



Labor Fax

March 30, 2005

Volume 9 Issue 3

TAKING AWAY SECURITY

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

For seventy years social security has provided retired and disabled workers a guaranteed income, and in many cases, has been the safety net which has kept its recipients from falling into poverty. Now, in his first major assault against working families in his second term, President Bush has announced plans to reform this program.

Under his plan, social security funds would be diverted from the program and put into the hands of private account managers. If enacted, President Bush's reforms would plunge our nation deeper into debt and tie future benefits to the success of the stock market. The labor movement here in New Jersey, and throughout the country, has fought to guarantee workers financial security after their working days are over and will not accept this risky scheme.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is proud to be leading a statewide mobilization campaign against social security privatization. On Thursday, March 24, 2005 several hundred working men and women joined us for a rally on the Statehouse steps to urge our Congressional Delegation to oppose any plans which will lead to the creation of private accounts, reduced benefits, or further drain the social security trust fund. We would like to thank Senator Jon Corzine, and Congressmen Andrews, Holt and Pallone for once again standing with New Jersey's working families on this issue.

Many have asked us how long this campaign will last. The answer to that is simple, we will continue to fight social security privatization until President Bush and his supporters announce a better plan to fix this system.

We respectfully call on our members to communicate our message about the dangers of social security privatization to their co-workers, friends and families and to also voice their opposition to this plan to their own Congressional representatives.



1998
Labor Fax
APEX Award

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2006 BUDGET & PUBLIC EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Governor Codey gave a stern warning during his recent Budget address stating that public employee benefits "are the driving force behind the increase in State spending each and every year." The Governor also stated that he will not sign any legislation that increases benefits and called for the creation of a working group to develop ideas for consideration on the issue of employee entitlements.

PROPERTY TAX CONVENTION BILL ADVANCES

Legislation authorizing a Property Tax Constitutional Convention (A-5269 & ACR-25) was released from the Assembly State Government Committee on March 10, 2005. The bill is expected to be considered by the Assembly Appropriations Committee after the budget break. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO has taken a neutral position on the bill and continues to work with its sponsor, Majority Leader Roberts, to insure that progressive property tax reform is achieved without adversely affecting working families. For more information on the State Federation's activity on the issue, or to get involved in our lobbying efforts, please contact Eric Richard, Legislative Affairs Director at (609) 989-8730.

"ANTI-OUTSOURCING" BILL ON GOV'S DESK

A-2133 / S-494, sponsored by Senator Turner and Assemblyman Gusciora, which would ban the "offshore outsourcing" of state funded service contracts passed the Assembly by a vote of 68-5-6-4. Voting in favor were all Democrats and 21 of 33 Republicans. To see how your Assembly Representatives voted on this bill visit www.njafclcio.org.

ALSO ON HIS DESK...

A-3781 / S-2065, sponsored by Senator Sweeney and Speaker Sires, which would "phase-in" a \$2 increase in the minimum wage passed the Assembly by a vote of 52-19-6-3. Supporting the bill were all Democrats and Republicans Bill Baroni (R-14), Frank Blee (R-2), Kirk Conover (R-2), Jack Gibson (R-1) and Sean Kean (R-11). To see how your Assembly Representatives voted on this bill visit www.njafclcio.org.

ASSEMBLY OPPOSES PRIVATIZATION

On Monday, March 14, the New Jersey General Assembly passed a resolution supported by the NJ State AFL-CIO calling on New Jersey's Congressional Delegation to oppose any plan which would "create private accounts, require deep cuts in guaranteed benefits and lead to excessive federal borrowing. AR-245 was sponsored by Assemblyman Michael Panter (D-12), Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein (D-14) and Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew (D-1). A similar resolution awaits action in the Senate.

- NJ State AFL-CIO: The Voice for Working Families in New Jersey -

OPEIU:153

PUBLIC PROGRAMS OFFERED A SUCCESS

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO Occupational Safety and Health Education Project (OSHEP) completed two one-day workshops in conjunction with Rutgers University. The first program on Strategic Planning for Health and Safety Committees covered topics on developing a mission statement, evaluating committees, systems of safety, and creating an action plan. The organizations sponsoring their employee's or member's included: AFSCME Local 2208 and 3287, AKZO, CWA Local 1034, HPAE Local 5091, IAFF Local 2663, IAM&AW Local 315, Laborers Local 472, PSEG, RWDSU, Siemens, UWUA Local 375 and 601. The second program focused on Emergency Response Plans. Participants included employee's and members of Congoleum, IBEW Local 164, IUOE Local 825, Middlesex County Vocational Schools, and Schering-Plough.

HAZARDOUS WASTE AND CONFINED SPACE CLASSES

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO Occupational Safety and Health Education Project (OSHEP) teamed up with the Center to Protect Workers Rights (CPWR) in offering a 40-hour Hazardous Waste Course on March 7th - March 11th. Upon completion, each worker received the 40-hour hazardous waste worker card that allows him or her to do their job on Superfund sites.

On Monday and Tuesday, May 9 and 10th, OSHEP will again collaborate with CPWR to offer a Confined Space Course for workers. The 16-Hour Confined Space training program is a voluntary program intended for hourly workers and supervisors. Class participants who need certification to teach the 16-hour Permit Required Confined Space class can also attend the Wednesday through Friday, May 11th - May 13th Course for Trainers. Course size is limited. Call Laurie Hrebenak at 732-745-8226 to register.

LEAP PROGRAM SERVES DISLOCATED WORKERS

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, will hold a Peer Counselor Train-the-Trainer program May 2-4, 2005 at the Rutgers Labor Education Center in New Brunswick. Thousands of union members throughout New Jersey have benefited from the LEAP program which serves dislocated workers by exploring avenues of public and private support designed to maintain jobs, career development and emotional support.

NEW AFFILIATES WELCOME

Faculty members, graduate assistants and teaching assistants at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, voted overwhelmingly in support of the Rutgers Council of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Executive Board's recommendation to jointly affiliate with the AFT/AFL-CIO. With a bargaining unit of over 2,700, the Rutgers University Council is the largest chapter of the AAUP and the 1st in New Jersey to affiliate with the AFT/AFL-CIO. This historic campaign was successful because of the joint efforts of the NJ State AFL-CIO, AFT and Rutgers Council of AAUP Chapters.

Upcoming Events

April 28, 2005	Workers' Memorial Day Commemoration
May 2-3, 2005	16-Hour Confined Space Course IBEW Local 456 North Brunswick
May 2-4, 2005	LEAP Training Peer Counselor Train-the-Trainer Rutgers Labor Education Center
May 4-6, 2005	Confined Space Course Train-the-Trainer IBEW Local 456 North Brunswick
June 14, 2005	New Jersey State AFL-CIO Labor Awards Ceremony Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa Atlantic City
June 14-15, 2005	New Jersey State AFL-CIO Legislative/COPE Endorsement Conference Borgata Hotel Casino and Spa Atlantic City
August 5-7, 2005	Labor Candidates School Rutgers Labor Education Center

NEW LABOR CANDIDATES ELECTED

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO congratulates Harry Smith, NALC 908, and Paul Huggins, Ironworkers Local 11 on their recent electoral victories. In March, Brother Smith won a seat on the Cinnaminson Board of Fire Commissioners and Brother Huggins won a special election held on March 8 for a seat on the Little Falls Municipal Council. These victories bring the total number of rank-and-file union members elected since the Labor Candidates Program was launched in 1997 to 311. For more information about this program, or to find out how you can become a labor candidate, contact John Shea, COPE Director, at (609) 989-8730.

SPRING CONFERENCE SET

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO will hold its Legislative/COPE Endorsement Conference June 14-15, 2005 at the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City. This conference is especially important as we will make endorsements in the Gubernatorial and Legislative races scheduled for November and meet our rank-and-file union members seeking election through our Labor Candidates Program. All affiliates are encouraged to register their full number of delegates for this Conference and can find out more by calling (609) 989-8730.