, Pennsylvania

John Porter
Franklin International
Logan, Ohio

Arturo Rodriguez
Del Monte Corporation
Fontana, California

Edwin Rosado
American Casting & MFG Corp.
Bronx, New York

Teresa Ruiz
Urban Commons
Cerritos, California

Ana Saldivar
Queen Mary
Hempstead, New York

Manuel Sevilla
Del Monte Corporation
Chino Hills, California

Warren Wagner
Paulsen Wire Rope
Northumberland, Pennsylvania

Paul Worthington
Rossmoor Community Assoc.
Inc.
Ewing, New Jersey

Melbourne Yates
Portus
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida



**Coalition Blasts
Proposed Budget Cuts**
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Congress Passes USMCA, Trump Signs Measure Deal Still Must Be Ratified by Canada Before It Becomes Finalized

President Donald Trump on January 29 signed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), accomplishing a major achievement prior to heading into the 2020 election.

Congress gave its final approval of the refurbished trade agreement January 9 when the U.S. Senate, by an 89-10 margin, voted to move the legislation to the president's desk for his signature. Slightly more than a month earlier on December 19, the U.S. House of Representatives gave its go-ahead on the measure on the strength of a 385-41 vote. The House action came following more than a year-long struggle by Democrats to iron out their concerns about the agreement that centered around tougher enforcement tools for labor standards.

Many regard the USMCA as an updated version of the nearly 25-year-old, trillion-dollar North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It includes major changes on cars and new policies on labor and environmental standards, intellectual property protections, and some digital trade provisions.

Trump, during his February 5 State of the Union Address, touted the legislation as one of his signature achievements. Following is an overview of the measure's main provisions:

Country of origin rules: Automobiles must have 75 percent of their components manufactured in Mexico, the United States, or Canada to qualify for zero tariffs (up from 62.5 percent under NAFTA).

Labor provisions: 40 to 45 percent of automobile parts must be made by

workers who earn at least \$16 an hour by 2023. Mexico agreed to pass new labor laws in order to give greater protections to workers, including migrants and women. Most notably, these laws are supposed to make it easier for Mexican workers to unionize.

U.S. farmers get more access to the Canadian dairy market: The United States got Canada to open up its dairy market to U.S. farmers, a big issue for President Trump.

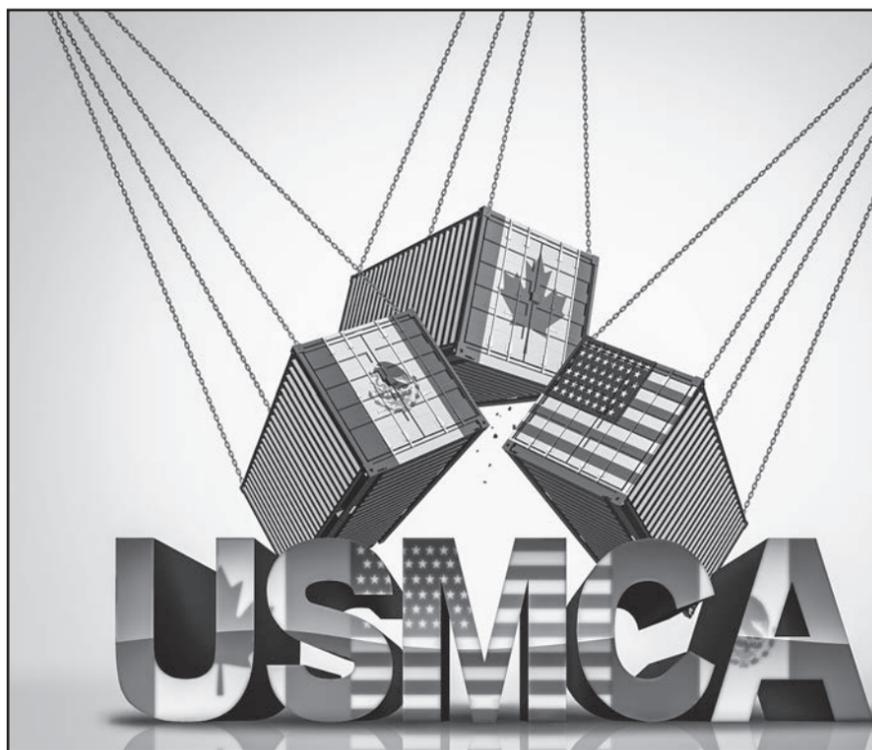
Intellectual property and digital trade: The deal extends the terms of copyright to 70 years beyond the life of the author (up from 50). It also includes new provisions to deal with the digital economy, such as prohibiting duties on things like music and eBooks, and protections for internet companies so they're not liable for content their users produce.

Sunset clause: The agreement adds a 16-year sunset clause — meaning the terms of the agreement expire, or “sunset,” after 16 years. The deal is also subject to a review every six years, at which point the United States, Mexico, and Canada can decide to extend the USMCA.

In June 2019, Mexico became the first country to ratify the deal. But in the United States, Democrats on Capitol Hill refused to sign on to the deal without stronger enforcement of labor provisions, stricter environmental protections, and other changes.

House Democrats formed a working group to work with the administration on those demands.

In December, House Democrats



announced they'd reached a revised USMCA deal with the Trump administration that included most of the updates they wanted. One big one was a “rapid-response mechanism” that calls for an independent, three-person panel of multinational, independent experts who will make sure Mexico abides by its union rules and other protections.

The revised version won the support of Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO, the largest federation

of labor unions in the United States, who had initially opposed the deal. Environmental groups still say it doesn't go far enough, though, and some unions are still opposed.

The USMCA won't be finalized until Canada ratifies it. Canada's parliament just started that process, though some lawmakers are resisting some of the deal's elements. Canada nonetheless is still likely to endorse it. When it does, the USMCA will go into effect 90 days later.

Unemployment Rate Stays Unchanged

Economy Gains 273,000 Jobs During February

The U.S. economy gained 273,000 jobs in February, and the unemployment rate was essentially unchanged at 3.5%, according to figures released March 6 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wages showed some

improvement, rising 3.0% over last year.

February's biggest job gains were in health care (57,000), leisure and hospitality (53,000), government (45,000), construction (42,000), professional and business services (32,000) and financial activities (26,000). Employment in other major industries—including mining, manufacturing, information, transportation and warehousing, wholesale trade, and retail trade—showed little change over the month.

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for Asians declined a half of a percentage point in February to 2.5%. Unemployment rates for teenagers (11.0%), blacks (5.8%), Hispanics (4.4%), adult men (3.3%), whites (3.1%) and adult women (3.1%) showed little or no change.

The number of long-term unemployed (those jobless for 27 weeks or more) showed little change in February and accounted for 19.2% of the unemployed.



AFL-CIO Endorses Trade Deal After Negotiating Upgrades

Editor's note: AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka released the following statement December 29 on the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), provided final text accurately reflects changes:

“Make no mistake, we demanded a trade deal that benefits workers and fought every single day to negotiate that deal; and now we have secured an agreement that working people can proudly support.

“I am grateful to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her allies on the USMCA working group, along with Senate champions like Sherrrod Brown and Ron Wyden, for standing strong with us throughout this process as we demanded a truly enforceable agreement. I also commend Ambassador Robert Lighthizer for being a straight shooter and an honest broker as we worked toward a resolution.

“Working people are responsible for a deal that is a vast improvement over both the original NAFTA and the flawed proposal brought forward in 2017. For the first time, there truly will

be enforceable labor standards—including a process that allows for the inspections of factories and facilities that are not living up to their obligations.

“The USMCA also eliminates special carve outs for corporations like the giveaway to Big Pharma in the administration's initial proposal and loopholes designed to make it harder to prosecute labor violations.

“The USMCA is far from perfect. It alone is not a solution for outsourcing, inequality or climate change. Successfully tackling these issues requires a full-court press of economic policies that empower workers, including the repeal of tax cuts which reward companies for shipping our jobs overseas.

“But there is no denying that the trade rules in America will now be fairer because of our hard work and perseverance. Working people have created a new standard for future trade negotiations.

“President Trump may have opened this deal. But working people closed it. And for that, we should be very proud.”