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

America's energy security, affordable gasoline prices and booming refining sector would be jeopardized if Congress votes to lift the ban on crude oil exports, declared the United Steelworkers Union (USW). "Does Congress want the United States to be dependent on Mideast oil producers who have the power to deny oil supplies based on political whims," asked USW International President Leo W. Gerard. He pointed out Congress passed the crude oil export ban in 1975 because America's dependence on the Mideast for crude oil allowed Saudi Arabia to hold oil supplies hostage in retaliation for the United States' support of Israel in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. "Members of Congress want to place our country in that precarious position again by lifting the crude oil export ban. Exporting crude makes no sense when our country is not energy self-sufficient, importing 44 percent of the crude that is refined in the United States," he said. The union said the ban has allowed U.S. refineries to compete against foreign competitors who have lower labor, environmental and safety standards. Lifting the ban would put them in competition with refineries in China and India and lead to their shutdown.

AFL-CIO Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) called for more "strategic investment" by unions in organizing Latinos and expanded use and promotion of workers' centers. The group produced a 60-page report, "Latino Workers and Unions: A Strategic Partnership for America's Progress," which pointed out that Latinos are the fastest growing U.S. minority and fastest-growing segment of the U.S. workforce. They are also the most exploited. "For Latinos, the road to social and economic prosperity is mired with hurdles. From wage theft to the increased rates of deaths at the workplace, Latinos are increasingly susceptible to a wide range of attacks on their labor,

human and civil rights... More work and advocacy needs to be made in order for Latinos to achieve parity," the report stated. Hector Sanchez, LCLAA's executive director who edited the report, said that the Latino share of the workforce is calculated to double, to 30 percent, within a few decades. "Organized labor must make strategic investments in outreach to Latinos. The potential for growth in organizing Latinos is a critical lifeline unions must use in order to stay relevant. More importantly, unions can use this new membership to leverage a more pro-worker agenda and reverse the laws that have weakened collective bargaining for working people," the report said.



Hector Sanchez, LCLAA's executive director. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from AFGE.

Wages increased by an average of 4.3 percent, a jump of \$1,147 a year for a typical wage earner in the United States, for workers who bargained new contracts in the first half of 2015, according to a new report by the AFL-CIO's Center for Strategic Research. The report is the most comprehensive look at the current state of collective bargaining at a time when an estimated 5 million American workers will negotiate new contracts this year. Wage increases are up from 2.9 percent compared to the first half of 2014, the report said, with substantial wage wins occurring in sectors from nursing and oil to airline pilots and teachers. "This country is having an important debate about raising wages and tackling income inequality," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. "This report provides clear evidence that joining a union and bargaining with your employer is the most effective way to give workers the power to raise their own wages. When working people speak with one voice, our economy is stronger, and all workers do better."

INTERNATIONAL LABOR NEWS

Migrant children, mostly from Myanmar, work illegally in Thailand's seafood processing industry and are twice as likely to be injured as minors working in other industries, according to a new report from the International Labour Organisation and the Asia Foundation. The report found almost 20 percent of children in

the seafood industries reported workplace injuries, compared to 8.4 percent in other workplaces. "In the 21st century no child should be brutalized by exploitation," said Maurizio Bussi, head of the International Labour Organization's office in Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. Thailand's seafood industry, with exports valued at \$3 billion a year, relies heavily on cheap labor. Thai law states the minimum age of employment is 15, but many younger children work illegally and are not in school, the report found. Thailand is the world's third-largest seafood exporter.

The international Trade Union

Confederation organized a recent two-day meeting in Paris to develop common positions on climate change prior to the much-anticipated 21st Conference of the Parties on climate change known as COP21. Some 200 union delegates from 30 industrialized and developing countries met to identify trade union priorities. The purpose of the meeting was to have a strong impact on global negotiations to reduce climate change. "It is the most significant challenge of the next 30 years," Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the ITUC, said during the opening session of a meeting which intended to prove that "climate change is a trade union issue." French Foreign minister Laurent Fabius, who will preside over the COP21, attended the session and challenged delegates to identify the sectors that are most vulnerable to climate change, help prepare workers for the industrial transition ahead, hold employers accountable on their CO2 reduction promises, and alert workers that rising temperatures is a critical issue.

Lufthansa pilots must halt a

strike that led to the cancellation of about 1,000 flights, in an increasingly bitter battle over benefits and the future of the airline. Represented by the Vereinigung Cockpit (VC) union, pilots began a series of 13 strikes about 18 months ago to protest changes to early retirement benefits. In recent months, the pilots also have tried to block the low-cost expansion at Lufthansa. The regional labor court in the federal state of Hesse overruled a decision made by a lower court and blocked the pilots from striking. The court said the pilots were

striking over the airline's plans for low-cost expansion which was not part of the union's mandate in pay talks. VC spokesman Markus Wahl said that the union was surprised by the ruling. However, it may not mean the end of strikes. "We will review the decision and then draw the consequences for our continuing labor battle," he said.

IndustrialALL Global Union

launched an international campaign against Chevron for firing union organizers in Bangladesh. IndustrialALL Global Union Assistant General Secretary Kemal Özkan said Chevron sacked the workers with "impunity" and their actions were "shameful." According to the international organization's statement, Chevron has been in the country for nine years since acquiring exploration and extraction operations from Unocal. The company employs 453 workers but only 37 are permanent contrary to Bangladeshi labor law that limits temporary employment to three months. Workers in May filed with local courts for permanent status after forming a union. The following day Chevron hung up a list of 17 fired workers that included the top officers of the workers' union, Bangladesh Chemical, Energy and Allied Workers' Federation (BCEF). IndustrialALL condemned "Chevron's illegal union busting in Bangladesh, and calls for corrective action by the multinational energy company."

NATIONAL AND POLITICAL EVENTS

The Labor Department's Bu-

reau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported in September that the number of workers who died on the job in the U.S. rose 2 percent in 2014 to 4,679 fatal work injuries compared to 4,585 the previous year. The figures will be finalized later this year and are expected to be revised higher. The rate of deaths remained essentially unchanged at 3.3 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers because U.S. workers are logging more hours on the job. "Far too many people are still killed on the job — 13 workers every day taken from their families tragically and unnecessarily," said Labor Secretary Tom Perez. "These numbers underscore

the urgent need for employers to provide a safe workplace for their employees as the law requires.” The preliminary number of workers ages 55 and older who died on the job was “the highest total ever reported,” according to the BLS. The number jumped to 1,621 in 2014 from 1,490 in 2013, a 9 percent increase. Sources reported that a likely reason for that rise is the increased numbers of older workers because retirement is coming later for many Americans.

A recent study released by the

Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research & Educational Trust found that employers are continuing to shift the costs of health care to their employees with no slowing in sight. According to the survey, the size of the deductible employees are required to pay before benefits kick in has soared in the past decade. The average general deductible for workers with single coverage totaled \$1,077 this year, compared to only \$303 in 2006. That deductible has climbed nearly seven times faster than wages, on average, over the past five years. Kaiser CEO Drew Altman called the cost shift a “quiet revolution in health insurance,” obscured in recent years by the health care overhaul’s coverage expansion for people who don’t have

coverage through work. “It’s funny, we used to think of \$1,000 as a very high deductible, and now it’s almost commonplace,” he said. “Consumers have much more skin in the game, and that may be fine if you’re healthier and don’t use a lot of health care. That could be a real problem if you’re chronically ill.”

Top Senate Democrats, includ-

ing presidential contender Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), introduced legislation to repeal ObamaCare’s so-called “Cadillac” tax on high-cost, mostly union-negotiated health-care plans. Other sponsors include Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who is in line to become the chamber’s top Democrat, as well as Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), the chamber’s longest-serving member. The tax, which does not go into effect until 2018, will affect families whose benefits exceed \$27,500 and individuals whose benefits exceed \$10,200. Applied to insurance carriers, critics say the cost of the tax will be passed along to subscribers. A similar measure introduced in the House earlier this year has enough bipartisan support to easily pass. The AFL-CIO’s Trumka hailed the bill, saying, “America’s working families are encouraged by the bipartisan leadership to improve access to comprehensive health benefits.”

Missouri legislature in Sep-

tember failed to muster the two-thirds majority needed to override Governor Jay Nixon’s June veto of so-called “right-to-work” legislation. The Missouri House passed the bill by a 92-66 vote and Senate vote was 21-13, meaning an override would require 17 more votes in the House and two more in the Senate. Nixon called the legislation harmful to the middle class. “This extreme measure would take our state backward, squeeze the middle-class, lower wages for Missouri families, and subject businesses to criminal and unlimited civil liability,” Nixon said in remarks released by his press office. “Right-to-work is wrong for Missouri, it’s wrong for the middle-class – and it must never become the law of the Show-Me State.”

REGIONAL & LOCAL LABOR NEWS

United Food & Commercial

Workers Local 555 recently negotiated a three-year contract on behalf of employees at a Portland, Oregon, cannabis dispensary where marijuana sales became legal on October 1. Workers at Stoney Brothers approved a contract that provides starting wages of \$15 an hour for cashiers, \$20 an hour for trimmers and up to \$32 an hour for master cannabis cultivators. The agreement also guarantees paid holidays and vacation days, pension contributions and employer-subsidized health insurance. “Our UFCW International Union has been involved in cannabis organizing for six to eight years, much of it in northern California involving medical dispensaries,” said Jeff Anderson, Local 555 secretary-treasurer, who is coordinating union organizing efforts in Oregon. The union represents about 3,000 cannabis workers in nine other states and the District of Columbia where medical or recreational marijuana are legal, he said. Based on population comparisons with Colorado and Washington, the first two states to legalize recreational marijuana, union officials estimate the industry could expand to as many as 7,000 cannabis workers in Oregon.



Senator Bernie Sanders. Shutterstock.com photo from Juli Hansen.

Teamsters Local 104's 469 members ended a 42-day strike against SunTran/Transdev, the City of Tucson's public transit system, on September 16. Members approved a new two-year contract with Professional Transit Management (PTM) a wholly-owned subsidiary of Transdev, after rejecting a previous offer. The new pact provides raises for all employees ranging from \$0.30 per hour for some to more than \$5.00 per hour for other employees, as well as paying for 100 percent of the monthly health and welfare premiums for all. Management also addressed serious mold contamination that exists in SunTran's north facility and on the buses and the installation of Plexiglas partitions in buses in high-risk routes. During negotiations, PTM/Transdev faced growing community outrage over the use of out-of-state scab replacement workers who received lucrative employment contracts, the union reported. Teamsters Local 104 represents 530 workers at the transit system.

The United Auto Workers scored a major organizing win in the south when 135 workers at an auto parts maker in Piedmont, AL, voted to join the union by a 2-1 margin. Workers at the Commercial Vehicle Group Inc. plant, located about 85 miles north of Birmingham, said they were concerned about issues such as wage caps and the growing use of temporary workers without benefits. Pay tops out at \$15.80 hourly while temporary workers are hired at even lower rates and rising health care insurance costs cut take-home pay. UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada told the news media, "I think it shows that workers do want change and they can stand up and win in the South." She said people do not

realize that 80 percent of a car is built by workers in the parts sector, which is where the union is concentrating many of its organizing efforts. The union, however, has an active campaign at the Mercedes-Benz assembly plant in Tuscaloosa County, which employs 2,200 regular employees and more than 1,000 temporary workers. The company has said it is staying neutral in the organizing effort.

IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Some 1,000 federal contract workers who cook, clean and provide other services at governmental buildings in Washington conducted a one-day strike September 22 to coincide with the Pope's visit to the nation's capital. The pope has made the plight of the low-wage worker central to his papacy and has dubbed economic inequality the "root of social evil." Workers walked off their jobs for \$15 an hour "living" wage and union recognition. "The pope has been a prophetic voice globally denouncing economic inequality and poverty-wage work... there is no better example of that than the U.S. Capitol," Joseph Geevarghes told the news media. He is deputy director of Change to Win, the group helping to organize the strike. After marching off their jobs, workers gathered at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, across the street from the U.S. Capitol, and heard from speakers who included U.S. presidential candidate, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). "Workers there serve U.S. senators who are worth \$2.3 million on average, yet they earn so little that they are on food stamps, they sleep on the streets, they cannot afford to make ends meet," Geevarghes said.

Seattle teachers approved a labor contract Sunday, September 20 ending a weeklong strike that had delayed the start of school for 53,000 students. "We got many new things in our contract that will benefit students," Shelly Hurley, a special education teacher and a member of the union bargaining team, said in a statement. The new contract provides teachers a 9.5 percent pay raise over three years in

addition to state cost-of-living adjustments, guaranteed 30-minute recesses for elementary students and greater teacher input over standardized tests. Educators had complained that the high cost of living in a city with a booming population of well-paid tech workers was pricing them out of the area. The union received wide-spread support from the community, parents and students who raised concerns over too much testing, not enough recess and concerns about racial disparity in discipline and student performance.

SIGNIFICANT LEGAL AND NLRB RULINGS

In a controversial 3-2 ruling, the National Labor Relations Board significantly revised and broadened its standard for determining joint employer status under federal labor law. Companies considered "joint employers" are required to engage together to recognize and bargain with unions formed by their employees. In Browning-Ferris Industries of California (BFI), the NLRB said that joint employer status will now exist when a company exercises "indirect control" over working conditions or if it has "reserved authority" to do so. The Board determined BFI, an owner and operator of the Newby Island (Calif.) Recycling facility, should be considered a joint-employer with Leadpoint Business Services (Leadpoint), a Phoenix-based temporary staffing agency, which supplies workers to the facility. The board majority said the new standard of joint employer was needed because of "changing economic circumstances, particularly the recent dramatic growth in contingent employment relationships."



UAW Protest. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Thomas Altfather Good.

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Richard Trumka
President,
AFL-CIO

UNIONS FIGHT TO EXPAND THE AMERICAN DREAM

(The following is excerpted from a speech by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to the 2015 convention of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers on September 14 in Baltimore.)

Every day, and in every way, America's unions are fighting to expand American freedom. Across our entire labor movement, we're finding new ways to build bridges within our communities, and one issue is particularly urgent today... and that's the epidemic of racism.

When we are divided by race, it is easier for our political opponents to keep us down, to kill our jobs and lower our wages. We know racism is wrong. We believe with every fiber of our being that #blacklivesmatter.

This is about all of us... together... moving forward toward justice... and shared prosperity... guided by our shared values.

Together, we'll rise to create an economy that really works for every single one of us! We are activists. We are trade unionists. We know what's right and what's wrong, and we're not afraid to stand up and say it.

We are guided by one central idea. It's like our North Star. We're working... for a better life. The way we'll get there is by raising wages ... any way we can and everywhere we can. We want raising wages and everything that comes with it. Good pay, great benefits, fair schedules, paid sick leave and a voice on the job.

We know the best way to raise wages is to organize.

The best ladder to the middle class is a collective bargaining agreement. It is the single best way to raise wages and build a ladder to the middle class. Collective bargaining is our priority, but we'll raise wages any way we can. We'll campaign to raise the minimum wage. We'll fight for paid sick leave and family leave. We'll win fair schedules and equal pay for equal work.

We know what works ... and we know what doesn't work. Corporate trade deals don't work. That's why we're against the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The truth is these trade deals have ripped apart the fabric of our nation.

And let's be real, our trade policies are a bipartisan failure. For three decades, Democrats and Republicans have sold us down the river. From NAFTA to CAFTA to Korea and now the TPP, our elected officials have continually put profits over people. That's why we fought so hard against Fast Track. The corporate lobbyists pulled out every trick in the book and still only managed to squeak by. But we have forever changed the debate about trade in America.

We made everybody, including the elites, take a long hard look. And if it comes up for a vote, we are going to kill the TPP once and for all.

We are demanding raising wages and a rising tide for every worker in America! Raising wages is our measuring stick for the 2016 election. As you know, the AFL-CIO has not yet made an endorsement, but we are not sitting back. We have been grilling presidential candidates on what actions they will take to make our economy fairer for working families.

We also make crystal clear that we do not work for any political party or candidate. We work for working people, plain and simple, because we want the freedom to live better lives, to take care of our families and to improve our jobs and our communities.

A big part of our raising wages agenda is collective bargaining. And let me tell you, collective bargaining is on the rise. This year 5 million union workers are negotiating contracts. This is the biggest year for bargaining in American history. So why is this important? In the first six months of

this year alone, working people in all kinds of jobs have won an average pay increase of 4.3 percent the old-fashioned way — by demanding it. By standing in solidarity for it.

Raising wages also means investing in our infrastructure. We need to go big. I'm talking trillions with a T. America should have the best infrastructure in the world. It will create new jobs. And it will have economic benefits across the supply chain — what people in transportation like to call the multiplier effect.

Today working men and women can feel like we're struggling and pushing without getting anywhere. Wages are too low. Benefits are too few. Retirement security just isn't. It's hard.

And the corporate right-wing is waging the most sophisticated anti-worker campaign we have ever seen.

But even in the face of these enormous challenges, I know we can... and we will win a new day for working people... together. The Koch Brothers and Scott Walker can spend all the money in the world, but they do not have the men and women in this room. I will take our might over their money any day of the week.

When we work together, there is no challenge too difficult, no obstacle too great, no hill too steep. We'll stand together. We'll push together. We'll organize together. We'll mobilize together. We'll register together. We'll vote together. And we'll win together.



Minimum Wage Protest. Flickr.com photo used under Creative Commons from Steve Rhodes.



Virginia AFL-CIO Convention

The Virginia State AFL-CIO convention featured a big presence by AIL. Shown are (left to right), Marc Perrone, Int'l President, United Food & Commercial Workers, AIL PR Manager John Keliher and PR Representative Vivian Dwyer.



NY Building Trades Rally

Central NY ALF/Tompkins-Cortland County Building & Construction Trade recently held a rally in Ithaca to protest the use of non-local, non-union contractors that build projects where the property owners receive local tax abatements to help complete the project. In the photo, NILICO PR Marketing Specialist David Scalisi (right) met with county building trades President Dave Marsh.



CWA Demands Fair Contract

AIL's George Farenthold and John Keliher recently attended a rally in Annapolis, Md., in support of CWA members fighting for a new contract with Verizon.

AIL/NILICO PARTICIPATES IN LABOR DAY EVENTS

AIL was active and visible in Labor Day 2015 events held around the nation in September. Below are a few places where AIL participated with union families in local Labor Day activities.



St. Louis Parade

Missouri Governor Jay Nixon (right) joins AIL's Pam Monetti at the St. Louis Labor Day Parade.



South Florida Labor Day Gala

Attending the Broward County AFL-CIO Annual Labor Gala are (left to right) AIL PR Manager Bill Sauers, South Florida AFL-CIO President Andy Madtes, and AIL PR Marketing Specialist Steve Sanchez.



Cincinnati AFL-CIO Picnic

AIL's PR Marketing Specialists John Wagner and Anna Rohrer volunteered to call the numbers and check the cards at the Bingo tent during the Cincinnati Federation of Labor Labor Day picnic.



Grand Rapids Labor Fest

Proudly wearing Raise the Wage stickers provided by AIL, PR Marketing Specialist Lisa M. Bennett joins members of Millwrights Local 1102 at their exhibit during the Grand Rapids (Mich.) Labor Fest.



PA Labor United Labor Day Celebration

AIL's PR Marketing Specialist Mark Flemm, wife, Kelly and son, Jason participated in the festivities at Northmoreland Park where the Greater Westmoreland County (PA.) Labor Council hosted the Labor United Labor Day Celebration. According to media reports, more than 100,000 people attended the two-day event.



Erie, PA AFL-CIO Parade

AIL's PR Marketing Specialist Jeffrey Hapke (second from left) is flanked with representatives from the Simon Arias SGA office who marched in the Erie, PA. AFL-CIO parade.



NYC Labor Day Parade

NILICO PR Rep Kathy Pappas and her daughter Katina stand on the Office & Professional Employees Union float in the New York City Labor Day Parade with OPEIU Int'l Pres, Mike Goodwin (left) and OPEIU Local 153 Sec-Treas. Richard Lanigan. AIL/NILICO employees and representatives employees in the U.S. are represented by OPEIU Local 277.



NC AFL-CIO Convention

North Carolina AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer MaryBe Mcmillan (left) and North Carolina AFL-CIO President James Andrews (right) join AIL's Vivian Dwyer and PR Manager Bill Sauers at the podium during the North Carolina AFL-CIO Convention.



Hawaii State Senator meets with Labor Leaders

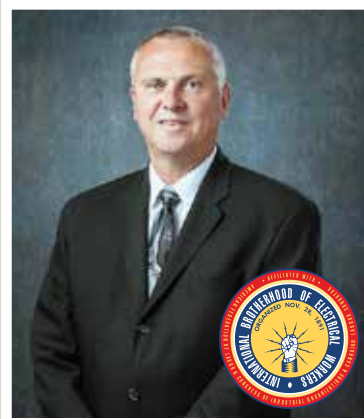
Shown are (left to right) Randy Perreira Executive Director, HGEA/AFSCME 152, President, Hawaii State AFL-CIO; U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz (D); AIL's PR Marketing Specialist Dion Dizon.



Oklahoma's Munson Elected

AIL PR Marketing Specialist Tim O'Connor joined state labor leaders for the swearing-in of labor-endorsed Cyndi Munson to the Oklahoma state house. Shown are (from left), Oklahoma State AFL-CIO President Jim Curry, O'Connor, Delegate Munson, Retired AFSCME 2406 member Mary Sosa, Assistant Business Manager LIUNA 107 Arturo Delgado and Business Representatives Operating Engineers 627 Curtis Chambers and Alan Farris.

IBEW Leader to Join the AIL/NILICO Labor Advisory Board



AIL/NILICO President & CEO Roger Smith announced International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers International President Lonnie Stephenson is the newest member of the AIL/NILICO Labor Advisory Board. "We are pleased and delighted to welcome IBEW International President Lonnie Stephenson to the AIL/NILICO Labor Advisory Board," said Smith. "He replaces a renowned labor leader, Ed Hill, and will continue the union's growth and influence into the future."

Lonnie Stephenson was the unanimous choice of delegates to the 38th International Convention in June to serve as International President following the retirement of long-time leader Edwin D. Hill. He had served as International Vice President of the Sixth District for five years.

One of his major goals will be challenging so-called "right-to-work" laws. "It has become more important than ever to educate the general public about why it's right for people to pay their fair share for the protections provided by collective bargaining agreements that help support them and sustain their communities," said Stephenson, who helped lead the huge protests in Wisconsin to halt Gov. Scott Walker's assault on public workers.

A native of Moline, IL, Stephenson, whose father worked at the U.S. Army's Rock Island Arsenal and whose mother was a factory worker, began his inside wireman apprenticeship with Rock Island Local 145 in 1975. He was elected Vice President in 1984 and President from 1987-1992.

Stephenson later served as an Executive Board member of the Quad City Federation of Labor and partnered with business leaders to support a successful bond referendum to launch the project.

As co-chairman of the labor/management cooperative committee, ILLOWA, Stephenson helped establish the basis for 300 public and private sector all-union project labor agreements. He helped to spearhead a one-cent sales tax referendum in Davenport that brought millions of dollars of work opportunities to the area.

Stephenson was appointed an International Representative assigned to the Sixth District in 2002. He was soon appointed Organizing Coordinator for the Sixth District and then Administrative Assistant to then-IBEW Sixth District International Vice President Joseph (Jeff) Lohman.



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