



New Mexico

State Employee Alliance



Voice of your Union - CWA 7076 Summer 2008

Contract Bargaining-2008

Member Action Will Be Vital to Win Strong Improvements

Paula Hopper,
CWA Region 4 VP, Steward, Bargaining Team

The opportunity to represent CWA workers and their families on the Contract Bargaining Team this year is awe-inspiring! Economic security and workplace representation are important goals of our union during the bargaining process. One factor that separates the union-represented workplaces from the non-union environment is VOICE. Union represented workers have a right and ability to be heard collectively. Moreover, I will meet and talk with as many of you as possible and get your commitment to SHOUT that VOICE this year!



Bargaining Team L to R, Eric Peters NMED, Leona Maes STO, Robin Gould DCA, Janine Anton DoIT, Marcos Tapia DoIT, Michelle Lewis PED, Lawrence Sandoval CWA, Phil Sweeney DOH, Glen Carlberg DOH, Mike Mailinowski GSD, Paula Hopper DOH, Tom Scharmen DOH, not pictured - Scott Gould WCA, Rosa Padilla DOH, Robert Romero PED, Paul Singdahlsen DCA, Carl Reed GSD, Bertha Terrazas OCC, Kathy Chavez CSW

CWA 7076's newly elected bargaining team met together for the first time on May 14th at the Santa Fe Union Hall and began preparation for contract negotiations expected to open this Summer. Many new faces joined the experienced union activists as they sat down and began examining 263 issue surveys submitted by State Workers. Pay inequity, real cost of living increases, improved benefits, health and safety, and career advancement were issues topping the list that

CWA 7076 members want to see the union fight for during negotiations.

One of the bargaining team's first tasks has been to establish an activist network reaching into every represented workplace in New Mexico. What Union members must know is that our collective bargaining power does not grow out of a table of

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Unions Continue Fight for Contract Raises

On April 18, CWA and AFSCME (our sister union) filed a joint prohibited practices complaint (PPC) against the State of New Mexico for bargaining in bad faith over our wage increase. The case is going to be heard in August before the Public Employees Labor Relations Board. As you may remember, we called members to action during the legislative session and we believed our raises were fully funded as negotiated.

SPO moved forward by taking an entirely different proposal to the State Personnel Board, i.e., 2.9% of midpoint. On July 1st, SPO will begin rolling out the raise package that does not meet the amount negotiated in the contract. If we prevail in our case against the state then State Workers will see a raise go into effect retroactively that reflects the actual amount negotiated in the contract.

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The Alliance Progress

Employee Free Choice Act

The right of workers to organize and bargain collectively is a longstanding American value. It has so helped build a strong middle class and a strong nation, that it is a now principle enshrined in international agreements. It is a core standard that the United States uses to measure adherence to democratic norms throughout the world.

Yet across America, workers are being stripped of this basic freedom.

Each year, more than 20,000 workers are illegally fired or discriminated against for attempting to organize. Many employers make an art of it - hiring high priced union busting "consultants" to help defeat organizing drives. And even if employees overcome all the odds, in one-third of all union election victories, workers still do not have a collective bargaining agreement two years after the election.

42 million workers who are not in a union have say they would like to be represented by one. 42 million workers is more than three times the number of workers presently represented by unions in the United States. That is 42 million workers who are unable to exercise their rights.

It is in the name of those workers that CWA is fighting for the Employee Free Choice Act. EFCA provides for the certification of a union as the bargaining representative if the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) finds that a majority of employees in an appropriate bargaining unit have signed written forms designating the union as its collective bargaining agent

EFCA also speeds along the process of bargaining between employer and employees for their first contract by obligating both parties to reach an agreement, through escalating procedures of mediation and arbitration, if necessary.

EFCA requires stronger penalties against employers for engaging in unfair labor practices while employees are attempting to organize or obtain a first contract. The bill mandates that the NLRB must seek a federal court injunction against an employer whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that the employer has discharged employees or discriminated against them or engaged in conduct that interferes significantly with employee rights during an organizing campaign or bargaining for a first contract.

The Act also mandates an award of three times the amount of back pay for illegal discrimination that occurs during efforts to organize or when workers are seeking a first contract. The legislation provides for penalties up to \$20,000 per violation against employers found to have willfully or repeatedly violated workers' rights during an organizing campaign or pursuit of a first contract.

At the very minimum, American workers should be free to decide whether they want union representation without experiencing intimidation, retaliation or interference.

Enactment of EFCA would help ensure that workers can exercise the basic human right to organize freely and bargain collectively.

Outrageous! AFL-CIO Speaks Out on How Gas Prices Hurt Working Families in NM.

Driving down Central Avenue in Albuquerque, NM, on June 11th 2008, one could hear the blare of horns honking their support for a boisterous crowd of people from AFL-CIO and community affiliates protesting the rising cost of gasoline. Members of AFSCME, AFT, IBEW, NATCA, SMWIA, and UA waved signs proclaiming "Bush + McCain Love Big Oil" to spread the message about how gas prices are hitting working Americans hard.

Dana Hampton of Working America, spoke to the media about how gas prices have affected her family. "I live in Albuquerque because I have to be here for chemotherapy five times a week. My family can barely afford to drive here from Alamogordo to visit me. You're telling me that Bush and McCain can do nothing to stop oil prices? I'm not buying it."

To show AFL-CIO sympathies for working Americans, Executive Director Chris Chavez of the NM State Fed gave out free gift cards for two gallons of gas to people driving up to the station. He sent out our message, "We understand how you and your family have been affected by gas prices, you deserve a free trip to work today."

This country is at a critical turning point. The average person now spends ¼ of monthly income just getting to and from work, and prices of food and other basic needs continue to skyrocket as the Bush administration allows oil prices to get more and more out of control.

Dean Powers, Canvas Director for Working America says, "The reason that members are signing up to be part of Working America by the thousands is because our message is resonating with them. People are fed up with rising gas prices, expensive prescriptions and a poor health care system. We need to take back America."

Source: NMLabor2008, <http://labor2008.typepad.com/nm/>



Health Care Voices: Why Americans Want Change Now

The AFL-CIO union movement is fighting for a unique American plan for secure, high-quality health care for all that:

- Builds on what's best about American health care.
- Controls costs.
- Makes sure everyone gets high-quality health care as good or better than they have now.
- Covers preventive care.
- Lets people choose their own doctors and other providers.
- Government is watchdog on costs, quality and fairness and offers the choice of a public alternative to private insurance.
- Divides responsibility among employers, government and individuals.

The unions of the AFL-CIO are mobilizing a 1-million-member health care mobilization team working with a broad alliance of grassroots organizations to win progressive reform and give millions more union members the information and tools to become active players and health care voters.

What's Wrong with America's Health Care System?

America is facing a health care crisis. As of 2006, 47 million U.S. residents have no health insurance, and the number keeps rising. By 2010, the number of uninsured Americans will grow to more than 50 million. That's 50 million people who face bankruptcy if they get sick—or who might avoid seeking treatment altogether. Exploding health costs are devastating working families.

Recent AFL-CIO opinion research of union members and retirees and polls of the general public show Americans overwhelmingly agree on the need for health care reform.

AFL-CIO opinion research of union members and retirees found:

- 71 percent of union members believe it is "critical" for elected officials to address health care (compared with 75 percent for Iraq, 67

percent for terrorism and 43 percent for economic conditions).

- 82 percent of union members say the health care situation is either in a "state of crisis" (32 percent) or has "major problems" (50 percent).
- 76 percent of union workers believe the health care situation either needs an "overhaul" (30 percent) or "major reforms" (46 percent).
- 82 percent of union members say the "government should do more" in the area of health care (compared with 67 percent for education and 63 percent for labor/employment issues).
- 90 percent of respondents to a CBS/New York Times poll of the general public earlier this year said the U.S. health care system needs to undergo fundamental change (54 percent) or be rebuilt completely (36 percent).
- 95 percent of the public believes the fact that many Americans do not have health insurance is a very serious (70 percent) or somewhat serious (25 percent) problem, according to that same poll.
- 84 percent of the same respondent pool said they would favor expansion of a government program that provides health insurance for some children in low- and moderate-income families in order to cover all uninsured children.
- 85 percent of respondents to an Associated Press poll earlier this year said health care was either extremely or very important to them as an issue while 86 percent of those polled in another CNN survey around the same time agreed.
- 76 percent of Americans either strongly support (53 percent) or somewhat support (23 percent) providing guaranteed health care coverage for every American, according to a recent Gallup poll.

Sources: AFL-CIO and Working America

Websites; Financial Dynamics International Ltd. for the AFL-CIO, a nationally representative survey of 601 working members and retirees, July 25–29, 2007.

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20 union leaders sitting down with management. Our power must come from a vocal active membership in the workplace. To that end, members are called to action! Contact the union hall and let us know that you can spend some time (1 hour a week or more) communicating with your co-workers, telling them what is happening at the negotiating table, and amplifying their responses so they are heard loud and clear by our team and management's. Local Activists will be visiting State Facilities throughout the summer months

and holding lunch time meetings to discuss the bargaining process and build activist networks. Mobilization events are being organized around many of the concerns we're working to address at the bargaining table. This will provide all of us the ability to exercise that VOICE. And, as a UNION, to recognize and support the concerns and goals of our fellow Union members as we negotiate another 3-year contract.



One for all, all for one! Let's give it everything we've got and inform State Government we mean what we say and we say what we mean. CWA

7076's contract protects and benefits New Mexico State Employees at over 200 locations across our State. Our current contract will expire at the end of December 2008.

COPE (Committee On Political Education)

COPE is the legislative and political arm of the union that supports legislation that affects all Americans. Legislative and Political Action cannot be funded by members dues money and is solely supported by voluntary member contributions.

CWA-COPE supports issues that affect working families including:

- Universal Health Care for all Americans.
- Passage of a Strong Patient's Bill of Rights to safeguard quality patient care.
- Increased Public Support for Teaching Hospitals and other Facilities instead of privatization or closures.
- Safer, Healthier Jobs including OSHA protections against SARS, TB and other airborne pathogens; a strong, national ergonomics standard and protection from workplace violence.
- Better Schools for children and financial help so they can

continue their education past high school.

- Secure Pensions, a strong Social Security system and a modern Medicare program with real prescription drug benefits.

As a union of health care professionals CWA goes to Capital Hill with a different agenda than the corporations. We believe America needs a health care system that puts quality patient care first, not industry profits.

To get our message across in Washington, CWA-COPE mobilizes our union's members to provide the financial support it takes to back legislators and candidates who aren't afraid to stand up for quality health care and for the women and men who provide it.

We also ensure that CWA families have the factual, up-to-date information needed to hold politicians accountable.

When you contribute to CWA-COPE

you're sending a message that it's time for Congress to curb the power of the insurance companies and drug industry and put quality health care first.

For as little as \$1 a week you can give CWA-COPE the added strength we need to make our voices heard.

Individually, none of us will ever have the money that corporations spend on politics. But your contribution, combined with those of more than 700,000 CWA families across America, can give us the strength to win.

Contact your union to contribute to CWA-COPE and become active in the SEA-CWA legislative and political action program. In Santa Fe at 505-955-8534 in Albuquerque at 505-889-4537 visit SEA-CWA website at SEA-CWA.org.

Check It Out! Keep up with the fight to take back America at www.cwa-cope.org

John McCain's Health Care Proposal Will Increase Costs and Reduce Benefits

John McCain's health care proposal is similar to President Bush's failed plan. Like Bush's, McCain's plan undermines existing employer-based health care and pushes workers into the private market to fight big insurance companies on their own. It will reduce benefits, increase costs and leave many with no health care at all.

A New Tax on Working Families. McCain wants to shift the burden from employers to workers. He will make employer-provided health benefits part of taxable income, essentially creating a new tax for working families.

Increase Costs to Workers. The modest tax credit McCain wants to give to people to cover his new tax would cover less than half the average health premium, leaving workers to pick up the difference. Also, by promoting high-deductible Health Savings Account (HAS) plans, which provide fewer benefits at higher costs, he will make the high costs of individual insurance even worse.

Leaves Workers at the Mercy of Big Insurance Companies. McCain's effort to "eliminate the bias" toward employer-based health care will encourage employers to stop offering health care, pushing workers into an unregulated market to fend for themselves. Big insurance companies will be free to weed out people with health care needs, charge excessive premiums and limit benefits.

Makes Health Care Harder to Get. Pushing workers into the private health care market and promoting HAS's will encourage insurance companies to attract only the healthiest people, driving costs up overall. Insurance companies can decide to refuse to cover people with pre-existing conditions, such as cancer survivors. Retirees will have a particularly hard time getting health care.

Lowers the Quality of Available Health Care Plans. Many states have laws regulating health care quality by requiring basic services to be included in health care coverage. McCain's proposal would circumvent these laws, resulting in lower quality coverage without consumer protection.

Sources:

The Commonwealth Fund, *Envisioning the Future*, 1/08; Los Angeles Times, 11/20/07; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), *Administration's Proposed Tax Deduction for Health Insurance Seriously Flawed*, 7/31/07; CBPP, *GAO Study Confirms Health Savings Accounts Primarily Benefit High-Income Individuals*, 9/20/06; CBPP, *A Brief Overview of the Major Flaws with Health Savings Accounts*, 4/5/06; The Commonwealth Fund, *Paying More for Less*, 6/05; McCain's campaign website, accessed 2/21/08; Health 08.org (Kaiser Family Foundation) *Presidential Candidate Forum: John McCain*, 10/31/07; Kaiser Family Foundation and HRET, *Employer Health Benefits 2007 Annual Survey*.