



Labor Fax

February 22, 2008

Volume 12 Issue 2

DIALOGUE ON DEBT REDUCTION IN NEW JERSEY

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

Governor Jon S. Corzine began a tour of our State, last month, meeting with an unprecedented number of New Jerseyans, to introduce and gain feedback on his Financial Restructuring and Debt Reduction Proposal that would pay down half of the state's debt and fund transportation projects for a generation. With each man, woman and child in New Jersey personally owning \$3,700 of our State's \$32 billion bonded debt (the third highest amount in the country), New Jersey is facing true fiscal crisis. This situation didn't happen overnight, and won't be fixed overnight either. A solution will require tough choices, unconventional thought, and in some cases, ideas that we won't all see eye-to-eye on. What we do all agree on is, if the finances of the State are not corrected, our State, and, most importantly, our children, will not have the same opportunities that our infrastructure have provided to us.

We may not agree one hundred percent with the Governor on everything in the debt reduction strategies he proposes, but we are supportive of, and grateful for, the Governor's willingness to continue to involve us and consider our concerns, opinions and perspectives as we sustain and improve our State. Our continued engagement, counsel and commitment are crucial if our State is to continue to move forward in a way that benefits workers and their families.

When we worked so hard in 2005 to elect a pro-working families governor, we knew organized labor would have a seat at the table and a role in the process. Governor Corzine has provided those opportunities for dialogue. He has stated that he is open to considering thoughtful, alternative solutions to solving New Jersey's debt crisis. We should take advantage of the Governor's invitation to provide our ideas and feedback, because that inclusion and outreach are, in part, what we fought for in the 2005 Election.



1998
Labor Fax
APEX Award

Labor Fax Co-Editors:

Charles Wowkanech

Laurel Brennan

President

Secretary-Treasurer

Associate Editor:

Christine Rampolla

(609) 989-8730 • www.njafclcio.org

UNION MEMBER TURNOUT ON SUPER TUESDAY

Union members turned out in big numbers in Super Tuesday's 23-state Presidential Primary Election, earlier this month. According to exit polls by CNN, in New Jersey, 35 percent of the votes in the Democratic Party's Primary Election came from union households. Overall voter turnout, at 35% of registered voters, was the highest for a Presidential Primary since 1940. The New Jersey Attorney General's Office reports that statewide voter registration rose by 221,000 people since the last Presidential Primary Election of June 2004 (which had 9% voter turnout), with 48,000 registered since our November 6, 2007 General Election.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE LOBBY DAY

All affiliates supporting pending Paid Family Leave legislation are asked to participate in a 'Paid Family Leave Lobby Day' at the State House on Monday, March 3, 2008, with the New Jersey Partnership for Working Families and allied organizations. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO will be coordinating private meetings with legislators on this day, as well as having membership interaction with legislators. All interested participants are asked to contact Eric Richard, Legislative Affairs Coordinator, at 609-989-8730 or ericrichard@njafclcio.org.

MOBILIZE YOUR MEMBERS TO TAKE ACTION!

Please "spread the word," asking your membership to contact their legislators immediately in support of this important pro-family legislation (S-786: Sweeney & A-873: Albano). Members can connect to their State Senator's office automatically to register their support for this bill by calling 1-877-696-2282 toll-free, a service provided by the AARP. Members can also send a free, automatic pre-written fax to all three of their legislators by visiting our coalition's web site at www.njp4wf.org.

477 AND COUNTING

Congratulations to Union Brother Jason Carty, of IAFF Local 3091 for winning election to the Mount Holly Board of Fire Commissioners. New Jersey's rank-and-file union members have won 477 elections to public office through the Labor Candidates Program.

27th CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION CALL

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO 27th Constitutional Convention will be held at the Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa at Renaissance Pointe in Atlantic City, on June 10-11, 2008. The Constitutionally-mandated Convention Call was sent to affiliates earlier this month. Please check your union's mailbox for more information on this important event for our State's Labor Movement.

ON THE ROAD

Officers and Staff of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO:

...Successfully lobbied for the release of Paid Family Leave legislation from the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

...Testified in support of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's plan to provide for increased security, as well as the proposed long-term capitol construction plan.

...Provided LEAP services for 1199J AFSCME members being dislocated from Barnert Hospital, in Paterson.

...Conducted a LEAP Training for Officers and Staff of 1199J AFSCME in Newark and UAW in Atlantic City.

...Participated in the NJ State AFL-CIO Retirees Committee Meeting in New Brunswick.

...Facilitated Security Awareness and Preparedness Training at Chemtura Corporation in Perth Amboy.

...Trained Public Works employees in Sea Isle City on Trench Safety, Bloodborne Pathogens and Workplace Violence.

...Participated in Youth Transition to Work Partnership Program meetings of RWDSU Local 108 and the New Jersey Pipe Trades Association.

...Worked with the Transitions Sub-Committee of the State Council on Adult Literacy Education Services to form assistance strategies for high school graduates pursuing continued education.

...Contributed valuable input at Union County One-Stop Career Center's Regional Workforce Development meeting and the New Jersey Career and Technical Education Advisory Council.

2008 OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 2008 OSHEP Conference, held on February 21, 2008, at the Heldrich Hotel & Conference Center in New Brunswick, received rave reviews from its 100+ participants, representing safety and health professionals, employers, and union activists, staff and shop stewards. The Conference highlighted important workplace safety and health issues like Outdoor Electrical Safety, Workplace Violence, Global Warming and Energy Control, and World Trade Center Health Effects, among others.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Register now for the Fourth Annual Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference, being held on March 28, through 29, 2008, at the Rutgers University Labor Education Center in New Brunswick. Beginning with a reception and distinguished bill of speakers on Friday evening, the Conference will feature workshops, panel discussions, and a keynote speaker on Cultivating Leadership. For more information, contact Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan at 609-989-8730.

LEAP TRAINING COURSE

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO and New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development established the Labor Employment Action Project (LEAP) to enable unions to be proactive in today's rapidly changing workplaces. The LEAP Spring Train-the-Trainer Program will be held April 22, 23 and 24, 2008, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at Rutgers University Labor Education Center in New Brunswick. Please contact LEAP Coordinator Nancy Miller at (973) 614-0049 for more info.

Upcoming Events

March 3, 2008	Paid Family Leave Lobby Day Trenton, NJ
March 12-14, 2008	Safety and Health Train-the-Trainer Manchester, NJ
March 12, 2008	New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees Committee Meeting New Brunswick, NJ
March 28-29, 2008	Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference New Brunswick, NJ
March 29, 2008	School Board/Non-partisan Election Labor Candidates Seminar Trenton, NJ
April 22-24, 2008	LEAP Train-the-Trainer New Brunswick, NJ
April 25 -27, 2008	Organizing Institute Course New Brunswick, NJ
April 30, 2008	Public Employee Meeting Trenton, NJ
May 20, 2008	New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees Legislative Conference Edison, NJ
June 10-11, 2008	27th New Jersey State AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention Atlantic City, NJ

For more information on any events listed, please check our online calendar at www.njafclcio.org.

INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO and the Essex-West Hudson, Hudson, Bergen and Passaic Central Labor Councils hosted a meeting, yesterday, to discuss the future international trade agreements that may soon be debated by Congress. Congressmen Pascrell and Sires attended the meeting, giving union representatives the opportunity to take a strong stance on the need for strong workers' rights protections in any future trade deals. Just days after an AFL-CIO led fact-finding mission to Columbia, New Jersey union members expressed a moral obligation for any trade agreements to require signatory countries guarantee collective bargaining rights, safety and health protections, and environmental controls, among other basic standards.

STATE AFL-CIO WELCOMES NEW STAFF PERSON

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is pleased to welcome Mike Logan to our staff. Mike, who has joined our COPE Department, most recently worked on grassroots election campaigns in New Jersey, as an organizer with the AFL-CIO community affiliate, Working America.