

NEWS FROM THE AFL-CIO, CTW, INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL UNIONS

AFL-CIO led a week of action in early June to protest “egregious workplace policies” at Walmart. Hundreds of “Walmart Moms” went on strike in dozens of cities across the country to protest Walmart’s treatment of working women. In one demonstration, Walmart moms rallied outside the Walmart Supercenter in Washington, D.C., to protest the company’s illegal firings and disciplinary action against co-workers who have struck to end illegal retaliation. The AFL-CIO also named Rob

Walton, Chairman of Walmart, the “Low Wage Villain of the Week”. According to the AFL-CIO, the “company admits that 500,000 of its workers earn less than \$10 an hour.” Numerous job websites report the average pay for Walmart employees to be less than \$10, ranging from \$8.63 to \$9.64 Pay Scale the federation said. “While Walmart drags its heels on wages, companies like Costco and the Gap are beginning to recognize the value of paying employees fair wages. They know that paying workers more will help the economy and boost sales because workers will be able to afford the products they sell. And they won’t have to rely on public assistance and food drives around the holidays anymore,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

With the federal Highway Trust Fund going broke by August, Laborers International Union June 16 launched a 22-city “Getting Schooled in Infrastructure” campaign to highlight needed congressional action to fund the highway bill this year. The Highway Trust Fund provides money to states for infrastructure improvements to the nation’s roads and bridges. The visual centerpiece of the tour is a school bus crushed by a piece of fallen bridge. “It’s time to stop sugar-coating this issue. We are not trying to scare people, but we are trying to wake people and Congress up,” said LIUNA General President Terry O’Sullivan. He pointed out the nation’s infrastructure is in dire need of upgrade and repair. One in four bridges is deficient or obsolete, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. Poor road conditions, such as potholes, are now a contributing factor in one-third of traffic fatalities, equating to about 10,000 lost lives each year, according to the transportation research group, TRIP.

The head of Volkswagen Group’s Global Group Works Council told 1,100 delegates attending the recent United Auto Workers convention that the union election earlier this year at VW’s Chattanooga plant was “stolen” because of outside political forces. “We have lost one battle, not the fight,” Frank Patta, VW Global Group Works Council general-secretary said in German via a live video hookup using a translator. He said the outside forces denied the nearly 1,300 workers in Chattanooga a voice in their workplace. Patta vowed that VW labor representatives would continue



Moms protesting at Wal-Mart. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Brave New Films.

to support the UAW in the organizing drive in Chattanooga and elsewhere where auto workers are without union representation. The UAW also is trying to organize Nissan and Kia workers in the South, among others. Patta said unions co-determine governance at 100 VW plants worldwide, representing more than 600,000 workers. Even VW plants in China and Russia have works councils, he said. In other convention news, Dennis Williams was elected president to succeed Bob King who retired. Williams previously served as the secretary-treasurer of the UAW, and has been a member of the union since 1977.

AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades leaders joined with other supporters to urge the Senate to vote on legislation approving the Keystone XL pipeline. Sean McGarvey, President of the building and construction trades department, AFL-CIO, participated with the American Petroleum Institute to call for a floor vote on the project “without further delay.” In related news, the Building Trades also expressed “deep concerns” over new regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency to curb carbon dioxide from existing power plants. “Significant numbers of states, and countless communities across America, are currently heavily reliant upon coal-burning power plants. Our unions are concerned that these rules, inasmuch as they are proposed on an accelerated and unrealistic timetable for implementation, will cost us in higher electricity rates, in lost jobs, and in lost business growth due to a lack of affordable, reliable electricity,” said McGarvey in a statement. He said the EPA has “lost sight” of the potential economic chaos that will follow if the regulations fail to provide “realistic and achievable” standards.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS

Hundreds of workers formerly employed by Adidas in Jakarta staged a demonstration June 11 demanding Adidas and its local contractor pay them severance owed since 2012. The demonstrators carried signs denouncing Adidas and local footwear producer PT Panarub Dwikarya (PDK).

The protestors were among the more than 300 PDK workers who were fired after joining a five-day strike in 2012. The strike in October 2012 at the Tangerang, Banten factory involved 1,300 PDK workers who opposed a new company policy forcing them to make more shoes during the same working hours. The workers demanded improved working conditions and higher pay in accordance with the regional minimum wage. Adidas is a major international sponsor of the World Cup and the workers used the opening of the games as momentum to stage a protest. The Indonesian Labour Association Movement’s Textile Union of Garment, Textile and Shoes Workers (SG-BGTS-GSBI) said it had contacted both PDK and Adidas multiple times with no successful outcome.

Taxi drivers in cities across Europe on June 11 joined in a massive protest against the transportation app, Uber, because of unfair competition. The company connects passengers with drivers for hire and ride-sharing services through the internet. Traffic in major cities such as Berlin, Paris and London was stalled as cabbies took their complaints about the service to the streets. Uber has caused concern among cab drivers throughout the countries where it operates, including the U.S. and Canada. Cab drivers said the drivers connected through Uber are unlicensed, unregulated and may pose a threat to passengers. In the United Kingdom, cab drivers have filed legal action against Uber in London’s High

Court. Although a decision may be months away, some 12,000 black cabs drove to the London’s Trafalgar Square in solidarity. “Transport for London, our licensing body, refuses to enforce the law. Specifically, the 1998 London Private Hire Vehicles act, which Uber circumvents and is in direct contravention of,” said Lewis Norton, the branch secretary for the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers.

Finnish stevedores staged a strike June 11 in protest of “slave labour” used on a Russian vessel that suspended operations at ports across Finland, reported Juha Anttila, a union secretary at the Transport Workers’ Union (AKT). The union said nearly 3,000 AKT members took part in the action, shutting virtually every port in Finland. The industry-wide action was approved by the union after stevedores at the Port of Tornio refused to unload a Russian vessel and subsequent threats made to a local shop steward. “We don’t approve of any threats, so the AKT executive board decided to enforce the one-day strike,” Anttila said. The workers returned to work the next morning. The union asserted the strike was legal. “This is a so-called political strike, which is not in violation of Finnish laws. This has absolutely nothing to do with collective agreements, so we aren’t breaking them,” stated Anttila. Tiina Haapasalo, a chief policy adviser at the Confederation of Finnish Industries, estimates that the costs of the one-day strike may amount to ten million euros.



London anti-Uber taxi protest. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from David Holt.

NATIONAL AND POLITICAL EVENTS

Twenty-two states have passed

laws restricting voting since 2010, according to a new study by the Brennan School for Justice at New York University. The study noted that nearly all of these new laws were passed in the South and the Midwest and would have been “previously blocked by the Voting Rights Act.” The Voting Rights Act that covered parts of 16 states with long histories of voter discrimination until the U.S. Supreme Court overturned it in 5–4 ruling last year. According to the study, the new laws range from photo ID requirements, early voting cutbacks to voter registration restrictions and are squarely aimed at reducing voter turnout. “Partisanship played a key role,” said the report. “Of the 22 states with new restrictions, 18 passed entirely through GOP-controlled bodies, and Mississippi’s photo ID law passed by a voter referendum.” The report also cited a recent study from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which found restrictions were more likely to pass “as the proportion of Republicans in the legislature increased or when a Republican governor was elected.”

Brothers Charles and David

Koch, known for their support of right-wing, anti-union causes, have formed a new “super PAC” to raise hundreds of millions of dollars for the 2014 election. The group is known as “Freedom Partners Action Fund,” and, according to news reports, is the first super PAC founded by the Koch political organization. Previously, the Koch brothers funded their political activities through non-profit organizations which are not required to release their donor names. Unlike political non-profits, however, super PACs can spend every dollar they raise on political advertising and other activities expressly advocating the election or defeat of a candidate. Political observers explained that groups supported by the Kochs and their fellow donors have relied heavily on “issue ads” that do not specifically ask listeners to vote for or against a candidate. But strategists working with the Kochs concluded that the approach, while preserving the secrecy of donors, limited the political impact

of the groups’ efforts. Koch donors are usually reluctant to have their activities exposed, but extensive publicity in recent months has already revealed many of their names.

REGIONAL & LOCAL LABOR NEWS

More than 1,000 people rallied

June 16 for workers’ rights at North Carolina’s state capitol in Raleigh after a state judge struck down parts of a gag law passed by the legislators aimed at silencing them. Dubbed the “Moral Monday” demonstrations, have been held each Monday during the legislative session to protest extremist measures that have been passed attacking voting rights, education, the environment, unemployed workers, health care and women’s rights. Several hundred demonstrators, led by North Carolina union members, have marched the legislative halls chanting and singing. In response, the legislature passed a ban on public demonstrations. But Judge Carl Fox ruled most of the measure was overly broad and restrictive in a suit brought by the NC NAACP. During the recent protest, 19 people were arrested, including American Federation of Government Employees President David Cox, not for chanting or

singing but for trespassing. All were released on bail. The Moral Monday actions have drawn national attention and inspiring similar actions at state capitols around the nation.

Hated by corporations and

loved by working people, Mother Jones was a legendary firebrand labor activist who was a familiar sight at some of the most infamous labor disputes in history. Six years after her death in 1930 at the age of 93, an 80-ton Minnesota granite obelisk was erected at Illinois gravesite funded by small gifts from working families across the nation. On June 17, union leaders and local politicians jointly announced that more than \$60,000 had been raised to refurbish her monument at a union-owned cemetery in Mount Olive, Ill., northeast of St. Louis. “The legacy of Mother Jones is one we treasure,” Michael Carrigan, the Illinois AFL-CIO’s president said during a ceremony. Born Mary Harris Jones, she is buried at her request near four dead miners who were killed in the notorious 1989 “Virden Massacre” strike and denied burial at the Lutheran cemetery by the local minister who called them “murderers.”

After a four-year struggle,

Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en la Lucha (CTUL), announced a historic policy



AFGE President David Cox alongside other AFGE members at a Moral Monday Protest. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from AFGE.

agreement that will be implemented between Target and the companies it sub-contracts to clean its stores. The union said Target agreed to “unprecedented” contractor policies that will provide important protections for workers. “The new agreement will be implemented with new contracts in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area and will ensure that workers’ rights are protected,” the group said. The workers do not work directly for Target. “This is the first policy of its kind in the retail janitorial industry,” explained Veronica Mendez, co-director of CTUL, in a news release. “It’s a victory not just for the estimated 1,000 retail janitors in the Twin Cities, but for all the low-wage workers of color fighting for a place at the table in deciding the future of work.” The agreement stipulates that before signing new contractors, sub-contracting companies must seek a labor peace agreement with CTUL and a local affiliate of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which will co-represent sub-contracted janitorial workers. According to the group, the deal also includes “significant protections” against future wage theft, work overload, and unsafe working conditions.

IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) expressed “cautious optimism” about legislation to improve staffing and wait times at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities, the union said in a statement. AFGE represents 210,000 VA employees. The union also “applauded” provisions to extend advance appropriations to the full VA budget, expand GI bill benefits and enhance medical services for victims of military sexual assault. The bill was moved by Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Chairman Bernie Sanders and Senator John McCain. The measure authorizes \$500 million to hire new doctors and nurses and includes provisions for expedited hiring authority and urges swift action to fill thousands of vacant positions at medical centers across the country, identify causes of high provider



NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Cameron Yee.

turnover and ensure regular Congressional oversight of VA’s staffing practices. AFGE said it was “essential” for management to work with the union “to identify both short term and long term strategies for ensuring that the VA remains the health care employer of choice and that vacancies are promptly filled,” said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. He said the “compromise bill drafted by Sens. Sanders and McCain will make meaningful progress toward getting our VA system back on track.”

American Postal Workers

Union took their “Stop Staples” campaign to Pittsburgh where more than 125 protestors paraded outside the Staples store at 4801 McKnight Road chanting “Privatization, We Say No, The Staples Deal Has Got to Go,” and “The U.S. Mail is Not for Sale.” Pittsburgh is one of four test sites for the program to establish postal counters in more than 82 Staples office supply stores. The counters will be staffed with Staples employees rather than U.S. Postal Service workers. Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe and Staples intend to expand the program to 1,500 Staples stores across the nation. The union reported that ongoing protests have been held on an almost-daily basis at Staples stores in the San Francisco Bay Area since January and in Atlanta since March. Fifty-six protests were held across the country on April 24, the National Day of Action to Stop Staples. The fourth test site is in Central Massachusetts, not far from Staples’ corporate headquarters. The union’s nationwide campaign is gaining momentum as more organizations expressed support for the postal workers. Among them are the National Educational Association, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and Nurses United.

SIGNIFICANT LEGAL AND NLRB RULINGS

National education leaders reacted with dismay after Superior Court Judge Rolf recently struck down tenure and other job protections for teachers in *Vergara v. California*. National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel called the ruling “deeply flawed” and vowed to support the California Education Association in its appeal. “NEA will continue to stand up for students and focus on the ingredients that are proven to help students the most—like supporting new teachers, providing ongoing training, paying teachers a decent salary, and developing reliable evaluation systems to measure teacher effectiveness,” he said in a statement. American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten and California Federation of Teachers President Joshua Pechthalt said in a joint message to teachers the decision was “a sad day for public education.” “By attacking the rules that protect and support teachers, the Vergara decision destabilizes public education,” they said, and added, “The judge argues that no one should tolerate bad teachers in the classroom. We agree...But in focusing on teachers who make up a fraction of the workforce, he strips the hundreds of thousands of good teachers of any right to a voice.”

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Elizabeth Schuler
Secretary-Treasurer,
AFL-CIO

FROM SPEECHES TO REAL ACTION FOR WORKING FAMILIES

People from all over the country convened in Washington, D.C. on Monday, June 23, and many more logged in to participate virtually, at a White House Summit on Working Families. Under the banner of “creating a 21st century workplace that works for all Americans,” we heard from businesses, economists, advocates, workers and, yes, labor leaders to discuss policy solutions that can make a difference in the lives of working families. It’s an important conversation.

The event featured remarks by the President, the First Lady, the Vice President, and Dr. Jill Biden, as they participated in a national conversation about how we can create 21st-century workplaces that work for all Americans.

I also looked forward to seeing great examples of companies that give their employees meaningful benefits, fathers who take family leave when a new baby arrives and communities coming together to support workers struggling to get by.

But when the speeches are done, the focus of national news wanes and the participants all go home; it won’t have been enough to have had a successful discussion about important topics. We have to be ready to build on the momentum of the important discussion and turn these from exceptional examples into real, everyday practices. It’s crucial that we help working

families who are quickly falling further and further behind.

This is a challenge that is personal to me, because it wasn’t that long ago when I was piecing together part-time jobs, struggling to find my way into work that would lead to a career. And in my early years of working to help clerical workers organize to gain better wages and benefits, I saw firsthand how intimidating it can be for workers to even ask for a better deal, much less demand one.

To help working families thrive, three areas stand out as critical. And while I looked forward to talking about them at the Summit, I’m also looking forward to acting on a robust agenda to strengthen women and working families in the weeks and months that follow.

Support working families by creating equal opportunity for women. It’s almost a cliché, but the stubborn reality is that women are the sole or primary breadwinners for a record 40% of all U.S. households. If we brought women’s earnings in line with what men earn, working women below the poverty line would see a bump in average yearly wages of about \$11,600, enough to make a huge difference in their lives, according to the National Women’s Law Center.

Moreover, women face pregnancy discrimination, and also hold a majority of the jobs that do not offer paid leave or paid sick leave. Basic paid leave laws would ensure workers don’t have to choose between staying home to recover and having their pay reduced.

Lift working families out of poverty by demanding a fair deal for low-wage workers. Over the past few years, low-wage workers have been among the fastest growing segments of the job market, and until we get them a better deal, the United States will continue to swell the ranks of the working poor. This means getting Walmart workers enough work-

ing hours and predictable schedules to earn better than \$25,000 a year, with basic benefits.

It also means helping to raise the hourly wage for tipped workers—three-quarters of whom are women. The wage—\$2.13—has remained the same for more than two decades. It means raising the minimum wage high enough so that workers do not have to rely on government assistance to raise their families.

Create better economic opportunity for all through collective action. Unions have been a frequent and convenient target for Big Business, politicians and others in the recent past, but the reality is that collective action and joining a union have resulted in higher wages and better conditions for workers across the board. In fact, union membership is one way women in the workforce are moving toward achieving wage parity with men.

And our impact extends beyond the ranks of our members: Through collective advocacy, we’ve helped enact policies that give all workers a fairer shake as well, whether it has been raising local and state minimum wages or increasing access to health care and family friendly policies like the Family Medical Leave Act. I applaud the companies that are paving the way to a better future for their employees, but let’s be clear: History shows us that massive changes that benefit workers are achieved when workers organize, speak up and demand it.

When the summit convened, I was honored to be at the table because millions of women and men who are working incredibly hard to provide for their families deserve to be heard.

They also deserve our active, collective support. And that’s exactly what the labor movement is prepared to do. We will continue to stand up for all workers so that everyone has a voice on the job to improve conditions for working families.

A BUSINESS VOICE FOR RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE



Business for a Fair Minimum Wage

Business for a Fair Minimum Wage (BFMW) is a national network of business owners and executives who believe a fair minimum wage makes good business sense. AIL is one of the leading members of BFMW. BFMW is working to increase the federal minimum wage and has been successful in many places such as Maryland and Massachusetts which recently passed wage floor hikes.

"Huge thanks goes to AIL and SGAs for walking the talk on raising the wage as employers, encouraging other businesses to join the cause and for being wonderful spokespeople for media and events around the country,"

said BFME Director Holly Sklar. "Our special thanks to CEO Roger Smith and to Vice President Denise Bowyer for leading AIL's involvement and being a powerful voice for fair wages in Maryland and nationally." AIL representatives have participated in events around the nation in support of minimum wage increases.

In the photos, AIL SGA Brandon Cooley - Arizona, (top left) speaks on why business leaders and owners should support raising the minimum wage, while other AIL representatives participated in events in and Dayton (right) and Indianapolis (bottom).



AIL in Ireland

UHL's Susan Kelleher recently participated in the May Day Rally that took place in Dublin. Shown in the photo is Eamon Devoy, General Secretary of the TEEU, Ireland's largest engineering union.



Fund Mass Transit

AIL's George Farenthold joined union transit workers represented by Transport Workers Local 100 of New York and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689 at a rally in Washington, D.C., to urge Congress to fund the Highway Transit Fund which is set to go broke in August. Transit workers held other rallies in cities across the nation. Shown is TWU Local 100 President John Samuelson speaking to the crowd.



AIL Supports Alabama Candidate

Alabama PR Marketing Specialist George Murry (left) presents a contribution to the campaign of James Fields, a candidate for lieutenant Governor.



Walmart Moms Strike

AIL's Central Florida PR Manager Carmella Stroud Blitch (left) joins Walmart strike leaders Angela Williamson of Our Walmart (right) and Denise Diaz, Executive Director of Central Florida Jobs with Justice (center).

YTD CONTRIBUTIONS

Listed below is a partial list of contributions made on behalf of AIL/NILICO, its State General Agents, and directed by the Labor Advisory Board. All contributions were made between January and June, 2014 and total over \$1.4 Million.

- **ALABAMA AFL-CIO** - Legislative Appreciation Day
- **ALLIANCE FOR JUSTICE**
- **ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS**
- **ARKANSAS AFL-CIO** - Young Workers Conference
- **BCTGM BISCUIT, CANDY, SNACK AND PASTA COUNCIL** - Constitutional Convention
- **BROADBENT INSTITUTE**
- **CANADIAN BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT**
- **CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM**
- **CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES** - Convention
- **COALITION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS**
- **CENTER FOR MILITARY RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT & VETERAN EMPLOYMENT (CMRAVE)** - Helmets to Hardhats
- **COLORADO AFL-CIO** - Cope
- **DC FRIENDS OF IRELAND**
- **DELAWARE BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL, AFL-CIO** - Apprentice Graduation Banquet
- **ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE**
- **HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO** - Aloha United Way Golf Tournament
- **IBEW** - Membership Development Conference
- **IDAHO STATE AFL-CIO** - COPE
- **ILLINOIS STATE AFL-CIO** - COPE
- **JAMES R. HOFFA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND**
- **JEWISH LABOR COMMITTEE**
- **JOBS WITH JUSTICE**
- **LABOR OF LOVE**
- **LCLAA**
- **LOUISIANA AFL-CIO** - Emile J. Bourg Scholarship
- **MANITOBA BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL** - Charity for Kids Golf Tournament
- **MASSACHUSETTS AFL-CIO** - Scholarship
- **MISSOURI AFL-CIO** - Fight Against the Right To Work Ballot Initiative
- **NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE**
- **NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS ALLIANCE**
- **NATIONAL LABOR COLLEGE**
- **NEW BRUNSWICK FEDERATION OF LABOUR** - Labour Solidarity Award Bursary
- **NEW JERSEY AFL-CIO** - Earned Sick Leave Law & WILD Conference
- **NEW JERSEY BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL** - Convention
- **NEW YORK BRANCH NAACP**
- **NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO** - Annual Awards Reception and NYS Dream Act Coalition
- **NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF LABOUR** - Leo McKay Bursary
- **ONE WORLD EDUCATION**
- **OHIO AFL-CIO** - President's Club Golf Outing
- **ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR** - South Asian Community Activism Event
- **OPCMIA** - Scholarship
- **PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO** - Fight Against Paycheck Deception Legislation
- **SACRAMENTO SIERRA BUILDING TRADES COUNCIL** - Dad's Day Golf Tournament
- **SAN FRANCISCO LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO** - COPE
- **SASKATCHEWAN BUILDING TRADES MAGAZINE**
- **SOUTHWEST VOTER REGISTRATION EDUCATION PROJECT**
- **STATE BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA** - Tradeswoman Conference
- **UNION SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE**



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