

I



WA

AFL-CIO NEWS

Volume 21, Issue 1

Official Publication of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO

June 2021

The President's View . . .

Help Pass the PRO Act

By Charlie Wishman, IFL President

With the vote in Bessemer, Alabama behind us and the employees losing in this vote, there are important lessons to take away from that organizing action, and it's a textbook example of why we need the PRO (Protect the Right to Organize) Act.

Why? Let us take a look at just some of the actions that Amazon took, and why having the PRO Act would have made a difference.

The most important reason is that Amazon would have faced actual consequences for unlawfully interfering with the election. The NLRB has a lack of actual meaningful remedies, and therefore employers are incentivized to commit unfair labor practices. Under the PRO Act, a union that enjoys majority support before filing its petition would be automatically certified through card check in elections that have been stopped because of employer unfair labor practices. So, either Amazon would have had to play by the rules or face actual consequences for its actions.

Amazon would have been prohibited from conducting captive audience meetings. Studies and research show that employers use

is accepted by the labor board, as long as the bargaining unit shares a "community of interest." If this had been in effect, the initial 1,500 employees would have been covered under the vote, rather than the more expansive vote that the company wanted.

If the union did win, it would be guaranteed a first contract. The PRO Act would have a system of arbitration to take hold if the parties do not reach an initial collective bargaining agreement within 90 days of the union's certification. Amazon was able to scare employees by correctly claiming that even if the Union won the vote, they were not assured to provide its members with a contract even if it won the election. Not only does this provision help in getting that first contract, it takes that scare tactic away from management to use against employees.

The election would have been completed quicker. The PRO Act provides for pre-election proceedings and the option for electronic voting at the union's preference. While mail-in voting isn't inherently bad, in this case it turned out to be. Amazon installed USPS drop boxes on their property, which certainly intimidated many people,

and in addition Amazon was allowed to continue campaigning against the union during the time it took to have a mail in ballot procedure. This is relevant because the pandemic issues with the USPS convinced the NLRB that voting needed to last almost two months.

The union also would have far more tools to build solidarity. While it is not known if it was considered by the union's tactics, there would have been the possibility of job actions such as intermittent strikes, partial strikes, and production slowdowns. Again, we don't know if that would have come into play or not, but it certainly would have had more tools available in the toolbox for these unions.

Right to work laws would be repealed. With those laws repealed, we can begin to chip away at decades long anti-union propaganda and would be a valuable tool to build worker power.

There are actually many other examples of how things would have turned out differently with the PRO Act. I'm sure you can think of many examples of organizing drives you've been a part of that would have turned out differently. The PRO Act is 80 years overdue. It wouldn't just be a change in labor law, it would be a revolution for workers and for the working class of this country. Contact your members of the US House of Representatives and the US Senate, and tell them we need the PRO Act now.

this tactic because it works. Forcing employees to listen to anti-union propaganda is clearly coercion, and it works. Under the PRO Act, this would be an Unfair Labor Practice, and a violation of the NLRA (National Labor Relations Act).

The Union's initial proposed bargaining unit would have been accepted. Under the PRO Act, a union's proposed bargaining unit

Call Your U.S. Senators and Tell Them to Pass the PRO Act Now!

Call: 1-866-832-1560.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act last year, but anti-worker legislators in the Senate blocked it. Undeterred, working people fought to elect pro-worker lawmakers to the Senate, House and White House. And we won.

Lawmakers gave us their word they would make the PRO Act a top priority. It's time for them to keep that promise. The House passed the PRO Act for a second time on March 9, 2021, sending the bill to the U.S. Senate.

The PRO Act is the cornerstone of the AFL-CIO's Workers First Agenda. If it passes, it would:

- Empower workers to organize and bargain.

- Hold corporations accountable for union-busting.

- Repeal "right to work" laws, which were created during the Jim Crow era to keep White and Black workers from organizing together.

Stronger unions mean higher wages, safer working conditions and dignity for all people who work. The PRO Act is our first step to get there.



Iowa Federation of Labor Convention

.....Page 2

Iowa PRO Act Resolutions Filed

.....Page 5

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PRESORT INC

Iowa AFL-CIO News
Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
2000 Walker St., Suite A
Des Moines, Iowa 50317

Iowa Federation of Labor Convention

The 65th annual Iowa Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) convention will be held August 25-27 in Altoona.

The Theme for this year's convention is "Organize: The Time is Now".

On Wednesday there will be an open reception to Honor Ken Sagar in Skinner A and B rooms from 5:30 to 7:30. The event is free to attend, will include free hors d'oeuvres and have a cash bar. A free will donation to the University of Iowa Labor Center is encouraged. The IFL Hall of Fame (HOF) dinner will be Thursday evening.

Convention registration information has been sent out with the Convention Call. Delegates may also register on Wednesday August 21 from 8 am to 5 PM at the Meadows Convention Center at Prairie Meadows.

Registration is \$40, and all delegates are encouraged to buy a \$20 COPE ticket. (COPE tickets must be paid for in cash or by personal check.)

Room reservations must be made directly by the delegate. They can be made by phone or online. 515-957-3000 or 800-325-9015 or www.prairiemeadows.com. Reference number is 08232021AFL. Room rate is \$115 plus tax. Deadline to reserve rooms is August 5, 2021 by 5 PM.

Credentials can be dropped off or mailed to the IFL office (2000 Walker, Des Moines 50317) no later than August 4, or received by mail at the IFL office by August 2 2021.

Resolutions can be submitted at this convention. The deadline for submission of resolutions is in office August 4, and by mail July 30. You may email resolutions to Pete Hird at pete@iowaafclcio.org.

The 37th Labor Hall of Fame Dinner and Induction Ceremony will be held Thursday evening. Hospitality will be start at 6 PM and the Dinner and Program will begin at 7 PM. This year's Hall of Fame inductees are Ken Sagar (IBEW), Randy Bolton (USW) and Anthony Stephens (Packinghouse Workers

Organizing Committee). The keynote speaker is former Iowa Democratic House Leader and Labor Activist Mark Smith. Tickets for

ested in a vendor table contact the IFL no later than August 2, 2021.

For more information contact the Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-

Organize
The Time is Now

Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
65th Annual Convention
August 25-27, 2021
Altoona, Iowa

IN UNITY THERE IS STRENGTH

The Iowa AFL-CIO News is the official publication of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
2000 Walker St., Suite A
Des Moines, Iowa 50317
and is published quarterly.

(515) 262-9571
iowaafclcio.org

Officers & Staff

President
CHARLIE WISHMAN
charlie@iowaafclcio.org

Secretary/Treasurer
PETER HIRD
peter@iowaafclcio.org

Political Director
JULIANNE FROSLONE
julianne@iowaafclcio.org

Communications Director
LANCE COLES
lance@iowaafclcio.org

Organizing Director
BEN MURRY
ben@iowaafclcio.org

Bookkeeper
JAMIE MILLER
jamie@iowaafclcio.org



The Death of the Myth of 'Iowa Nice'

By Jay Smith & Dennis McElwain

If nothing else, Governor Reynolds' recent announcement of her decision to cut Federal Unemployment Benefits and send back \$95 million in Federal COVID-19 aid (complete with bragging about it on Fix News (Fox News) confirmed what those of us in the Labor Movement have known since the dark days of February 2017, when the Republicans gutted Chapter 20 and then went on to gut Iowa Workers' Compensation statute – the myth of "Iowa Nice" is dead. When our state's governor goes on Fix News to brag about rejecting federal money and less than two weeks later cuts unemployment benefits for individuals, it is hard to say those decisions are "nice." At this point in time, it is probably more apt to say those decisions reflect "Iowa Vindictiveness" or "Iowa Mean Spiritiveness." In either case, neither description is flattering.

Governor Reynold's decision to end the \$300 payments for those who are unemployed citing a need for Iowans "to get back to work" should not have come as a surprise. However, it demonstrates a basic misunderstanding of the moment in which we live. For the last forty years, the inequity between worker's pay and the pay of executives has grown exponentially. At the

same time, Iowa's minimum wage has not been increased to keep up with inflation. For example, in 1980, Iowa's minimum wage was \$3.10 per hour. Today, it is \$7.25 per hour. If the minimum wage had tracked productivity increases, the minimum wage would be \$22.00 per hour today.

It should not come as surprise then that some businesses, who pay minimum wages or wages close to it and do not offer benefits, are having difficulty hiring. Who can blame someone who does not want to return to the workforce for starvation wages with no benefits? More important, however, the question becomes why should our state government care about those business who can only stay afloat by paying starvation wages? And, why should

the policy of our state be to take away benefits for individuals who may not have returned to the workforce simply because we continue to be battling a worldwide pandemic that has left over 500,000 Americans dead and are uncomfortable returning to the workforce? Finally, why would anyone celebrate the decision to take away benefits? We do not have good answers to these questions because there are no good answers.

However, the dissatisfaction with the pre-pandemic status quo offers the Labor Movement an opportunity. It seems as if many workers are beginning to understand that the economy does not have to work only for the rich, that government should not exist simply to cut taxes for corporations, and that starvation wages without benefits do not have to be their destiny. In this moment, at this time, this awakening presents an opportunity to talk to workers, to educate workers, to mobilize workers, and to organize workers.

If the Labor Movement takes advantage of this opportunity, we can help put an end to the mean spiritiveness and vindictiveness of Governor Reynolds and her cronies. We can help return Iowa's reputation to "Iowa Nice." And, most important, we can help better the lives of working people.



The Secretary-Treasurer's Notes . . .

No Help for Iowa Workers



IFL Secretary Treasurer
Peter Hird

This year's legislative session went into overtime to complete its work, even though the Republican party controls all three branches of Government. This was the second session during the COVID-19 pandemic, and again, it came and went without addressing the real concerns for workers during, or even before the pandemic. It wasn't for the lack of good ideas or examples to learn from. We clearly saw how workers struggled when the economy wasn't up and running at 100%. Instead of shoring up real problem areas in Iowa, this session almost seemed to be a campaign ad full of misinformation and divisive tactics.

Looking back at bills that were filed, it was nice to see that there was an opportunity to do some good policy work. A handful of pro-worker bills even made it through a committee or a chamber, but few had the coordinated effort to get passed by both chambers to be put on the Governor's desk. Three bills we supported passed one of the chambers, but amendments seemed to keep them from passing in the other. For the second year now, a bill to ban employers from mandating employees have a microchip implanted passed the House but not the Senate. The bill didn't have any teeth, though, so a Senate amendment added a fine if an employer violated the law and the bill died. Non-compete agreements are becoming a growing trend for employers to limit who and where an employee may work if they move on. A bill banning non-compete agreements for workers who make under \$41,600 was filed, but no subcommittee was scheduled. A second non-compete bill that limited the wage level to double the minimum wage passed the Senate but didn't get a House meeting. Another bill file brought a little more equality for parents who adopt a child. If a parent

adopts a child from 0-18 years old, and that parent worked in a workplace that provided benefits for parents who had a biological child, this bill would have given them the same benefits. This was then amended to only include parents who adopt children 0-6 years of age and passed the House but died in the Senate. Rights for manufactured home residents, pregnancy accommodations for women in the workplace and allowing college athletes to earn money for their likenesses only received committee meetings and are forced to wait another year for consideration. Opportunities are there to help the workers of Iowa, but the will to make change isn't there.

Many bad ideas rose to the top of the priority list this year. The Governor signed a bill which allows 16 to 18-year-olds to operate amusement park rides even though it may conflict with Iowa's child labor law. Some say it is an insignificant change to allow a 16-year-old to push a button to start or stop a ride, but we cannot ignore that accidents do happen. And who will be responsible to assist if one occurs? Senator Boulton offered an amendment to make sure an 18-year-old is always readily available on site, but it was voted down on the Senate floor along party lines. This legislation was requested by the amusement park owners because they can't find enough people to work at their parks. Instead of raising the wages, they change the rules.

Election legislation was passed with two different bills this year. The first piece shortened early voting days, reduced hours that polls can be open, banned elected county auditors from sending out absentee request forms, purged voters from the registration list if they miss one general election and banned anyone from picking up another person's absentee ballot. It didn't take too long after the Governor signed the bill for leadership to realize they went too far. The two chambers passed new legislation that now allows household members, immediate family members or a delivery agent to deliver another person's ballot with a maximum of two total ballots. However, employers or employer agents, political party agents, union officers or agents cannot be delivery agents. This bill will be punishable as a felony charge if a union officer or agent helps deliver a member's ballot.

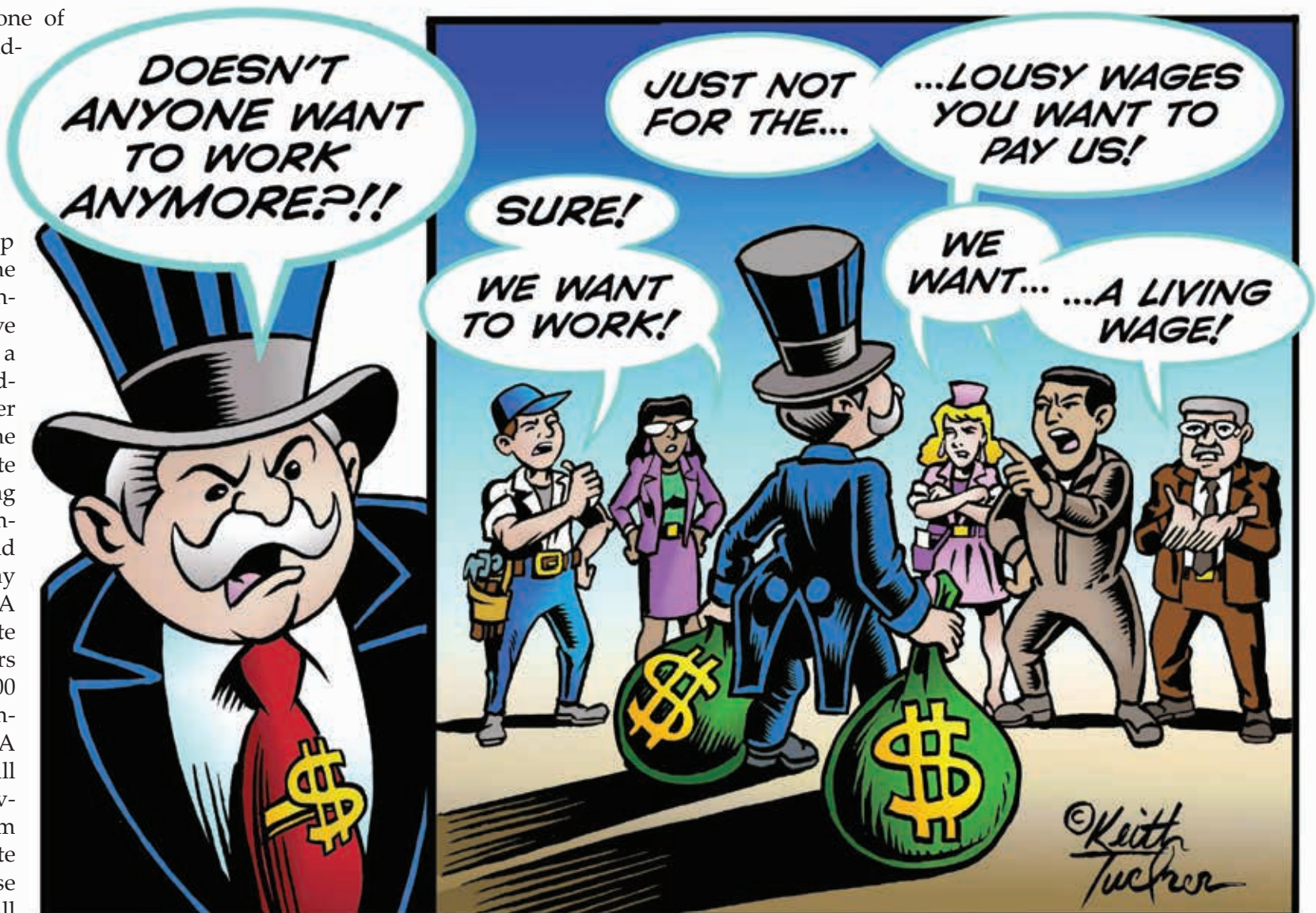
Iowa's public education system was targeted in the legislature this year as well. Many Republicans talked about why they think some schools are failing without bringing up any ideas on how to improve public schools. Instead, legislation was filed to funnel kids out of their current schools through open enrollment, private school vouchers and charter schools. While the bill to allow public dollar vouchers to be spent on private education was stopped by the hard work of advocates, open enrollment by prohibiting diversity plans and char-

ter school expansion were pushed through.

Iowa leadership allowed a lot of awful legislation to have subcommittee meetings this year and ignored many good ideas that put workers first. Not every bill gets a subcommittee. Democrats filed dozens of pro-worker bills that never received a meeting including expanding collective bargaining rights, paid leave benefits, voting rights, pregnancy accommodations, wage theft protection, workplace injury rights, retirement options, pandemic workplace safety and setting a prevailing wage on public construction projects.

One bright light throughout this session was the collective voice of Iowa's labor movement and legislators who stand with Iowa workers. Some awful legislation was put to a halt this year including the attempt to remove protected class status for LGBTQ individuals, banning the Design Build bidding practice that is allowed in 48 other states, school vouchers and unemployment cuts. From your help, working Iowans and their communities will not lose \$30 million in earned benefits because they lost their job, at no fault of their own. This fight will never be officially over, and we all need to continue letting our legislators know to leave our earned unemployment benefits alone!

It is a true honor to serve as your representative at the capitol, but the real voice of Iowa workers is, and always will be, you.



"WHAT NOW?!!!"

© KEITH TUCKER
WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

The Basics Beyond: Switch Iowa to an Opportunity Agenda

By Mike Owen

Moving ahead from the 2021 legislative session, Iowa must return to the basics: What can we do to make Iowa a better place to live and raise a family? That one question captures the essence of how public policy can help improve the lives of all Iowans vs. only the few.

For starters, we can truly invest in public education.

- That would be a big contrast to 2021, when legislators once again held down state per-pupil spending for K-12 schools. The agreement on 2.4 percent Supplemental State Aid kept average annual growth below 2 percent since FY2012, compared with 3.1 percent during the decade before.

- Diverting public money to private education is a growing trend, opening the door to privately run charter schools and expanding the cost of the private school scholarship tax credit by 33 percent, from \$15 million to \$20 million.

- Regents universities' general appropriations were frozen at this year's levels, raising the specter of tuition increases at some point and compounding a long-term change in emphasis from state aid to tuition.

- We can make reliable child care available to more low-wage families by expanding eligibility for Child Care Assistance.

- While the Legislature did fur-

ther ease the "cliff effect" where people abruptly lose CCA benefits by taking even a modest raise, that was low-hanging fruit.

- Lawmakers missed a clear opportunity to expand the benefit to more families who cannot afford it if their jobs don't pay enough. Currently they are not eligible if they make above 145 percent of the federal poverty level — or \$31,842 for a family of three. Iowa's law remains one of the most restrictive in the country.

Education and child care are just two among many examples where our state budget is not crafted first with Iowans' needs in mind. The drive from the top is to cut taxes, no

matter the cost in services. Tax cuts billed as the state's largest in history in 2013 and 2018 were followed in 2021 with hundreds of millions in new tax cuts over the next several years.

A long-term opportunity agenda will offer a hand up, not the back of the hand, to Iowa's working families and those most in need of protection.

Such an agenda would bring workers to the table to improve workplace safety and job quality. It would recognize the chronic underfunding of prisons, which shows itself in the killing of employees and other violence. We would finally address long-running problems of water quality and recreational opportunities for which voters demanded, and offered, a solution a decade ago.

Iowa leaders would recognize that the national spotlight on racial division and its historical roots in public policy is an opportunity to build inclusion and equity — not to create new wedges by restricting curriculum, banning diversity plans in schools, and raising new barriers to voting.

That public policy can be an effective tool for all is emphasized by Iowa's arm-length response to a worldwide pandemic that in Iowa alone killed over 6,000 people and infected 1 in 10 residents. The Governor relied more heavily on voluntary actions than directives for community protection and attempted to penalize Iowans who did not feel safe returning to work.

The Legislature left much of the pandemic response to the Governor, except to institute a ban on local directives on masks. For good measure they rammed it through both houses in one day on an unrelated bill, marching it down for the Governor's signature in time to make sure schools could not maintain mask rules for even one more day. Local school officials (and parents) not only were not consulted, but not even notified to prepare children for the abrupt change in routine.

The common threads here? Not surprisingly, money and power. Iowans must learn from the mistakes of 2021 to set a better course in 2022 and beyond. Public policy crafted with community input and oversight to assure public purpose, is the only public policy worthy of the name.

Mike Owen is deputy director of Common Good Iowa, a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy analysis and advocacy organization in Des Moines and Iowa City.



CONGRATULATIONS 2021 Labor Hall of Fame Inductees

Ken Sagar

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

Randy Boulton

United Steelworkers (USW)

Anthony Stephens

Packinghouse Workers of America Organizing Committee (UPWA)

(Posthumous Award)

Labor Hall of Fame Dinner & Ceremony

The Meadows, Prairie Meadows Casino, Altoona, IA

Thursday, August 26th

Bishop Ballroom

6:00 pm Hospitality—7:00 pm Dinner

Keynote Speaker: Mark Smith: Former Iowa Democratic House Leader and Labor Activist

Tickets \$50 each

Table for Eight (8) \$400

To Order Tickets Contact Jamie at Jamie@iowaafclcio.org

Deadline to Purchase Tickets-Monday, August 9

Iowa PRO Act Resolutions Filed

Leaders Senator Zach Wahls and Representative Todd Prichard filed a resolution in support of workers and the PRO Act!

Prior to the closing of this year's Iowa Legislature, two Democratic leaders offered resolutions in support of the PRO act.

Representative Pritchard and Senator Wahls offered resolutions prior to the legislature adjourning, that strongly support Iowa workers and workers' rights to organize.

"The PRO Act is a critical step forward for American workers and the Labor movement in our nation – I am proud to have introduced a resolution in the Iowa Senate calling on the United States Congress to pass the PRO Act. Republicans must immediately stop blocking this legislation from coming up for a vote so President Biden can sign it into law." Senator Zach Wahls

"Working families have always been the heart and soul of America and they deserve a seat at the table. I'm a strong supporter of the PRO Act to raise wages, address income inequality, and rebuild the middle class." Democratic House Leader, Todd Prichard

According to the AFL-CIO, the PRO Act's passage is critical to ensure the voices of working people are heard and our nation's economy works for all of us—not just the wealthy few.

The PRO Act will empower workers to exercise our freedom to organize and negotiate for better wages and working conditions. It will re-

move archaic barriers to organizing, increase worker protections and strengthen the institutions that hold corporations accountable. It will repeal the "right to work" laws that lead to lower wages, fewer benefits, and more dangerous workplaces.

All workers want dignity and respect at work, and a fair share of what we produce. A union contract is the single best tool to ensure workers—all workers—have safe working conditions and earn a fair wage.

The PRO Act will empower America's workers and make America's economy work for working people.

A Concurrent Resolution relating to expressing support for the federal Protecting the Right to Organize Act.

Here is the resolution:

WHEREAS, inequality in the United States of America and Iowa has skyrocketed due to the failure of federal policymakers to pass pro-worker labor laws and properly administer the federal National Labor Relations Act of 1935, which has been dismantled for several decades to make it more difficult for workers to form unions; and

WHEREAS, the proposed federal Protecting the Right to Organize Act is the most significant worker empowerment legislation since the Great Depression, as it stands to give

workers the free and fair choice of whether to form a union, ensures workers can reach a first contract quickly after a union is recognized, ends employers' practices of pun-

WHEREAS, wage stagnation and runaway inequality of political, social, and economic power have undermined the public's faith in our democracy; and

WHEREAS, through the expansion of collective bargaining under the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, there will be increases in pay and protections for all workers, including women, people of color, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America and Iowa must support unions by making the Protecting the Right to Organize Act the law of the land, increasing worker power and re-

building our economy fairly for all of us; and

WHEREAS, the United States House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize Act with bipartisan support on March 9, 2021, and it is now before the United States Senate; NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That the General Assembly finds that the federal Protecting the Right to Organize Act stands to greatly increase economic opportunity in Iowa and the United States of America and to empower workers through the promotion and expansion of collective bargaining."



ishing striking workers by hiring permanent replacements, and holds corporations accountable with real penalties for illegally retaliating against workers who organize; and

WHEREAS, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act will help make the United States of America's economy work for working people and help raise stagnant wages that only increased 9 percent from 1973 to 2013, while productivity increased 74 percent over that same time period; and

WHEREAS, previously, wages increased 91 percent from 1948 to 1972, while productivity increased 108 percent over that same time period; and

Iowa Blue-Green Alliance: Good Jobs, a Clean Environment, and a Fair and Thriving Economy for Union Workers and Working Class Families

We face a fork in the road right now, with a large transition coming to our economy that will focus on "green jobs." We can either work to force Iowa to take the high road on these jobs, one that seeks to have those jobs be family sustaining union jobs, or the low road, one that leaves workers and their communities behind. Our job, and our duty, is to do all we can to make sure that the green jobs that are created are good jobs, and to define to others who may be advocating for "jobs" what exactly we mean when we're talking about that and why our perspective matters.

Our efforts center on the immediate need to develop common-sense solutions that protect the environment and create and maintain quality, family-sustaining jobs across Iowa's economy, and to find coalition partners to work with to advocate for them. The Blue-Green Alliance unites labor unions and environmental organizations on issues that they can agree on to solve today's environmental challenges in ways that create and maintain quality jobs and build a clean, thriving, and equitable economy.

So far in Iowa we have been able

to educate environmental activists on things that have gone right, things that haven't gone right for workers, and to help those environmental activists understand what a "good green job" is.

So, what are some of the principles that in Iowa, labor leaders and labor activists have collectively worked to develop to educate environmental groups on?

- **Employ local workers first.**

Iowa workers are ready to build the renewable energy infrastructure of the future. We need to invest in local skilled workers and apprentices, who have a personal stake in the quality of our infrastructure and whose wages build our local tax base and are spent in local businesses.

- **Pay family-supporting wages and benefits, in line with area standards.** Good jobs should honor and build upon the compensation workers have negotiated in similar local workplaces – rather than undercutting and driving down standards. In construction, this is called "prevailing wage" and is required for federally funded projects.

- **Use transparent, clear, equitable pay schedules to prevent discrimination.** Good jobs have trans-

parent, equitable wage scales based on objective criteria like training, years of service, and job title, regardless of a worker's race, gender, or other characteristics. Arbitrary and secretive pay scales often lead to favoritism and even unlawful discrimination.

- **Provide safe workplaces that involve workers in developing safety plans.** Workers in manufacturing and construction face some of the highest rates of injury. Good jobs require OSHA-approved safety training, involve workers in developing safety plans, and provide workplaces free of recognized hazards.

- **Offer quality, affordable health insurance and retirement benefits.** Good jobs promote the health of workers and their families, by providing quality, affordable health insurance. They provide retirement benefits so workers retire in dignity after a life of labor and open jobs to the next generation.

- **Invest in training, including registered apprenticeship for skilled trades.** Good jobs continually invest in training, for new and existing workers. In building and construction trades, Registered Ap-

prenticeships are U.S. Department of Labor certified, multi-year programs that combine classroom and hands-on experience to prepare new workers and provide continuing education in the trades.

- **Respect workers' right to organize and have a voice in working conditions.** Workers have a fundamental human right to organize unions to improve their workplaces and collectively bargain over their conditions. Organized workers with anti-retaliation protections can ensure safety, wage payment, and other core rights are upheld on the job.

- **Hire workers directly vs using temp agencies and independent contractors.** Good jobs commit to a stable, sustainable workforce protected by workers' rights laws. Temporary staffing agency workers and independent contractors face barriers to asserting their rights to protect against abuse.

For more about the Blue-Green Alliance, go to bluegreenalliance.org. If you are interested in being a part of the Iowa Federation of Labor's involvement with the Blue-Green Alliance, contact IFL president Charlie Wishman at charlie@iowaafclcio.org.

Introducing . . .

Local Union Community Charities (LUCC)

Giving The Way It Should Be

By Rick Moyle,
Executive Director Hawkeye Area
Labor Council AFL-CIO,
President Local Union Community
Charities (LUCC)
319-396-8461
rmoyle@hawkeyelabor.us

Union members not only take pride in our work, but in the fact that we participate in and give back to our communities. Now unions in many areas of Iowa are joining together to help fill the gaps in fundraising to support the needs of working families and the neediest in their communities. We're making it easy for you to help.

We live in times of great need, and every goodhearted working person feels a desire to help by giving back to their communities.

These acts of generosity and kindness should be simple and leave us with a good feeling, yet often don't. Why? One reason is that we're asked - and sometimes pressured - to give through annual campaigns that

funnels giving through employers, pools our contributions, and makes most of the decisions for us on what community needs receive them.

Do you ever stop to ask, what



1211 Wiley Blvd. SW Cedar Rapids, Iowa • 1695 Burton Ave Waterloo, Iowa

were the community needs that finally received your contribution? How much went to each one? How much of your payroll-deducted gift went to pay for overhead and executive salaries at the nonprofits that distributed your funds?

Local Union Community Charities was recently created to help

union members give in the way that's most meaningful to them, and with the same values of empowering working people that fuel the union movement in America.

Unions have made life better for American workers by providing them with a collective voice to negotiate contracts providing better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Quite simply, American workers need a strong common voice to be heard in a system that too often

allows employers with the deepest pockets to have the greatest influence. In the same way, **union members can be more impactful** by joining together to make their giving count in ways that help working families.

We believe that organizations that solicit funds from union members and maintain responsibility for how those funds are spent **should respect the right of workers to unionize**, which experience shows us has not always been the case.

LUCC does not wish to run campaigns in areas of the state where United Way currently has a true partnership with labor. We will operate in areas of the state where partnerships have been dissolved.

- **More choice.**
- **Credit where it's due.**
- **Low overhead.**
- **Responsive to immediate needs.**
- **Fully tax deductible**
- **Union friendly.**
- **Transparency.**

Area Labor Federations and Chapters Have New Leaders

Brad Greve was president of the Great River Area Labor Federation (GRALF) job leading that organization since its inception in 2016. He decided not to run again. The GRALF oversees the whole eastern side of Iowa all along the Mississippi River.

Tom Townsend, Business Manager for IBEW Local 704, in Dubuque, stepped up and is the new GRALF President.

Townsend has been Business Manager for 10 years, President of the Dubuque Building and Construction Trades Council, Treasurer Iowa Electrical Workers Council, Vice President IBEW state conference and district representative on IBEW Veterans Committee.

After getting out of the Navy, he applied for an IBEW apprenticeship and was accepted. He has been a member of the IBEW since 1993. His father is a retired heavy equipment operator from local 150.

Besides all the union office positions, Townsend is on the board for United Way, treasurer for Dubuque Area Labor Management Committee, and sits on several non-profit and county boards.

When Tom is not spending time with his wife of 35 years, his three children and five grandchildren, or at a meeting, he finds time to run a food delivery program during the pandemic where groceries have been delivered to over 2200 families in the Dubuque area.

Over on the Western half of the state, Jeff Shudak was elected presi-

dent of the Western Iowa Federation of Labor (WILF).

The WILF is the geographically largest area Federation in Iowa, covering about a third of the western part of the state all along the Missouri River.

Shudak has been a member of the United Association of Plumbers, Pipe Fitter, Sprinkler Fitters and



Service Tech of North America and Canada since 2007. He is a member of local 16 out of Omaha Nebraska, that covers 16 counties in Southwest Iowa. He is also the Iowa State Political Director for Plumbers Local 16.

He is currently the general superintendent of a large mechanical contractor overseeing 25-50 plumbers.

Shudak helps every month serving food at a local homeless shelter, and is very active during political campaigns.

He has lived most of his life in Iowa and has been married for the last 13 years to his wife who is a UE union member.

Both of these Presidents sit on the executive board of the Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-CIO. Contact info is as follows:

Tom Townsend:

IBEW Local 704

1610 Garfield, Dubuque, IA 52001

563-582-5947 (Office)

563-543-4708 (Cell)

tom@ibew704.com

Indianola, Iowa, where she studied Journalism and English.

In 2020 she was the regional field director for the John Delaney campaign. She also ran for the Iowa House district 16 seat, in 2020, but was not elected.

"I am a proud member of AFT Local 716 and I am looking forward to working for working families across the 37 counties making up the Western Iowa Labor Federation."

Dan Gosa was elected president of the Quad City Federation of Labor, replacing longtime labor and political activist Dino Leone, who stepped down. Leone was elected president in January 2013.

Gosa is the Midwest regional organizer for the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers, Local 81 and also serves as Davenport school board president.

Mary Sand was elected President of the Dubuque Federation of Labor, succeeding Tom Townsend.

Sand has been part of a IBEW Local 204 since 2003, soon after she moved back to Dubuque. A service technician for Black Hills Energy, she helped found the women's committee for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' 11th District. The district covers Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Missouri.

The GRALF is in the process of replacing their staff organizer position which became vacant when Julia McMeekan left.

Jeff Shudak:

UA Local 16

UFCW Local 222 Hall

3038 Lakeport Sioux City, IA

712-314-9536 (Cell)

huskers1974@yahoo.com

Jen Pellant is the new staff organizer for the Western Iowa Labor Federation. She replaced Scott Punterney, who took a job at Teamsters Local 238.

Pellant grew up in the Council Bluffs area, where her parents were members of ISEA, as public school teachers.

She graduated from Lewis Central High in Council Bluffs, and went on to college at Simpson in

The Organizing Imperative: Past, Present, and Future

By John W. McKerley, PhD,
Oral Historian – Labor Center,
Adjunct Lecturer – Center
for Human Rights,
University of Iowa College of Law

As labor's opponents continue to hold up the Protecting the Right to Organize Act and other important legislation in Congress, it's worth taking time to consider the long and complicated history of organizing and the law. Although favorable laws have certainly been important to sustaining the labor movement over time, positive legal change has tended to follow organizing rather than the other way around.

Take, for example, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), passed by Congress in June 1933.

The NIRA was part of President Franklin Roosevelt's first wave of New Deal legislation to combat the Great Depression and was intended to stabilize the US economy by encouraging "fair competition" and higher wages.

It included Section 7(a), which recognized workers' right "to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing." Although the law had significant loopholes, it marked a major shift in US labor policy, and it encouraged labor leaders to make the case that "the president wants you to join a union."

But, even before the law was passed, workers were organizing. As early as the spring of 1933, coal miners across the US had organized locals in places that had recently seen employers' and their allies use violence to repress unions. Other significant pre-NIRA organizing took place in the textile industry, where conditions made organizing particularly difficult.

As the NIRA ran up against roadblocks—employers routinely resisted it and the US Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional—workers again turned to mass organizing to secure their rights. In 1934, workers conducted as many as two thousand strikes, often including demands for union recognition. These strikes took place in Toledo, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and smaller cities and towns all across the US, including in Iowa. They provided critical support for passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935.

As Des Moines hosiery worker Don Harris later told an interviewer from the Iowa Labor History Oral Project: "In 1934 . . . we made an attempt to organize [Rollins Hosiery] into the American Federation of Hosiery Workers. We succeeded and had a strike in which we won recognition for our members only. A year or so later, in a subsequent contract, we got recognized for all the workers. This was without the

help of the National Labor Relations Act. So you had to go through the process of gaining recognition by the strength of your union."

After organizing their own plant,



Rollins workers turned their organizing success into a beachhead from which they could help workers in other workplaces across the city and state. As Harris recalled, "Our local, which was Branch No. 50 of the American Federation of Hosiery Workers, was the biggest

local union in Des Moines . . . and we had a lot of power. We were young gals and young guys, and we was in everything. There never was a picket line or another organizing campaign that we weren't involved in, and there never was a strike that we didn't put on a dollar assessment and give them money."

We can see this pattern again during the struggle for public-sector bargaining rights during the late 1960s and 1970s. In Iowa, many public-sector workers were organized and even bargaining with their employers before state law recognized their efforts. When public employers began to take advantage of the fact that the state did not hold them accountable to bargaining

in good faith, workers turned to the strength of their organizations to press Republican governor Robert Ray and a Republican-dominated legislature to pass what would become the Public Employment Relations Act of 1974.

So, as the wrangling unfolds in

Congress around yet another piece of labor legislation, what does Iowa's labor history suggest about what we can do here and now? In addition to contacting legislators and following any action requests from internationals or the AFL-CIO, we can begin by treating everything we do as an opportunity to organize.

In our unions, we need to ask ourselves how we develop effective methods of internal communication to keep our members informed and engaged, and how we turn every grievance and contract negotiation into an opportunity to educate our members about their rights and to bring them into more active involvement in the life of their union. Outside, we should keep engaged in the struggles of our neighbors, with an eye toward how we can coordinate with the broader labor movement to support organizing the unorganized.

If we focus on organizing, no matter what happens in Congress or Des Moines, we will be continuing the best traditions of the Iowa labor movement, strengthening and growing our unions for the challenges of today and into the future.

Think Before You Post *Survival in the Age of Social Media*

Our handheld devices provide us with an unprecedented level of convenience and accessibility to our neighbors, our friends, and the world around us.

At the touch of a button, information—whether it's true or false—can go from obscure to viral within a few hours.

This may sound great to those who aspire to be the next YouTube sensation, but the consequences can be dire for a democracy that needs accurate information in order to make important decisions.

DON'T SPREAD MISINFORMATION

As union members, you've probably heard from your union rep to "not spread misinformation."

It's a common reminder when the union is negotiating a contract on your behalf. We need a united front to secure the best contract possible, and when lies and half-truths are floating around on the work floor and in break rooms, it only serves to weaken and divide us.

It's damaging enough when lies are spread throughout a work location or company. It gets even worse when they've spread un-

checked across the entire country.

That is the unfortunate situation we're in now. Social media across all platforms are overrun with conspiracy theories containing misinformation and lies. The corporations that own these powerful platforms have displayed an inability—and, at times, unwillingness—to confront this problem.

Many of these conspiracies have come to mainstream attention as the United States continues to lack a unified response to the coronavirus pandemic.

In the absence of a coordinated approach from the current administration, some Americans have put their trust in unproven "miracle cures" or channeled their frustration into outrageous claims about the origin of the virus and its continued spread.

Such dangerous theories used to be relegated to the dark corners of the Internet or laughed off as fodder for tabloid newspapers. But in 2020 they have real-world implications.

It is a verified fact that countries and organizations have been using social media to tear apart the social and political fabric that has bound Americans together for most of our nation's history. They do this by spreading outright lies and exaggerating minor events to inflame passions and stir up resentment between groups of Americans.

CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Before you share something you see on social media, pause for a moment before pressing the "send" button. Consider whether the source is a reliable news organization. If it's an unattributed YouTube video or an organization you've never heard of, there's a good chance it is not legitimate.

You can also verify the information by using one of several reputable online fact-checking sites like Snopes.com or PolitiFact.com.

A functioning democracy requires having an informed populace. This can't happen when truth and falsehood are alternative "realities" that we select merely to confirm our personal prejudices.

Whether your social media platform of choice is Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Tik Tok or anything else, we urge you to keep your employer out of your status updates.

Please note that your company may not accept even looking for the time on your cell phone, let alone texting or checking social media, while on the clock.

Please do your part by sharing responsibly!



Amazon Workers This House Supports You!



Amazon Drivers:
Snap the QR Code and learn more
about WorkersEssential.org



WE support our Essential Workers
Workers Essential is fighting for you!

Workers Essential Needs Your Help!

Workers Essential is fighting for a better Iowa that supports fair wages, safer jobs, affordable housing, and a real safety net for our working families.

Help us organize Amazon Workers that are delivering goods in your neighborhood.

Please post this flyer on your door and let Amazon workers know your home supports them!

