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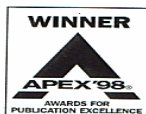
By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

2008 was a momentous year for our State's Labor Movement, filled with one accomplishment and milestone after another. The year began with enthusiasm centered on the prospect of passing landmark Paid Family Leave legislation into law, after nearly a decade of fighting for this program. Union members mobilized and contacted their legislators in droves and legislators and our Governor responded.

The passing of this legislation reinforced that notion that when we work together, we win together! It was with this mind-set that affiliates participated in the 27th Constitutional Convention, setting a clear mandate for change in Washington and feeling empowered to start right here at home by educating fellow union-member voters. Your confidence in our leadership and unanimous support of our re-election to office was heard loud and clear, and we set our sights on November.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO Labor 2008 Program was the most aggressive union member political education and mobilization initiative ever undertaken. Nearly every weekend between September and November broke previous records for labor-to-labor walks. Your efforts to register, educate, mobilize and deliver union household votes for our endorsed candidates clearly made the difference, ensuring our 500th Labor Candidate victory. No other state has come close to matching this milestone and you have a lot to be proud of.

This November 4th was a historic moment in our country's history. It was also another reminder of what we can accomplish when we work together. We hope you share our optimism as we enter 2009. An economic recovery and revitalization for our country, passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, and national healthcare reform are all within our reach, but only if we enter the new year with the same intensity that we applied to the 2008 Election. It is up to each and every one of us to do our part, and to hold the newly elected and re-elected leaders accountable.



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We cannot thank you enough for the hard work and dedication that each of you gave on behalf of working families during this historic and productive year. We will have to fight with strength and vigor to match and exceed this past year's accomplishments. In partnership with our Central Labor Councils, Building Trades Councils, affiliates and coalition partners, we have the collective power to do so.

2008 — A YEAR IN REVIEW

The beginning of a new year meant it was time to mobilize for an even more aggressive agenda for 2008. Together, we set the tone for the upcoming months in January by:

- Commencing "Operation Clean Sweep 2008," an effort to ensure the accuracy of union membership files, allowing us to improve our successful election programs.
- Testifying before the House Committee on Education and Labor in support of joint labor-management safety and health committees, following the tragic deaths of two workers at Northeast Linens.
- Standing with Senator Frank R. Lautenberg to announce new chemical security protections for New Jersey.
- Providing technical assistance to local consortia applying for the Construction Trades Training Program for Women and Minorities Grants of the School Development Authority, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Although it is the shortest month of the year, February certainly was full of accomplishments. In just 28 days, we:

- Held a two-day CLC Presidents' Retreat, featuring presentations by Joseph Cryan, Chairman of the New Jersey Democratic State Committee and David Engledow of Working America, and an overview of new technologies in voter tracking.
- Showed up to the polls in record numbers on Presidential Primary Election Day, with union members accounting for 35 percent of the votes in the Democratic Party's Primary.

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- Stood with Governor Corzine as he signed Executive Order #96, creating a commission to examine Construction industry independent contractor reform.
- Conducted Labor Candidates Training for Fire Commissioner Labor Candidates resulting in an additional union member elected to a local Board of Fire Commissioners.
- Hosted the 2008 New Jersey Occupational Safety and Health Conference, in partnership with the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. Over 120 participants attended workshop sessions on a variety of topics including Workplace Violence, Process Safety Management, Outdoor Electrical Hazards and Emergency Response.
- Facilitated an opportunity for affiliates to voice the need for stronger workers' rights protections in Future International Free Trade Agreements at a meeting with Congressmen Pascrell and Sires.

It was the hard work of our affiliates, not the Luck of the Irish, that helped us in March as we:

- Held numerous Paid Family Leave lobby days, connecting union members with their State representatives.
- Sponsored the 5th Annual Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference, which provided panel discussions on building leadership skills and achieving political power, and included its first international delegation of union women.
- Facilitated a School Boards / Non-Partisan Labor Candidates Training Seminar for potential labor candidates.
- Conducted Labor 2008 Kick-off meetings in targeted Congressional Districts, and started educating union members through targeted mailings.

With Winter behind us, we were ready to "Spring" into action in April by:

- Keeping up the pressure to pass Paid Family Leave legislation through the State Senate and Assembly, via e-activist alerts, lobby days and affiliate phone calls to legislators.
- Convening the first annual statewide Organizing Institute, engaging union members in the growth of our movement and preparing them to organize new members.
- Electing 16 out of 19 graduates of the Labor Candidates Program to School Boards across the State.
- Participating in Workers' Memorial Day observations to commemorate those who have died in workplace catastrophes, suffered diseases because of exposure to toxic substances or have been injured because of dangerous conditions, and rededicated ourselves to the fight for safe workplaces.

- Delivered Worker Peer Counselor Training to address Workplace change, focusing on job retention, job transition, layoffs and plant closings, through the Labor employment Action Project (LEAP).

- Applauding Atlantic City Mayor Scott Evans as he signed a casino smoking ban into law at the United Auto Workers hall in Atlantic City.

Unfortunately, there wasn't much time for us to stop and smell the May flowers. This month we:

- Participated in the Governor's Bill Signing Ceremony for Paid Family Leave legislation, making New Jersey the second state to enact a program
- Held the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees 7th Annual Eldercare Conference, with 200 retirees in attendance to hear speakers including Ron Blackwell, Chief Economist of the AFL-CIO, and discussed issues such as the Employee Free Choice Act and the need to protect and improve Medicare and Social Security.
- Elected 4 out of 5 labor candidates to Non-partisan Municipal offices, bringing the total number of labor candidate election victories to 499.

June of 2008 marked an important milestone as we held our 27th Constitutional Convention. At this quadrennial Convention, delegates:

- Voted unanimously to re-elect President Charles Wowkanech, Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan and the entire slate of Vice-Presidents.
- Endorsed 37 rank-and-file members for election to office through the labor candidates program, 11 candidates for House of Representative, Senator Frank Lautenberg for U.S. Senate, and the eventual democratic nominee for President, U.S. Senator Barack Obama.
- Amended the Constitution to add a representative of Central Labor Council Presidents to the Executive Board, and created a stable and long-term funding mechanism for the COPE Program to grow our State's pioneering labor candidates' program.
- Passed resolutions charting our movement's direction on the Employee Free Choice Act, nationwide healthcare reform, economic prosperity for all, supporting our troops, and green-sector job growth, among other meaningful and progressive resolutions.

We didn't let the dog days of summer get us down in July! This summer, we:

- Lobbied on a Workers Compensation reform package of six bills, which were later signed into law in October.

- Supported and fought for A-2873, which would provide approximately \$3.9 billion for school construction. The bill was signed into law on July 9th.
- Provided technical assistance on applying for customized training grants through the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to IBEW Local 164, RWDSU Local 1102, and UA Local 9.
- Graduated 39 union members from the 11th Annual Labor Candidates' School in collaboration with the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. The course offered union members seeking office an opportunity to fine-tune their campaign skills in areas such as fundraising, public speaking and media relations.
- Provided job retention, layoff and plant closing assistance, Trade Act assistance and information to unions and thousands of members.
- Conducted landmark bilingual training in Hindi and English for members of UNITEHERE Local 54 in Atlantic City.
- Launched a new partnership with the Middlesex County Construction Trades Training Program to train and certify students for the OSHA 10 Hour Construction Industry course.

By September, we were geared up for the upcoming Election season. We were prepared for the fight and in September we:

- Observed Labor Day, starting with 114th Annual Peter J. McGuire Labor Day Celebration on the Battleship New Jersey.
- Lobbied against legislation seeking to reduce certain public employee benefits.
- Kicked-off the Labor 2008 Program, designed to empower union voters to make informed decisions at the polls in November and elect pro-working family candidates who will represent us in Trenton, by providing educational materials to affiliates and commencing labor-to-labor walks.
- Recruited a record numbers of union volunteers for labor walks, phone banks and worksite leafleting.

With the goal of electing our 500th union member into public office, and making sure the voices of New Jersey's working families were heard, we kept the momentum going in October by:

- Conducting a massive member education, persuasion, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort to ensure the election of labor candidates, who will fight for the rights of workers in the Statehouse.
- Convening the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Legislative Conference, focusing on the "Education and Mobilization" of our members, emphasizing the importance of the this year's elections and strategies to grow the labor movement.

- Hosting the NJ State AFL-CIO Retirees 7th Annual Legislative Conference, attended by over 200 retirees. Speakers included labor candidates and the Legislative Director of the National AFL-CIO, describing the launch of their 2008 Healthcare Initiative.
- Rallying with hundreds of affiliates and members of the New Jersey Labor for Obama committee, in support of endorsed Presidential candidate, U.S. Senator Barack Obama.

Working families sent a mandate for change to Washington in November. November was a momentous month, as we:

- Mobilized a GOTV effort resulting in our labor movements' 500th rank-and-file union member victory since the inception of the Labor Candidates Program, far outpacing any other state in the union.
- Completed more member-to-member contacts than ever before through the COPE Program, with over 360,000 phone calls, 359,000 house visits, 464,780 pieces of mail and 2,103,818 worksite flyers reaching union members in New Jersey during this election cycle.
- Delivered huge union household vote pluralities for all endorsed candidates electing Barack Obama, Frank Lautenberg, John Alder, and all endorsed incumbents for Congress. Also elected 36 out of 46 labor candidates achieving 536 labor candidate election victories since 1997.

While still rejoicing from November's political accomplishments, we had one final month to make a difference in the lives of working families. In December, we kept up the pace by:

- Presenting Major General Glann K. Reith with a donation to the New Jersey National Guard's State Family Readiness Council, on behalf of the executive Board and in appreciation of all that our national Guard does and sacrifices for our country.
- Hosting an OSHEP Advisory Board meeting, focusing on OSHEP's accomplishments during the past fiscal year and a presentation by Board of Public Utilities Commissioner Joseph L. Fiordaliso on Clean Energy Initiatives.
- Lobbied in support of SCR-60, which seeks to amend the state Constitution to stop the diversion of funds from workers protection funds such as the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The resolution has passed the State Senate.

2008 was a victorious year for workers organizing for a voice on the job. New Jersey State AFL-CIO Officers, Staff, and Affiliates supported organizing campaigns and shared representation election victories for newly organized workers with...

- More than 1,000 New Jersey adult day care providers who gained a voice on the job by joining the Communication Workers of America Locals 1037 and 1040, forming the first unit of its kind in the nation.
- Two groups of workers at the Heldrich Hotel and Conference Center, gaining union recognition with IUOE 68 in April and UNITEHERE in August, both through card-check neutrality agreements.
- Sixty-two workers employed by the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, who voted to join the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), and ratified their first contract in May.

This year, we welcomed into our New Jersey State AFL-CIO family four newly affiliated unions:

- CWA Local 1012,
- National Air Traffic Controllers,
- CWA Local 1079, and
- APWU Local 149.

Together, we confronted labor challenges facing our members in 2008. We rallied and marched in solidarity with...

- Taxi Dispatchers and Customer Service Representatives Employed by Gateway Security, Inc., united through CWA Local 1032, who had been without a contract since September of 2006.
- Members of ATU Local 1614, employed by the Lakeland Bus Company, fighting for a fair contract, in Rockaway Township this April.
- Over 7,000 technical and clerical Verizon employees, united through the IBEW and CWA, and fighting for a collective bargaining agreement.
- Thousands of workers from the Northeast Region of the U.S. Congressional representatives, President Sweeney and UAW President Ron Gettlefinger, community representatives, and an interfaith coalition who marched through Atlantic City demanding the right for casino workers to fairly negotiate collective bargaining agreements.
- UAW workers trying to save automobile industry manufacturing jobs by appealing to Congress to vote for an industry bridge loan.



**THE OFFICERS AND STAFF
OF THE
NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO
WISH ALL OF OUR
UNION BROTHERS AND SISTERS A HAPPY,
HEALTHY NEW YEAR!**

