



Labor Fax

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JOBS, ECONOMY, AND EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

Each and every one of us in the New Jersey labor movement is working very hard, and it is no surprise that we find ourselves so close to achieving some of our most important goals like passing the Employee Free Choice Act and enacting comprehensive health care reform. Even in the midst of a struggling economy, we must keep our focus on the task at hand because our actions now will determine whether or not we can stem the loss of more good American jobs and ensure a prosperous future for our children.

The Employee Free Choice Act will be a major factor in determining whether or not we are successful in our endeavors. Not only will it provide a means for us to grow our unions, but now more than ever, workers need bargaining power to stay afloat in today's economy. We can pass the Employee Free Choice Act if we push Congress to champion the effort and stand up to the corporate interests. Legislation is expected to be introduced to Congress very soon and now is the time to begin talking to your friends, family, and neighbors about the importance of this legislation.

We must not hesitate or be dissuaded from action due to the condition of our economy. Various groups are involved and are mobilizing the projects that will define our country for the next generation. If we don't speak up, someone else will.

Already, there is a major health care campaign underway called Health Care for America Now (HCAN). HCAN is a grassroots organization committed to reforming our health care system to provide quality affordable coverage to all Americans. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO will have a major stake in this organization and ensure that labor weighs in on this debate.

We must be certain that among others, our voice is heard so that we can help develop the solutions that will benefit all of New Jersey's working families.



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APEX Award

Labor Fax Co-Editors:

Charles Wowkanech

Laurel Brennan

President

Secretary-Treasurer

Associate Editor:

Lee Sandberg

(609) 989-8730 • www.njafclcio.org

HOW STIMULUS HELPS NJ'S WORKING FAMILIES

In addition to the \$650 million for highway and infrastructure investment, which will help spur critical job creation in the construction sector; NJ will be receiving money from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to fund several important programs that will help working families. Specifically, NJ will receive almost \$207 million for the unemployment insurance (UI) fund and claimants will receive a \$25 weekly increase. NJ will also receive \$26.4 million for WIA programs to aid dislocated workers through the state's One-Stop Career Centers. Finally, ARRA will reduce the cost of COBRA for dislocated workers to 35% of their COBRA premium.

FIRE COMMISSION ELECTION VICTORIES

Working in partnership with CLCs and all affiliated unions, 3 union members were elected to public office on February 21st. Since the inception of the Labor Candidates Program, rank-and-file union members have won 541 elections in New Jersey.

Name	Union	Fire Commission
Jeffery Holtz	IAFF 2958	Bridgewater Fire District 3
James Hammond	IAFF 384	Jackson Fire District 2
John Hennessy	CWA 1034	Mount Holly Fire District

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND TO RECEIVE CASH INFLUX – FUTURE RESTRICTIONS NEEDED

NJ's ailing unemployment insurance fund (UIF) is poised to receive \$207 million in federal funds from the recently enacted Stimulus Package. Even with the influx of this money, NJ's UIF is dangerously low. Despite labor objections, from 1993 – 2006, approximately \$4.7 billion has been raided from the fund in order to help balance the budget. If these raids had not occurred, today's problems would not have materialized and the fund would be soundly solvent. The NJ State AFL-CIO urges the State Assembly to pass ACR-134 (Burzichelli / Munoz) which seeks to halt future raids from the UIF and other worker protection funds. The Senate companion resolution (SCR-60: Sweeney / Kean) passed unanimously in November.

"STOP WORK ORDER" LEGISLATION ADVANCES

Legislation (A-3569: Egan / Quijano / Vas & S-2498: Madden / Cunningham) supported by the NJ State AFL-CIO that seeks to establish a "stop work order" procedure for employers who knowingly fail to provide Workers' Compensation coverage or for an employer that knowingly misclassified one or more employees has been released from committee in both houses.

- 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:
 ...Attended the NJ State AFL-CIO Retirees Committee Meeting in New Brunswick.
 ...Attended National AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting in Miami, FL.
 ...Conducted LEAP training and assistance for UAW members in Atlantic City.
 ...Provided our "NJ Survival Guide to Unemployment" to 200 USW Local 2-040 members at Griffin Pipe; 30 AFSCME Local 1199J members at Hoboken Medical; and 33 CWA Local 1034 members in Burlington Township.
 ...Conducted several different classes in Chemical Security Awareness and Preparedness.
 ...Completed a 10 hour Construction Safety Training for the trade school students at Passaic County Vocational and Technical School.
 ...Held a 30 hour Construction Safety Course at IBEW Local 269, with over 40 journeymen receiving OSHA cards.
 ...Conducted Safe School Training for state high school and vo-tech teachers at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.
 ...Certified employees at IBEW Local 269 in American Red Cross Adult CPR and Blood Borne Diseases.

LEAP TRAINING ADDRESSES WORKPLACE CHANGE

The NJ State AFL-CIO Labor Employment Action Project (LEAP), in cooperation with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, will conduct the Spring Train-the-Trainer program April 21-23, 2009, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Rutgers Labor Center in New Brunswick. LEAP training addresses job retention, life-long learning, skills assessment, and job and career transition strategies. LEAP Training also provides invaluable information to assist union members and their families during these very difficult economic times. Call Nancy Miller, (973) 614-0049, nmiller@njafclcio.org or Paul Cenerino, (609) 989-8730, pcenerino@njafclcio.org to register.

2009 OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH CONFERENCE

160+ participants packed into the East Brunswick Hilton for the 2009 OSHEP Conference held on February 18th. Attendees participated in workshops focusing on a variety of topics including Workplace Violence, Practical Ergonomics, Indoor Air Quality, Emergency and Disaster Response, and Planning and Avoiding Infectious Diseases. The conference attracted union activists, staff and shop stewards, safety and health professionals.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

The 6th Annual Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference is being held on March 20-21, 2009, at the East Brunswick Hilton in East Brunswick, NJ. The already **sold out** conference will feature workshops, panel discussions, and a multi-media presentation called "We Were There!" depicting the compelling and inspirational stories of union women throughout history.

Upcoming Events

March 11, 2009	Retiree Committee Meeting New Brunswick, NJ
March 20-21, 2009	WILD Conference New Brunswick, NJ
March 28, 2009	School Board/Non-partisan Election Labor Candidates Seminar Trenton, NJ
April 21-23, 2009	LEAP Train-the-Trainer New Brunswick, NJ
April 24, 2009	Worker's Memorial Day Atlantic City, NJ
April 24-26, 2009	2009 Organizing Institute New Brunswick, NJ
April 29, 2009	Public Employee Committee Meeting Trenton, NJ
April 30, 2009	LEAP 1-Day Refresher Course New Brunswick, NJ
May 12, 2009	Retirees Annual Legislative & Eldercare Forum Edison, NJ
June 16-17, 2009	Legislative/COPE Endorsement Conference Atlantic City, NJ
August 15-16, 2009	Labor Candidates School New Brunswick, NJ

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

2009 ORGANIZING INSTITUTE (OI)

In these tough economic times, we must be able to organize. By taking part in our 3-day OI, union members and activists will learn basic organizing skills such as one-on-one communication, mobilizing workers to take action, leadership identification, and elements of an organizing campaign. For more information or to register, contact Lee Sandberg at (609) 989-8730 Lsandberg@njafclcio.org.

13TH ANNUAL LABOR CANDIDATES SCHOOL & NON-PARTISAN ELECTION TRAINING SCHEDULE

The Labor Candidates School and Non-Partisan Training Seminars are the cornerstones of the NJ State AFL-CIO's successful political program. Election experts instruct union members about fundraising, election law, research, message development, public speaking, media relations, voter contact, volunteer recruitment, targeting, and GOTV efforts. The School Board/Non-partisan Election Seminar will be on March 28th and the Labor Candidates School is planned for August 15-16th. Contact John Shea for more information at (609) 989-8730 cope@njafclcio.org.