



# THE DISPATCHER

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Twelve thousand workers attended the Wisconsin solidarity rally in Olympia, WA on April 8th including ILWU members and pensioners (L-R) Steve Johnson, Doug Johnson, Mike Jagielski, Erik Knutson, Tony Brett, Perry Smith, Dana Braach, Eric Sowers and Brendan Winderes.

# ILWU members join 1,000 "We Are One" rallies across the US to protect workers' rights

ILWU members joined workers across the country at rallies this spring to challenge politicians in Wisconsin and other states where working families and union members are under attack.

Plans for the "We Are One" nationwide solidarity actions were hatched at a February 28th meeting of AFL-CIO leaders including ILWU International President Bob McEllrath. The idea called for coordinated events on April 4th – the 43rd anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. King was killed 43 years ago while supporting public sanitation workers in Memphis who were striking for union recognition.

The plan to honor Dr. King's memory helped spark a total of 1000 events across the country. Within

days, rank and file members from Local 30 in Boron, CA were organizing solidarity actions on Saturday, March 5th in Palmdale and a week later in Barstow.

### LA leads the way with "Solidarity Saturday"

Union members in LA held the nation's first massive solidarity action with an event on March 26th that drew an estimated 20,000 people, including over 500 ILWU members representing most locals in Southern California. The group marched from the Los Angeles Convention Center to Pershing Square in downtown LA where a massive rally was held to support public-sector workers.

"It's really important that ILWU members remain active in this fight," said ILWU Local 13 President Joe Cortez. "Over 500,000 people turned out for a demonstration in London this weekend. They're facing the

same problems over there. These attacks on workers are spreading; and we have to be the ones to stop it."

"Tea Partiers and anti-union politicians are trying to take advantage of an economic crisis caused by Wall Street and use it as an opportunity to attack unions," added Local 13 Secretary-Treasurer, Mondo Porras. "Workers have got to stand together right now. If we don't step up, everything we've fought for can be taken away. The companies aren't going to give workers anything. It is only because workers come together and collectively fight for improvements in our working conditions that anything has ever been won."

Mahlon Mitchell, President of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, was a special guest at the rally. He explained the connection between attacks on workers in Wisconsin and Los Angeles. "This is an attack on

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## LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

**Dear Editor,**

I've been watching the situation in Wisconsin where thousands of working class families and union members are protesting in the capitol and marching on the streets against Governor Walker. Seeing this made me wonder how an anti-union Governor could be elected in the first place. Did union members not vote? Did many union members vote for an anti-union Governor? Did the Governor get votes from working-class voters who don't have a union? And what about all those former union members who used to have good jobs until investors shipped their jobs to Mexico and China – did some of them vote for Walker?

It seems to me that some working class voters are helping anti-union candidates win in Wisconsin and other states. If so, we've got to find a way to talk with these brothers and sister so the working class isn't divided and fooled into voting for anti-union politicians.

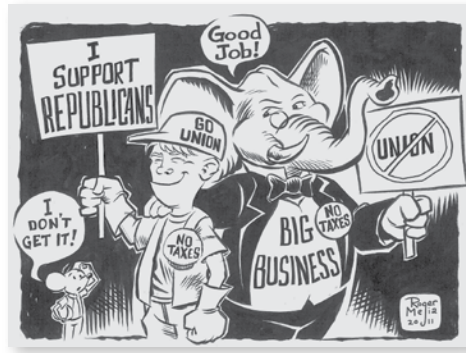
I was a bit curious about what some union brothers around here have been thinking about Wisconsin. I was astonished at what I heard, and it made me realize that we have plenty of work to do in our own house. One person told me: "I can't support those public unions in Wisconsin, because they're taking money from my taxes." Another said: "I can't support government unions, because we're a private sector union." Most of all, I heard: "I don't follow politics."

I was shocked and pissed off. Harry Bridges must be rolling over in his grave with so many union members who aren't interested in politics or vote against their own interests. I was aware that we have some conservative minded members in the union, but how do we explain so many anti-union members in our union? Really, you've got to be joking! The two words are so contradictory. It's like oil and water, they don't mix, right? Here's an analogy; a cancer patient who demands the best treatment in the best hospital then decides he likes getting cancer and wants more of it – even if it's going to kill him! Union members who vote for anti-union politicians are no different and just a suicidal.

I heard a radio report on NPR recently that said some union members are upset because their unions were contributing to help pro-union candidates. Well, of course unions should be supporting pro-union candidates, but maybe we've forgotten why.

A longshoreman of 1934 could easily tell you. They watched three consecutive anti-union presidents (Harding, Coolidge and Hoover) who encouraged the "free market" and Wall Street speculators to run wild and plunge our country into the Great Depression that began in 1929. The wealthy few in this country were fine while the rest of America was poor. In order to get the country back on its feet and put people to work, Franklin Delano Roosevelt put the "New Deal" into effect – using our government to hold bankers and business owners accountable – and giving workers the right to form unions. This gave average Americans a chance to work and pick themselves up by their bootstraps. Roosevelt signed the National Labor Relations Act that allowed longshore workers and others form unions, exactly one year after the "Bloody Thursday" murders in San Francisco. It was no accident that Roosevelt signed his pro-union law on the waterfront in Tacoma. To this day, bankers and corporate interests hate Roosevelt and his kind for supporting unions. Naturally, anti-union supporters cheered in 1981 when President Ronald Reagan broke a strike by the air traffic controllers union with scabs. Ironically, the union of air traffic controllers (PATCO) was one of the few that endorsed Reagan for President – along with Teamsters Union officials who endorsed Reagan's anti-union campaign twice – even after the PATCO strikebreaking incident.

In 2002, when longshore workers were locked-out (prevented from working) by the PMA during negotiations, President George W. Bush threatened to operate the docks using the National Guard to replace us. Now in 2011, anti-union governors in Wisconsin, Ohio and New Jersey want to bust unions by eliminating collective bargaining and pensions for public employees. Some ILWU members might say; well that doesn't affect us because we're not a public-sector union. But you're wrong. Business owners and investors have never liked the concept of unions and will do anything possible



to destroy them. When they're done weakening or eliminating those public unions, who do you think they're coming after next?

It's time for ALL unions to unite and defend the rights of all workers. We have to help any union that's under attack by politicians, the Tea Party, or their funders in big business. It won't always come down to Democrats vs. Republicans because there are some Democrats who are just as willing to kick union members and the working class as the Republicans. And don't be fooled by the anti-union politicians to try to score points with the working class by promising lower taxes. Almost all those tax cuts have helped a handful at the top get richer while the rest of us get the leftover crumbs while our government is weakened so corporations can run wild without anyone to control them.

If you're an ILWU member who's still voting for anti-union politicians, it's time to reconsider what you're doing before it's too late. Voting for politicians who believe "unions are destroying America" is a form of suicide that will take all of us down.

I'm an unemployed casual who wrote this letter because I want to make sure that our union still exists by the time I get in. My father, Rogelio Mejia, Sr., is a member of Local 13 who still works at the Ports of L.A. and Long Beach.

**Roger Mejia**  
Long Beach, CA

**Dear Editor,**

I'm writing to salute the truly superb editorial content and design of the *Dispatcher* publication. I try to read a few of the national labor organization publications, when available online, and the *Dispatcher* is clearly at the top. The quality of your communications media and transparency with both members and the public are just further indicators of the overall superiority of the ILWU within contemporary organized labor.

**Virgil J. Hill**  
Springfield, MO

**Dear Editor,**

Thank you for restarting my subscription. I am an ILWU member and a former representative on two contract negotiations. I am also an evangelical Christian. My wife's family is 3rd generation longshoreman, so at a glance most people would assume I am all over the place politically. Not so. I would have a hard time in this format describing the extent to which I despise the hypocrisy of the Republican Party. In your November 2010 issue, there was an article about the danger to working families signaled by the election results. One only has to look at what just happened in Wisconsin and what is happening in the NFL to see some of the "fruit" of the last election.

I applaud the ILWU's efforts to study the election results and counter the Republican "wedge" issues. The Democratic Party is failing to counter Republican arguments with extremely valid points about the behavior and profiteering of the elite. It disturbs me that so many of my evangelical peers' gazes are being directed towards heaven while someone is pillaging their pockets. Perhaps it's time to generate a few "wedge" issues of our own.

**Michael Plotycia, Local 12**  
Coos Bay, OR

**Dear Editor,**

I agree with Big Bob's column in the February *Dispatcher*. Big business is coming after unions. Not just in Wisconsin but everywhere in the country. Congress could have helped by passing the Employee Free Choice Act before the last election when more of those anti-union politicians were elected.

I'm tired of seeing so many good jobs go to China. President Obama didn't help by appointing the CEO of General Electric to be his special economic advisor. GE is one of the companies that's closing plants here and shipping jobs to China for the low wages. I've also seen 350 paper workers lose their jobs in my area – including some who recycled paper for McDonalds -because companies moved that work to China.

If we don't help all workers to fight back, we won't have unions left in America. Let's get busy.

**Earl "Tiger" Landsborough, Local 21, retired**  
Longview, WA

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# Tacoma longshore celebrates 125 years of strength and solidarity

A cemetery may seem like an ironic place to begin a celebration of the beginning of the Tacoma longshore local, but this is no ordinary cemetery. On the morning of March 22, Local 23 active members, pensioners, ILWU International President Robert McEllrath, International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams, and Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet, Tacoma community members, and representatives from ILWU locals along the coast gathered in the Old Tacoma Cemetery at the burial site of 23 of the original 47 workers who formed the Stevedores, Longshore and Riggers Union of Puget Sound 125 years ago. Many of the grave markers of those founding members have disintegrated over the years. Local 23 members and pensioners raised over \$18,000 to replace and set new markers so that the union's founding members could be appropriately honored.

The union was formed on March 22, 1886 after a unanimous vote by the men working the lumber ship Ivy. They struck for five days before winning their demands for union recognition, wage increase, and the right for the job dispatcher to be elected by union members.

"Seven of the 23 founding members buried in Old Tacoma Cemetery were killed on the job," honorary member of local #23 and historian Dr. Ron Magden noted in an article he wrote for the 125th anniversary celebration. "Two others died of exhaustion beside the ship. Another died a week after being injured on the job. Two died in the hospital after each lost a leg on the job."

"It was heart wrenching to know that these people gave their lives to set the table for us," said Local 23 President Scott Mason. "The turnout at this event was incredible. It shows the support we have in this community from being active in various civic organizations and from the hard work of Local 23 members which has made the port the economic engine of Tacoma."

"It was amazing to see our pensioners, active members and ILWU members from along the coast come



ILWU International President Robert McEllrath with Local 23's oldest pensioner, John Ehli.

together at the cemetery and pay respect to our founding members and celebrate our 125th anniversary," added Local 23 Vice President Holly Hulscher, who was also a part of the committee that planned the celebration for several years.

The atmosphere at the cemetery was at times somber and at other times celebratory. The event paid equal recognition to the sacrifices and fortitude of the local's founding members as well as celebrating the tenacity and spirit of the following generations that grew the Tacoma longshore local from its original 47 members to over 5,500 A-men and women who have worked the Tacoma waterfront since the beginning.

Local musician John Vance played and a moving rendition of Amazing Grace on the bagpipes and Local 23 members Zeek Green and Vance Lelli put their talents on display at the event. Green gave a spoken word performance of a piece he wrote specially for the 125th anniversary. Lelli led a sing-along of the Woody Guthrie classic, "Union Burying Ground."

ILWU International President Robert McEllrath spoke at the celebration luncheon held at the Local 23 dispatch hall later that afternoon. While reminding everyone of the sacrifices made by Tacoma longshore's founding members, McEllrath also noted important challenges that must be confronted on the waterfront today to ensure that Local 23 will be around to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

"One hundred and twenty-five years ago, the people working those docks were giving their life and limbs, working logs, stacking lumber without safe working conditions and protections many workers today take for granted. But they still found the time to organize a union," McEllrath said.

"When I came on the docks in 1969, I got to do some of that work where you shook hands with the cargo. You didn't have it in a container. The

work was done like our forefathers that we are celebrating today—they were looking at each other in the hold of a ship. They were talking to each other and we cannot lose that.

"Today, we've got a worker who sits up in the crane alone, we've got a trucker that drives around alone, and we've got a clerk that sits in the tower. There's no more talking. There's no more interaction. That's one step to divide us. Don't let them succeed in dividing us."

International Secretary Treasurer and Local 23 member, Willie Adams, also spoke at the luncheon and highlighted the fighting spirit that the workers from the Ivy imparted to following generations of Tacoma longshore workers.

"Those founding members gave us the attitude to fight for our jurisdiction and to fight for who we are as the working class in America. Everybody should have what we have as ILWU members. They should have a pension. They should have healthcare. They should have respect," Adams said. "Anyone can lead during good times. True leaders get us through the hard times. That's what makes the old timers so tough."

The film, "In Unity There is Strength," a 20-minute documentary on Local 23 produced by Nancy Bourne Haley for Local 23 members, also premiered at the luncheon. Copies of the DVD are available from Local 23 for \$5 a copy PLUS SHIPPING (253-383-2648 EXT. 3).

True to the community spirit of the Tacoma longshore local, members used the celebration as an opportunity to raise over \$2,000 for Tacoma's Hospitality Kitchen for the hungry. Raffle tickets were sold during the event to raise the funds and the lucky ticket holders received gifts—many of which were handcrafted—donated by Local 23 members and ILWU Local 500 Canada.



Local 23 President Scott Mason and Local 23 Vice President Holly Hulscher.

Local 23 member Zeek Green (below) gives a spoken word performance of an original piece he wrote honoring the Tacoma longshore local's 125th anniversary.



There was an impressive turnout for the ceremony at the Old Tacoma Cemetery.

# ILWU members join 1,000 “We Are One” rallies across the US to protect workers’ rights

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me. This is an attack on you. This is an emergency we have in Wisconsin and across the U.S. This is an attack on the middle class,” Mitchell said. “We are in the battle of a lifetime.”

By the time April 4th arrived, ILWU members were joining demonstrations up and down the coast and in Hawaii. In Southern California, some ILWU members were back on the streets again following their March 26th event, joining 2,300 Angelenos who filled the historic First A.M.E. Church in South Los Angeles to rally for workers’ rights. Two of the civil rights and labor leaders at the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike were featured speakers, including the Reverend James Lawson who helped organize the “Freedom Rides” in 1961 that challenged Southern segregation. He also helped create the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in 1960, chaired the sanitation workers strike committee in Memphis, and invited Dr. King to visit Memphis and support the Sanitation workers strike. The other featured speaker was William Lucy, retired Secretary-Treasurer of AFSCME – the union that was helping the striking Memphis sanitation workers in 1968.

“Dr. King’s identification with and in support of the sanitation workers’ strike in Memphis, Tennessee is so identical to the struggles of workers in Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Maine, and any number of states,” said William Lucy. “The American public clearly is identifying with this struggle.”

## Bay Area actions

To show their solidarity, Local 10 members didn’t work at the Ports of Oakland and San Francisco on April 4th. Wisconsin’s state flag was flown upside down from a crane at the port of Oakland on the morning of April 4th, and later in the Local 10 dispatch hall where it remains today. ILWU members from every Bay Area local attended a demonstration at noon in front of Oakland’s City Hall, and more attended a larger “Rally to End Corporate Greed” in San Francisco during the afternoon that attracted thousands.



Willie Adams, ILWU Int’l Sec.-Treas, addressed a crowd of 2,000 people on April 2 at Peace Arch Park in Blaine, WA on the US/Canadian border. Adams said the capitalists have declared war on the working class. “We have to fight back,” he said.

Twenty miles north, in the town of Crockett, CA, union supporters rallied in the middle of the Zampa suspension bridge, named for a local union leader. At this rally, one sign with the slogan, “Fight Like an Egyptian!,” summed up the spirit of these actions and their connection to other workers around the world.

In California’s Central Valley town of Stockton, ILWU members attended an evening rally at the Stockton City Hall that was attended by several hundred supporters.

## Hawaii events

The big “We Are One” rally in Honolulu on April 4th included a large contingent of members from Local 142. The turnout was estimated at 1000 with 30 different unions and many community organizations participating. Joining the delegation were ILWU members vacationing from Vancouver, Canada: Martin Neufeld, his son Nick, and Steve “Sarge” Zarchynski, who came by the Local 142 hall to share in the solidarity and then joined the rally. On Kauai, Local 142 members joined workers from six other unions including the Hotel & Restaurant Union (HERE) workers. They held a smaller but spirited rally involving dozens who gathered at the entrance to Lihue Airport.

## Pacific Northwest mobilizes

ILWU members in the Northwest helped organize an event on Saturday, April 2nd that united workers from Canada, Oregon and Washington State at a rally on the border crossing at Blaine that drew thousands.

On April 4th, ILWU members joined separate rallies in Tacoma and Seattle. In Portland, a rally of 500 at Directors Square Park highlighted the ongoing struggle by members of the Inlandboatmen’s Union (IBU) who work at three Georgia-Pacific warehouses in town. ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams spoke at the event, noting that Georgia-Pacific is owned by the infamous billionaire Koch brothers who are bankrolling anti-worker politicians in Wisconsin, including Governor Scott Walker.

On April 8th, ILWU members and pensioners joined one of the largest



ILWU Local 63 Vice President Roger Olson (left) with ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe joined hundreds of ILWU members at the Solidarity Saturday rally in Los Angeles.



Local 142 members joined along with more than 1,000 people in the solidarity rally in Honolulu

labor rallies that Washington State has seen in a decade. Over 12,000 people came to the State Capitol in Olympia to urge that legislators “Put People First.” Speakers at the event denounced the increasing attack on public workers, including employees at the Washington State Ferry system who belong to the IBU and are in the crosshairs of anti-union politicians (see story on page 5). Calls to “tax the rich” instead of attacking workers were heard frequently among speakers.

A special guest at the Olympia rally was Wisconsin State Senator Spencer Hawes, one of the “Wisconsin 14,” who left Madison to deny Republicans the quorum necessary to take away bargaining rights for state employees. Hawes spoke of the pride he felt watching the Wisconsin struggle grow to attract national and international support. Hawes said he saw an Egyptian man in a news report who was protesting Hosni Mubarak in Cairo and holding a sign that said: “We’re supporting Wisconsin, too.”

## Divide and conquer begins in the Midwest

The attacks by anti-union legislators began in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana for good reason. These “swing” states are battlegrounds where working-class votes are up for grabs. Anti-union forces have two goals in mind. First, they want to eliminate unions. With more than 93% of private-sector workers now without a union, their work has been successful, and the remaining public-sector unions are more vulnerable. Second, they hope to use public-sector unions as a “wedge issue” that can generate enough conflict to divide working-class voters. By portraying union members as lazy and overpaid, anti-

union forces hope their “divide-and-conquer” strategy will be as effective as gun control, abortion, the teaching of evolution, and other issues that drive working-class voters toward anti-union politicians. The 30-year decline of working class incomes, accompanied by weaker and more isolated unions, has left the working class vulnerable. The latest recession and high unemployment have increased resentment toward public workers and is a spark that anti-union forces hope will ignite working class voters to side with corporate-friendly candidates and right-wing populist efforts such as the Tea Party.

## Fight spreads to both coasts

With budget deficits in almost every state caused by the recession and years of tax-cutting promoted by right-wing politicians, the stage was set for attacks on public-sector unions to spread nationwide.

In Washington State, a Democratic Governor and Democratic majority in the upper and lower state house have provided limited help for public workers – including hundreds of Washington State Ferry workers who belong to the Inlandboatmen’s Union (IBU). The attack on these ILWU members is being led by a Democratic State Senator.

In the state of Maine, anti-union Republican Governor Paul LePage went off the deep-end by ordering the removal of a 36-foot mural depicting the state’s labor history from the Department of Labor. He’s also removing the names of labor leaders who were listed in the department’s conference rooms. The governor says the mural and labor names “go against the department’s pro-business goals.” Republican legislators in Maine are trying to match the Governor’s zeal with new laws that would ease child labor laws, requiring young employees to work longer for less money. Workers under the age of 20 would earn as little as \$5.25 an hour for their first 180 days on the job, undercutting the state’s minimum wage of \$7.50 an hour. The law would also eliminate limits on the number of hours children could work on school days.

## Elections and more action will be key

Besides holding rallies and marches, workers in Wisconsin and other states are getting more involved in elections in an effort to unite working-class voters:

- On April 5th, union volunteers in Wisconsin almost defeated State

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# Washington State Ferry workers fight Wisconsin-style attacks

Washington State Ferry workers have been getting a taste of Wisconsin-style anti-union attacks this year because some politicians in the Evergreen state have been scapegoating ferry workers as lazy, overpaid union members.

Most ferry workers belong to the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU), the ILWU's Marine Division. After being bashed in public for most of the year, IBU workers and others in the Ferry Union Coalition developed a plan in early 2011 to avert a potentially lethal attack by anti-union politicians who were aiming to strip job rights, slash pay and cut benefits for ferry employees.

The ferry workers survival plan calls for some hard work and sacrifices that were proposed as a last-resort:

- Involving more workers to discuss, analyze, and mobilize against the attacks.
- Building alliances with passengers and community group who want good ferry service.
- Re-negotiating contracts to eliminate controversial "hot button" issues and accept cuts that showed a willingness to make sacrifices in the face of severe budget cuts and the recession.

90% of ferry workers voted on March 25th to support this survival plan.

Washington Ferry workers aren't out of the woods yet, but it looks like we may have survived the initial round of attacks," said IBU President Alan Coté.

## The storm started building last year

Beginning last summer, ferry workers found themselves attacked in a series of investigative reports that aired on a Seattle TV station. Background for the attacks was provided to the TV station by right-wing, business-funded activists who have been promoting their anti-tax, anti-union agenda for many years.

## ILWU Board pledges aid to Japan quake victims and support for Powell's Bookstore workers

ILWU's International Executive Board met April 7-8 in San Francisco where they approved a \$10,000 donation for earthquake victims in Japan. Additional contributions of \$10,000 came from the ILWU Longshore Division along with a generous \$15,000 contribution from Hawaii's Local 142, plus another \$2500 from Hawaii's Longshore Division, for a grand total of \$37,500.

Following the sensationalistic investigative news reports, a group of Democratic and Republican politicians introduced legislation to strip bargaining rights and other provisions from the ferry workers' union contracts.

### Why were ferry workers so vulnerable?

"It may not have been a perfect storm, but ferry workers have been taking waves from all directions," says IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast.

First, the state budget crisis left the public ferry system without enough funding. Adequate funding disappeared in 1999 when anti-tax activists convinced voters to cut car registration fees that were funding transportation programs, including the ferries. Since then, the ferry system has had to beg each year for funding, creating an annual crisis that some politicians have exploited by scapegoating "overpaid workers" and "wasteful union rules." The recession only made things worse, she adds, because unions have done little to build public support for making corporations and the rich pay their fair share of taxes, leaving government-funded services vulnerable.

Second, Mast says the sensationalistic news reports resonated with the public because they fit into a familiar story-line that's been repeated by anti-union groups for 30 years, beginning with Ronald Reagan: "government is the problem, public workers are lazy and overpaid, unions are selfish and greedy, and public services should be privatized."

Third, she noted that there were a few kernels of truth in the otherwise exaggerated and distorted news reports. For example, a handful of employees had been milking travel time and mileage reimbursements to double their regular pay. While this was allowed under the contract and involved only a few IBU members, these examples became lightning rods that politicians used to turn the public against workers.

The fact that Washington State operates one of the largest, most dependable, and safest ferry systems

in the world – moving 12 million passengers and 10 million vehicles a year – was quickly clouded by the smoke-screen of anti-union attacks that gained momentum last year and snowballed into a full-fledged storm by 2011.

### Politicians pile on

A bi-partisan attack on workers has been led by State Senators Mary Margaret Haugen (D) and Curtis King (R). Washington's Governor Gregoire, who won her election by a handful of votes with critical help from unions, has been cautious in dealing with the ferry worker controversy. It may be up to the Governor to protect workers' rights by vetoing anti-union legislation if it passes through the legislature and reaches her desk.

**"We're in the same boat as workers in Wisconsin...Enough is enough."**

Even after workers made millions of dollars in concessions, legislation is still being proposed that would eliminate the Marine Employees Commission (MEC). The MEC is part of the conflict resolution process in the ferry workers' contract that originated from a historic agreement between former ILWU President Jimmy Herman and then-Governor Spellman who settled a difficult strike in the 1980's. A failure to protect the MEC and other contract rights would be dimly viewed by ferry workers because these provisions have promoted peace on the waterfront for thirty years.

### Workers are pushing back

Ferry workers made a point of attending the April 4th rally in Seattle where hundreds of members from dozens of unions rallied to show solidarity for public employees who are fighting back in Wisconsin and at home. A larger rally on April 8th at the state capitol in Olympia also had good turnout from ferry workers. "Our members are doing a great job during this difficult time. We are unified and very angry. The state can have some money, but not our rights," said IBU President Coté.

Rich Austin, President of the ILWU's Pacific Coast Pensioners Association, wrote a strongly-worded defense of ferry workers that was published in the Everett Herald newspaper on Sunday, March 6th. In it, he ridiculed politicians who focused on relatively petty problems instead of doing something about the massive transfer of wealth that's going to a tiny minority in Washington State and the nation. To see his article, go to [www.heraldnet.com](http://www.heraldnet.com) and search for Rich Austin.

"Everyone knows this fight won't end soon," says President Coté. "We're in the same boat as workers in Wisconsin and everyone else around the country who's coming under attack. All of us need to get more organized, recruit more allies, and build stronger coalitions to achieve a fair tax code that fully funds state budgets. Politicians must be held accountable for pandering to the corporations and the wealthy who receive tax break after tax break while hourly state workers get screwed. Enough is enough."



**Longshore voice:** ILWU International President Bob McEllrath joined leaders from 30 other transportation unions who gathered in Washington, D.C. in early March to coordinate policy and share ideas for the challenging times ahead. The group discussed disturbing plans by the newly-elected, anti-union majority in the House of Representatives who are trying to kill new rules proposed by the Obama administration that would make it easier for airline and railroad workers to join unions. Anti-union legislators also want to cut funding for the Federal Aviation Administration, the agency responsible for inspecting airplanes and hiring air traffic controllers. Within the past month, dangerous conditions were discovered on popular Boeing 737 jets, and exhausted air traffic controllers were discovered dozing-off on the job after being ordered to work double-shifts because of budget constraints. For more information about the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department, go to [www.ttd.org](http://www.ttd.org).

# ILWU International/Longshore Division joint legislative conference tackles port security, infrastructure, free trade and Social Security

During the week of March 13, ILWU members from the longshore division, Local 142, Hawaii Longshore Division, Alaska Longshore Division, IBU, and pensioners gathered in Washington, D.C. to fight for issues of importance to ILWU members and all American workers.

The conference focused on four key issues: port security, transportation and infrastructure, opposition to Korean and Colombian Free Trade Agreements, and protection of Social Security and Medicare.

"The Conference was highly successful," said ILWU International President Robert McEllrath. "We were able to agree on a common agenda and work together." Everyone did a great job getting our concerns across to politicians."

## Port Security Day

Rep. Peter King (R-NY), Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, and the Committee's ranking member, Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS), met with the ILWU delegation concerning port security.

The delegation made it known that the ILWU opposes the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program because it's a burden on workers, expensive to operate, and not a credible way to prevent terrorism.

The issue of employers abusing port security technology was also raised. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) was told about the misuse of security grants, including three examples at the Port of Stockton in California where federal dollars were used to construct a fence that employers hope will limit ILWU jurisdiction. The Port also used federal grant money to buy security cameras that focus on port workers instead of monitoring the fence line periphery against clandestine entry. Finally, the Stockton port used federal security dollars to build infrastructure projects that are unrelated to port security. Despite these concerns, Murray remains an advocate of the Port Security grant program.

## Meeting with Obama's Labor Liaison

Nate Tamarin, Labor Liaison for President Obama also met with the delegation. He received tough questions which reflect the frustration felt by

many workers who feel that the President is not fighting hard for working families and giving too much ground to the right wing.

## Social Security and Medicare Day

ILWU pensioners met with members of Congress who are wavering on their support for Social Security, and with other members who are in positions that could help defend the program. ILWU members lobbied the staff of Senator Durbin (D-IL) who is negotiating with Republicans who want to cut Social Security and Medicare. They met with Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) who has publicly expressed a willingness to put Social Security on the table and with Rep. John Lewis (D-GA), who is a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee.

"In my opinion there's a 'disconnect' between many politicians in our nation's capital and those of us who live in the real world," said Rich Austin, President of Pacific Coast Pensioners who was a part of the ILWU delegation. "When it came to Medicare the first thing out of the politicians' mouths was rising costs. We pointed out that every conversation about health care begins with money, rather than health care. That's in stark contrast to what Congress does when it comes to war. First they authorize war and then find ways to fund it. If they used the same approach when it came to keeping people alive, Medicare and other public health insurance programs would have all the money they need."

## Korea and Colombia Free Trade Agreements

Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA) who Co-Chairs the House Labor Caucus, expressed concern that the Korea and Colombian free trade agreements will hurt working people. Lori Wallach, Executive Director of the Global Trade Watch group went through provisions

of the Korea Free Trade Agreement that were particularly troublesome – including an asterisk in the labor chapter that makes it clear countries do not have to abide by rules set by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

"The Obama Administration is moving fast on these free trade agreements," said Coast Committeeman, Ray Ortiz, Jr. "If these end up passing, we know it will mean more jobs lost for American workers. We need to be focusing on creating jobs in this country, not shipping them overseas," said Ortiz.

## Transportation and Infrastructure Day

The ILWU delegates expressed concern about federal investments in short sea shipping, a program that's being promoted to compete against the low-wage, predominantly non-union trucking sector. ILWU delegates encouraged more investment in infrastructure to help move goods more efficiently from West Coast ports across the country. Notable meetings included a session with Nick Rahall (D-WV), key member of the Transportation Committee, and time with a staffer for Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), who Chairs the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) committed to tell the Dept. of Homeland Security about the ILWU's concern that TWIC readers and port security technology should not be used by employers for anything other than security.

"Overall, the trip was a success," said Ortiz. "We educated legislators on issues that are important to ILWU members. Politics can be frustrating, especially when it seems like politicians care more about the Wall Street bankers than the working class. But it's crucial for us to stay active in politics. There's too much at stake for workers right now."



**Hundreds launch boycott of San Pedro Rite Aid stores:** ILWU families turned-out in force on April 1st to begin a boycott of both Rite Aid drugstores in San Pedro, CA. The two stores fill 17,000 ILWU prescriptions a year worth almost \$2 million. The boycott is limited for now to the two San Pedro stores – but it will help Rite Aid workers across the country get fair union contracts with affordable health insurance. Five hundred ILWU families who work for Rite Aid in Lancaster, CA are welcoming the support in their fight against unfair health insurance hikes, as are Cleveland-area Rite Aid workers in Ohio who are striking 6 stores to protest illegal threats, harassment and surveillance by the company. San Pedro Rite Aid customers are being referred to other union pharmacies in the community, and will return when the company agrees to respect workers. To get involved, see [www.RiteAidWorkers.net](http://www.RiteAidWorkers.net)

**Save the Date**

**Saturday  
June 4, 2011**

**30th Memorial  
Anniversary of the  
murders of ILWU  
Local 37 officers  
Silme Domingo and  
Gene Viernes.**

**The event will take place  
in the early evening at  
University of Washington  
Horticulture Center,  
Seattle, WA.**

**More details will be  
published in next month's  
Dispatcher.**

**HERMANDAD MEXICANA NACIONAL**

**UNIFIENDO LATINO FAMILIAS**

**LOCAL 26 PRESIDENT  
LUISA GRATZ**

will be honored with  
**The Bert Corona  
Leadership Award**  
by Hermandad  
Mexicana Nacional

*This award is named after  
Bert Corona, former ILWU Local 26  
President and founder of  
Hermandad Mexicana Nacional*

**Friday May 27 at 6 PM**  
Hilton Hotel Universal Studios  
555 Universal Terrace Pkwy  
Universal City, CA 91608

For more information on the event call  
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# ILWU Coast Longshore Division's Grievance and Arbitration Process fills the GAP

## New officers learn effective grievance procedures in intensive 5-day workshop

Union officials from up and down the coast attended the Longshore Division's Grievance and Arbitration Process (GAP) workshop. The week-long training began February 28th and was organized by the ILWU's Education Committee.

"The training program brought 45 new officers from up and down the coast to learn about the ILWU's grievance and arbitration procedures so they can effectively represent members when disputes with employers arise," said Education Committee member Patricia Aguirre of Local 63.

"The GAP training covered the full gamut of the entire grievance procedure—from how to file and write a grievance, the preliminary investigation of a grievance utilizing a range of research tools, to understanding the arbitration process," Aguirre said.

The training program included presentations from ILWU members and other professionals experienced in the grievance process including labor attorneys and arbitrators. These presentations were supplemented with hands-

on interactive exercises that gave new officers practical and real-life experience with the grievance process. Opening remarks for the training were presented by ILWU Vice President Ray Familathe.

Thorough knowledge of the Pacific Coast Longshore Contract Document (PCLCD) is central to a successful grievance. The training stressed that this consists of two things: first, what the PCLCD says concerning a grievance and second, how the PCLCD has been interpreted in past grievance and arbitration proceedings. The source of the first is a copy of the PCLCD, but for the second, there are three main sources of information, GAP participants were told. The first resource is other ILWU members who may have had a similar case. If a union sister or brother has experience with a similar grievance or has attended a past GAP workshop they are a valuable resource. There are also two other listings of grievances and arbitrations that can be an important resource in understanding past decisions; they are the Ferguson Index and the Coast Database. How to use these sources was explained by the Coast Longshore Division's Kirsten Donovan, Coast Committeeman Leal



Photo by Lewis Wright

**Hands on learning:** GAP participants applied the knowledge they learned in the training in a two-day long mock LRC and arbitration.

Sundet, Research Director Russ Bargmann, Education Committeemen Rich Austin Jr. of Local 19 and Brad Clark of Local 4. Other industry research tools were covered by Jennifer Sargent of the Coast Longshore Division and Clerks Technology was covered by Joe Gasperov of Local 63.

Other issues covered were discrimination, history, picket lines and health and safety. Ray Ortiz, Coast Committeeman, spoke and answered many questions on our alcohol and drug grievance procedure.

Local 34 President Sean Farley was one of the presenters at this year's GAP training. He is one of several former GAP workshop attendees who returned to pass along their knowledge and experience to incoming officers. "When I finished the GAP training years ago, I felt confident in my understanding of the grievance process," Farley said. "Because of the workshop I knew PMA wasn't going to be able to push me around, and if I wasn't sure what to do, I could contact any of the GAP presenters for advice."

The Education Committee believes that an interactive, hand-on application of the information presented at the training is a vital part of the learning process. Participants were divided into groups representing the ILWU and PMA. For two-and-a-half days, participants, working off a mock-firing scenario, tried to get a crane driver rehired or permanently fired—depending on which side they were assigned to represent.

Using the PCLCD, the Ferguson Index and a laptop loaded with the Coast Database, the workshop participant groups investigated the grievance, took testimony of the scenario participants, disagreed at the Labor Relations Committee level, and finally presented their case to the arbitrator.

"The beauty of the GAP training is that we bring together officers from up and down the coast and they work with one another on a mock scenario," said Patricia Aguirre. "That is the highlight of the week. The mock LRC and mock arbitration gives the participants the chance to apply the information and utilize the tools they have learned and then work collectively to solve a real-life scenario."

"The GAP training is great for our organization," Aguirre added. "I hope we continue to do it and make improvements to the training to make it better and better."

Local 34's René Ducroux was one of the GAP training participants and said the training was one of the best educational experiences he has been a part of in ten years. "The Education Committee did a fantastic job in organizing this workshop," said Ducroux. "They took folks who had no prior knowledge or experience with grievances at the beginning of the training and after 5 days produced people who I would love to have handling grievances at my local. That just reinforces the importance of education in strengthening this union."

— Lewis Wright assisted with the reporting on this article.



Photo by Lewis Wright

Coast Committeemen Leal Sundet (white shirt) and Ray Ortiz, Jr. congratulate GAP participants.

## Free Trade Agreement with Colombia gets boost from Obama – boos from ILWU and AFL-CIO

President Obama disappointed union members and human rights groups on April 6th when by supporting plans for a US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement when it comes up for a vote in Congress – possibly later this year.

White House officials claim that conditions in Colombia have improved, but it remains the most deadly nation in the world for union members. In the past 25 years, more than 2,850 trade unionists have been murdered in Colombia.

Last year alone, 51 trade unionists were murdered, an increase over 2009. Six trade unionists have been murdered so far this year, including two within a week of the White House announcement. The conviction rate for union murders is tiny, despite an effort by the Colombian government to do more investigations and file more charges. The chilling effect of assassinating labor activists is reflected in the low union membership of only 5%. Many Colombia union members are unable to negotiate a contract without fearing violent reaction from paramilitary death squads that are funded by wealthy landowners and business men.

To justify supporting the Colombian Free Trade Agreement, the Obama administration pointed proudly to an "Action Plan" supported by the Colombian government. But the "Plan" isn't enforceable because it's a stand-alone agreement and not part of the free trade agreement.

The ILWU and other unions in the AFL-CIO have opposed the Colombia Free Trade Agreement, and remain opposed despite the announcement of an "Action Plan."

"Too many politicians in both parties have sold their souls to the big busi-

ness interests that are behind these free trade agreements," said ILWU International President Bob McEllrath. "Some of these guys in Congress will vote to help working families on one issue, then turn around and support big business on another. That kind of game will keep happening until more union members get involved so we can hold politicians more accountable."

McEllrath urged members to consider contributing to the ILWU Political Accountability Fund. For more information, visit the members-only site at [www.ilwu.org](http://www.ilwu.org)

# ILWU members join 1,000 “We Are One” rallies across the US to protect workers’ rights

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Supreme Court Justice David Prosser who barely survived a longshot challenge by JoAnne Kloppenburg. Prosser is sympathetic to Gov. Scott Walker’s anti-union agenda.

- Recall campaigns are being organized against eight Wisconsin State Senators who backed Gov. Scott Walker’s anti-union bill. Recall petitions on two of the legislators have already been filed.

- A statewide referendum is being planned in Ohio to repeal the anti-worker legislation backed by Governor John Kasich.

- In other states, including California, unions are considering statewide ballot propositions to “tax the rich” in hopes of easing budget deficits that fuel

attacks on public workers. In 2010, voters in Oregon passed two measures that raised taxes on corporations and high-income households with support from labor unions.

“From now on, no one who works for a living can afford to support any politician who won’t pledge to support union members,” said ILWU International President Bob McEllrath. “I don’t give a damn about what party they’re from, I just want to know if they’ve got the guts to stand-up for unions and working class instead of selling out.”

“The April 4th actions were a wake-up call that we’re in the cross-hairs. If all of us don’t get up and get moving, we’ll be an easy target,” said McEllrath.

## ILWU local 502 raising \$10,000 for Children’s Hospital

Surrey, British Columbia, Canada - ILWU local 502 raised over \$2600 for the food bank during the Christmas holidays. Now they have taken up a much larger project. They are attempting to raise \$10,000 for the Children’s Hospital. In one week of collections the members have donated over \$3,000.

The local was also involved in raising funds for cancer research a few weeks ago as well. This initiative by

local 502 also comes with a challenge to all Unions, groups and organizations to match or beat their target of \$10,000. Local 502 is becoming more involved in the community and is helping many groups.

The local has set a deadline of June 1 to accomplish this task. Judging from their current success they are sure to pass the \$10,000 target. As of April 1st, the collected was \$7,500.



Local 502 members involved with the fundraiser (L. to R.) Varinderjit S. Cheema, Pargan S. Mattu, International Longshore V.P. Ray Familathe (from California), Dilbagh S. Kingra. (not pictured Scottie Morrison and Bal S. Sanghera).

## TRANSITIONS

### NEW PENSIONERS:

**Local 10:** Sheldon A. Dulberg; Edward Carter Jr; **Local 19:** Carl J. Burke; **Local 26:** John L. Hodder; **Local 46:** Darrell L. Zobel; **Local 52:** Richard H. Paulson; **Local 63:** Oscar L. Trevino; **Local 94:** Marcus K. Johnson

### DECEASED PENSIONERS:

**Local 10:** Benjamin O Neal; Walter Pudoff; Robert A. Capurro; Richard Estrada; Robert Walker; **Local 13:** Gene A. Krieger, Sr.; Ted G. Osuniga; Ray S. Reynolds; John Smallen; James Hipsher (Elizabeth); James E. Hiser (Yong Hui); **Local 19:** Amos Whetung; **Local 19:** Rondell W. Von Carnop; Charles J. Hanke; **Local 21:** Perry W. Rose; **Local 23:** Terrence P. Mason; Ricky D. Welfringer (Amy);

Jarl A. Sonsteng; **Local 27:** Hugh E. Mc Lennan; **Local 34:** George H. Siemon; Tasuku Yui; Ashton Villia; **Local 40:** Robert F. Harvey; Clarence Nelson; **Local 63:** Anthony W. Osler; George Cyr; Jack R. Ronne; **Local 91:** Aurelio B. Quiros (Earlene);

### DECEASED SURVIVORS:

**Local 10:** Maudie Cam; Leatrice Nakano; **Local 13:** Mary Salas; Julia M. Rodrigues; Theresa Bell; **Local 18:** Shirley L. Bagwell-Holland; **Local 21:** Bobbye J. Johnstun; **Local 24:** Gaye C. Kaiyala; Jean M. Sharp; **Local 29:** Loretta Canich; **Local 34:** Jeanne Rice; Louise Tham; Violet M. Hildebrand; **Local 63:** Loydene F. Hutson; **Local 75:** Mary Alice Klein; **Local 94:** Carmen Machado;

## A Helping Hand...

...when you need it most. That’s what we’re all about. We are the representatives of the ILWU-sponsored recovery programs. We provide professional and confidential assistance to you and your family for alcoholism, drug abuse and other problems—and we’re just a phone call away

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San Pedro, CA 90731  
(310) 547-9966

**ADRP—Oregon**  
Brian Harvey  
5201 SW Westgate Dr. #207  
Portland, OR 97221  
(503) 231-4882

**ADRP—Northern California**  
Norm McLeod  
400 North Point  
San Francisco, CA 94133  
(415) 776-8363

**ADRP—Washington**  
Donnie Schwendeman  
3600 Port of Tacoma Rd. #503  
Tacoma, WA 98424  
(253) 922-8913

### ILWU WAREHOUSE DIVISION

**DARE—Northern California**  
Teamsters Assistance Program  
300 Pendleton Way  
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(510) 562-3600

### ILWU CANADA

**EAP—British Columbia**  
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3665 Kingsway, Ste 300  
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(604) 254-7911



Local 30 members organized Wisconsin solidarity actions at Palmdale and Barstow, CA in early March.



**Good jobs for our ports:** Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader of the House, was joined by ILWU Secretary Treasurer, Willie Adams, at a press event on March 5th, to protect funding for America’s ports. The budget being proposed by Republicans in Congress includes \$680 million in annual cuts to port spending. The cuts include money for port security, operations, maintenance and construction. “Workers today see the economy as being on life support and needs to be resuscitated,” Adams said. He urged cooperation between business, labor and elected officials to tackle the issue of port infrastructure investment. “Our ports are absolutely vital to our economy. We need to continue to invest in our ports to create good jobs for working class people.”



**Local 6 Convention:** Dozens of delegates from diverse workplaces throughout the Bay Area gathered on Saturday, March 26th at the Local 6 union hall in Oakland. Unlike past conventions where politicians were a big part of the program, this year’s convention heard reports from more rank-and-file members, including Christian Sledge from Bayer Pharmaceuticals in Berkeley, Timeteo Damas from Smurfit Stone Recycling in Oakland, Heather Chu from Waste Management’s landfill at the Altamont Pass, and Josefa Solano from BLT Recycling in Fremont. Reports from these and other shop-floor leaders were honest about the difficult challenges facing workers everywhere due to the recession and corporate greed. Several workers spoke about their efforts to prepare for contract negotiations by involving more co-workers and building community support, as workers are doing now at Bayer in Berkeley. The pharmaceutical giant sought big tax breaks – secured with help from the union – then announced dozens of job cuts despite promises to protect good jobs for the community. ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams spoke at the convention, encouraging workers to “stay strong and united,” explaining “these are tough times that are putting all of us to the test.” Local 6 Secretary-Treasurer Fred Pecker joined the Local 6 Executive Board in recommending a small dues increase to help workers fight back against employer demands for concessions. “This is the most difficult time workers have faced in decades,” said Pecker. “We need to do everything we can to hold the line.”