



Labor Fax

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PAID FAMILY LEAVE VICTORY

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

After working tirelessly towards Paid Family Leave legislation for over a decade, our New Jersey Labor movement stood triumphant this Monday, as New Jersey's State Senate passed a bill extending the federal unpaid leave law to provide six weeks of paid leave to New Jersey workers needing to care for a newborn baby, adopted child, or a seriously ill family member.

New Jersey will be the third state to enact paid family leave legislation, which will be funded through a 64 cents-per-week employee contribution starting January 1, 2009, and eligible for utilization on July 1, 2009.

Especially during a time of economic downturn, caring for a sick family member can take an enormous financial toll on working families. Additionally, a study released by the AFL-CIO late last month, reveals that America's health care system is failing even those who have insurance, directing more attention to the need of financial relief by working families struggling with family medical issues. While we focus on ways to improve our health care system, workers in New Jersey can find relief in knowing that if faced with illness, or the gift of a newborn, they will not have to choose between their jobs and caring for a loved one.

It is with much gratitude, that we express our appreciation to members of the State Legislature who voted in support of paid family leave, especially Majority Leader Steve Sweeney for his strong advocacy of this bill. We also thank Senate President Dick Codey and Assembly Speaker Joe Roberts for posting this important pro-family bill, and all of our affiliates and partner organizations in the New Jersey Partnership for Working Families who participated in lobbying efforts.

Now that the bill has passed both houses of the Legislature, we look forward to standing with our coalition partners again, as Governor Corzine signs the bill into law.



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COUNCIL MEMEBERS SUPPORT CASINO WORKERS

Hundreds of UAW members from Atlantic City casinos attended Wednesday's City Council meeting to support an ordinance guaranteeing that all city casinos are 100 percent smoke-free. City Council members unanimously supported the Casino workers' message that they should not be forced to breathe secondhand smoke at work. Atlantic City Council members also passed a resolution supporting Atlantic City dealers and slot technicians' rights to organize and negotiate fair union contracts. Please join us for a press conference in the Atlantic City Mayor's Office next Wednesday, April 16, at 2:00 p.m., as we stand with the Atlantic Cape May Central Labor Council, elected officials, union members, interfaith leaders and community activists, to support the casino dealers' and slot technicians' right to organize.

OPPOSE COLUMBIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO urges its Congressional delegation to vote 'NO' if the Columbia Free Trade Agreement is posted for a vote. We commend Speaker Pelosi and members of the House of Representatives that voted on April 10, 2008 to remove the timetable that forces Congress to take up the trade bill within 90 legislative days. President Wowkanech stated yesterday, "Congress must focus on addressing the economic concerns and insecurity of Americans and they must repair existing flawed trade deals like NAFTA before considering further free trade expansions." Please notify your membership that they can contact their members of Congress and send them an automatic pre-written email by visiting:

http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/no_columbia_trade_deal

LABOR 2008 IS IN FULL SWING

Worksite fliers, sample letters, and newsletter articles are available for use by all local unions. If you did not receive sample letters and resources in the mail last month, please contact COPE Director John Shea at (609) 989-8730.

WELCOME 1,000 NEW CWA MEMEBERS IN NJ

More than 1,000 New Jersey adult day care providers gained a voice on the job by joining the Communication Workers of America, forming the first unit of its kind in the nation. The care providers take in up to four developmentally disabled adults and receive a monthly check from the state that covers room and board and pays wages based on how much care each patient needs. Governor Jon Corzine signed an executive order recognizing the union, after the state Board of Mediation verified a majority of the workers signed cards seeking representation by CWA Locals 1037 and 1040.

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

OPEIU:153

ON THE ROAD

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

...Conducted LEAP Peer Counselor Trainings in Pemberton for officers and members of USW Local 12-238 at Lanxess Sybron, and in Trenton for officers of USW Local 493 representing Glen Gery Brick Company.

...Facilitated an intensive three-day Safety and Health Train-the-Trainer course, in conjunction with TWU Local 225, Branch 4, in Manchester.

...Addressed the Program Approval Subcommittee of the New Jersey Career and Technical Education Advisory Council on the importance of strengthening academic preparation in career and technical education programs.

...Hosted the Northern New Jersey Federal Safety and Health Council meeting, providing opportunities to safety and health professionals from around the state to examine the latest occupational safety and health issues.

...Presented information on the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Emergency Response Support Network to members of the Hudson and Mercer Central Labor Councils in continued efforts to establish a labor-centric disaster response support network.

...Participated in a Workforce Development Partnership meeting at the Union County One-Stop Career Center, focusing on demand occupations related to the New Jersey Transit Tunnel Project.

LEAP TRAINING ADDRESS WORKPLACE CHANGE

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO has partnered with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to establish the Labor Employment Action Project (LEAP), enabling unions to be proactive in today's rapidly changing workplaces. The LEAP Spring Train-the-Trainer program will be held April 22, 23 & 24, 2008 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at Rutgers University Labor Education Center in New Brunswick. Contact LEAP Coordinator Nancy Miller at (973) 614-0049 or nmiller@njafclcio.org to register or for more information.

EMPLOYMENT SKILLS TRAINING AVAILABLE

To achieve economic success and self-sufficiency, all New Jersey workers must be able to function at their highest potential skill level. If your union has members who wish to upgrade their literacy skills or receive assistance with basic mathematics, reading comprehension, basic computer literacy, English proficiency and work readiness skills, please contact Paul Cenerino, Employment and Training Coordinator, at (609) 989-8730.

JOHN MCCAIN REVEALED

As the Democratic nomination fight continues, it's time working families understand John McCain's poor record on working family issues. When you look at his positions on the issues—jobs, fair trade, the freedom to join unions, privatizing Social Security, health care and more—it's clear that John McCain is no friend of working families. Recently, the AFL-CIO launched "John McCain Revealed," a briefing book which details McCain's long anti-worker history and his embrace of President Bush's failed economic policies. For a quick look, visit <http://www.aflcio.org/issues/politics/mccain.cfm>.

Upcoming Events

April 16, 2008	Press Conference: Supporting Atlantic City Casino Workers Right to Unionize Atlantic City, NJ
April 17, 2008	Event Honoring Atlantic City Mayor Scott Evans (IAFF) Atlantic City, NJ
April 22-24, 2008	LEAP Train-the-Trainer New Brunswick, NJ
April 25, 2008	Workers' Memorial Day Observance Atlantic City, 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.

FIFTH ANNUAL WILD CONFERENCE

The 2008 Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference, held on March 28 through 29, 2008, at Rutgers University, made a remarkable impact on its 250+ participants. The international delegation attended an opening night reception featuring elected officials and labor leaders including National Secretary-Treasurers Barbara Easterling of CWA and Nancy Wohlforth of OPEIU; and followed Friday's success with workshops and panel discussions, with a focus on Cultivating Leadership.

2008 NJ STATE AFL-CIO RETIREES CONFERENCE

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees Committee will host their 7th Annual Legislative Forum, featuring State Senator John Adler and Assemblywoman Linda Stender, on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, at UAW Region 9 Union Hall in Edison, NJ, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For more info on the event, which will focus on the economy's impact on union jobs and the importance of the Employee Free Choice Act, please contact Retirees Staff Liaison Nancy Miller at (923) 614-0049.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great regret, that we offer condolences to John Shinn, Burlington CLC President, on the recent passing of his father. Condolences also go out to the family of Norman Castick, a member of USW Local 12-238, who lost his life as the result of a workplace accident at US Pipe and Foundry in Burlington, NJ.