



Labor Fax

September 29, 2004

Volume 8, Issue 9

NOT IN PLAY?

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

Throughout this campaign we have heard that New Jersey is a "safe state" and that the Presidential campaigns would not be putting a whole lot of resources into our efforts. If recent history is any indication, our state's 15 electoral votes should be an automatic for the Kerry/Edwards ticket.

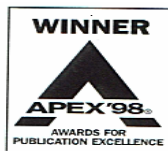
However, as anyone watching the polls can see, Senator Kerry and President Bush seem to be running neck and neck here. Whether you believe the polls or not, one thing is for sure, the labor movement here in New Jersey cannot afford to take anything for granted for the next 34 days.

This past Saturday, hundreds of volunteers from the labor movement hit the streets and knocked on the doors of their union brothers and sisters to remind them to vote for the candidates that were endorsed by the New Jersey State AFL-CIO at our Convention in June. Hundreds more are needed as we continue canvassing the homes of union members every Saturday between now and Election Day.

While all eyes are clearly on the White House, it is important to keep in mind that the Labor 2004 program is also about the endorsed candidates running for Congress and the New Jersey State Legislature, we must elect and re-elect candidates that we know will be responsive to the needs of New Jersey's working families.

Finally, the Labor 2004 program is about the 34 Labor candidates that are on the ticket at the local and county levels this November. These candidates seek to join the 279 rank and file union members that have already been elected through our Labor Candidates Program since 1997.

The time is now to get involved in this year's elections!



1998
Labor Fax
APEX Award

Labor Fax Co-Editors:

Charles Wowkanech
President

Laurel Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer

Associate Editor:

Steve Lenox
(609) 989-8730 • www.njaflcio.org

ELECTION DAY COUNTDOWN: 34 DAYS: NOVEMBER 2, 2004

TIME'S ALMOST UP!

The deadline to register to vote in this November's election is Monday, October 4, 2004. All completed voter registration applications should be delivered to the office of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO at 106 West State Street in Trenton by Friday, October 1. Working together, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO and its affiliates have registered more than 300,000 union members in the past six years. For more information about voter registration requirements and regulations, contact John Shea, COPE Director, at 609-989-8730.

WALK THIS WAY

The Labor 2004 program kicked into high gear this past weekend with labor walks being staged in several locations across the state. Several hundred union members joined in solidarity to knock on the doors of their union brothers and sisters to remind them why it so important that they vote for the candidates endorsed by the members of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO in November's election. All affiliates are encouraged to send members to walk with us every Saturday between now and Election Day. To find out where walks are being held in your county contact John Shea, COPE Director, at 609-989-8730.

PLAYING THE FIELD

Several members of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO staff have been dispatched throughout the state to assist with the coordination of the Labor 2004 program. Staff will work closely with Central Labor Council and County Building Trades Council presidents as well as local unions located within their zones. To assist in the Labor 2004 efforts contact John Shea, COPE Director, at 609-989-8730.

LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO will hold their Legislative Conference October 5-6 at the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City. Among the invited speakers are AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, Senator Jon Corzine, Congressmen Donald Payne and Chris Smith, Governor Jim McGreevey, New Jersey Senate President Dick Codey and New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Kevin McCabe.

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

ON THE ROAD

Officers and Staff of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO:
 ...attended a UNITE HERE Local 54 rally in Atlantic City in support of a fair contract.
 ...attended the Utility Workers Union of America education conference in Atlantic City.
 ...attended New Jersey State Pipe Trades Convention in Atlantic City.
 ...conducted a Public Employees Committee Meeting.
 ...coordinated labor walks in various locations across the State.
 ...attended meetings of the Somerset County, Hudson County and Middlesex County Building Trades Councils.
 ...attended a rally with Vice Presidential Candidate John Edwards.
 ...marched with nurses at Greenwood Hospital in Jersey City in support of a fair contract.
 ...addressed Committee for College Credit for Apprenticeship Program.
 ...testified on card check legislation before the Senate Labor Committee.

CONTRACT VICTORY

Asbestos Workers Locals 14 and 89, both affiliates of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO successfully persuaded K&S, a mechanical insulation firm in Trenton, to sign a union contract with their workers.

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

The 35 workers at the Mercer County Geriatric Facility in Trenton recently voted to join UFCW Local 1360.

SHIFTING COVERAGE

According to a report recently released by the Economic Policy institute, approximately 2.4 million children lost health care coverage provided by their parents' employers between 2000 and 2003. The report "*The Chronic Problem of Declining Health Coverage*" also shows that for families in the bottom 20 percent of income, the percentage of children receiving employer-paid health insurance dropped nearly 25 percent. During this time, the federal government has increased the number of children insured through government programs.

CORPORATIONS HIT THE LOTTERY

Between 2001 and 2003, nearly one-third of the nation's largest and most profitable corporations paid no federal income tax, while receiving billions in tax rebates. This information was included in a study, "*Corporate Income Taxes in the Bush Years*", released by Citizens for Tax Just (CTJ) and the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

MAKING US LESS SAFE

The House of Representatives voted 339-70 last week to block a Bush Administration plan to delay applying U.S. safety standards to truck and bus operators entering the country from Canada and Mexico for two years. The vote was another blow to the Bush Administration in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| October 1 | Information Session on New Overtime Regulations with Senator Jon Corzine
9:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.
Rutgers Labor Education Center |
| October 4 | Voter Registration Deadline |
| October 5-6 | NJ State AFL-CIO Legislative Conference
Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa
Atlantic City |

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS (PART 1)

Legislation amending the Conscientious Employee Protection Act (CEPA) was signed into law by Governor Jim McGreevey on September 14, 2004. Under this new law, sponsored by Senators John Adler (D-6) and Nia Gill (D-24) and Assemblywoman Loretta Weinberg (D-37), certain employers will be required to notify their employees, in writing, every year about their rights to speak out about illegal employer activity and employees' protections under the law. Currently, many employees are hesitant to "blow the whistle" on this type of activity because they are unaware of the protection afforded to them under CEPA. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO lobbied in support of this bill.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS (PART 2)

Senator Jon Corzine will host an information session on the new overtime rules which recently went into effect. The session will take place on Friday, October 1, 2004, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Rutgers Labor Education Center in New Brunswick. The new rules which went into effect on August 23, 2004 will take away overtime pay guarantees from nearly six million workers across the country. The Bush Administration, aware that they did not have support of the Congress on this issue, circumvented the usual legislative process by issuing regulations out of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Senate and House of Representatives have both voted to repeal this overtime pay takeaway, but, President Bush has said that he will veto any measures to undo these regulations.

SHE KNEW HER RIGHTS

The U.S. Senate unanimously passed a bill on September 15 designating the Kate Mullaney House in Troy, N.Y. as a national historic site. Kate Mullaney, with 200 co-workers, formed the Collar Laundry Union, the first women's labor union in the country.

WORDS OF WISDOM

"Workers have a right to organize into unions and to bargain collectively with their employers, and...a strong, free labor movement is an invigorating and necessary part of our industrial society." President Dwight D. Eisenhower