



# NEWS & VIEWS

**LEHIGH VALLEY LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO**  
**“UNIONS JOINING TOGETHER AS ONE”**

[www.lehighvalleyclc.org](http://www.lehighvalleyclc.org)



January 2026



**S**tudents greeted Santa, the Grinch and other cartoon characters during the Lehigh Valley Labor Council's 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Toy Drive at Allentown's Roosevelt Elementary School on December 15. See page two for more on the story.

(Credit: Marco Calderon Photography)

# Lifting holiday spirits

## LV Labor Council, community partners bring cheer to Roosevelt, Sheridan schools

by Gregg Potter, International Union of Operating Engineers #542  
Executive vice-President, Lehigh Valley Labor Council

The weather nearly disrupted the Seventh Annual Lehigh Valley Labor Council's Toy Drive at Allentown's Roosevelt Elementary School on December 15.

The day before, a wintry mix of snow and ice descended on the Lehigh Valley and threatened the council's chief community service project. However, as the saying goes on Broadway, the show must go on, and we made several logistical adjustments to prepare for frigid temperatures and a two-hour school opening delay. We were determined not to disappoint the students at the school with the city's largest elementary enrollment. Later in the week, families visited the school to "shop" for donated toys, games, and books. Donations from our labor and community partners reached 645 children at Roosevelt and many others at Sheridan Elementary schools. "We are actually giving gifts to every student in our school," said Yasainee Burton, United Way Community School Coordinator at Roosevelt.

Our labor volunteers never tire of seeing these students smiling, laughing and having the time of their lives when Santa, the Grinch and other cartoon characters visit them. We want to thank everyone who contributed to making this year's visit to Roosevelt a success, though there is not enough room in the newsletter to list them all.

We thank Cohen, Feeley, Altemose & Rambo and Capital Blue Cross for kicking-off our annual project by sponsoring our December 12 labor council holiday party. The December 15 toy drive at Roosevelt Elementary would not have been possible without President Mike Shupp and the officers and members of the United Auto Workers #677. They deserve our appreciation for consistently offering their hall on Mack Blvd., Allentown as a staging site for the toy drop-off, which is conveniently located a few miles away from the school.



**Yasainee Burton**, United Way Community School Coordinator at Roosevelt Elementary, greeted Iron Pigs mascot Ferrous and Santa Claus, played by Allentown Mayor Matt Tuerk. The Allentown School District established the city's first Community School at Roosevelt, and received recognition from the US Senate around 2009. (Credit: Marco Calderon Photography)



A big thanks also goes to President Jeremy Warmkessel and the officers and members of Allentown Firefighters #302 who never fail to captivate the young children with flashing lights and blaring sirens from their fire trucks as they pull up in front of the school. We also want to acknowledge the support from all our labor union affiliates and our many community partners, such as the Greater Lehigh Valley United Way, Dickinson Cranes, Allentown Police and Fire Departments, Lehigh County Sheriff Dept. officers. Finally, we appreciate the generosity of Cohen, Feeley, Altemose & Rambo toward our toy drive.

We had amazing media coverage from WFMZ-TV Channel 69 and the *Allentown Morning Call*. News reports noted that the council's toy drive arrived amid growing economic uncertainty for many families as the year drew to a close. Understanding the roots of this uncertainty at Roosevelt offers an explanation as to why we focus on this particular school.

The median income of households in Allentown with children in public school is \$47,544, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) most recent figures.

### Lehigh Valley Labor Council

AFL-CIO

[www.lehighvalleylclc.org](http://www.lehighvalleylclc.org)  
Phone 610-366-1358

#### General Officers

Jim Irwin	President	IUOE #542
Gregg Potter	Executive Vice-President	IUOE #542
Anne Radakovits	Secretary	AFSCME #1979
Dennis Andrews	Treasurer	USW/SOAR
Ron Labar	Sergeant-at-Arms	Pa Joint Board #234

#### Vice-Presidents

Mike Ahern	CWA #13500
Mike Baker	SEIU #668
Ron Ennis	APWU #268
Leslie Franklin	AEA
Dennis Hower	IBT #773
Christine Miller	Workers United
Lenny Perrone	Steamfitters #420
Mike Shupp	UAW #677
Paula Small	IBT #773
Brian Taylor	IBT #773
John Werkheiser	UFCW #1776

#### Trustees

Angie DeLeon-Solis	IBT #773
Jon Roth	IATSE #200
Mike Wallery	IBT #773

#### United Way Labor Liaison

John Werkheiser	UFCW #1776
-----------------	------------

The Lehigh Valley Labor Council *News & Views* is published monthly by the Lehigh Valley Labor Council, AFL-CIO. We are proud members of the Pennsylvania Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the writers only and do not necessarily express the policy of the Council or any of its affiliates. All articles submitted for publication must be signed and received by the second last Thursday of the month.

Our mailing address is: Lehigh Valley Labor Council  
P.O. Box 20226  
Lehigh Valley, PA 18002

Our office location is:  
Operating Engineers #542  
7609 Kuhns Drive  
Trexertown, PA 18087

Editor	APWU #268
Webmaster	SEIU #668

Ron Ennis

John Weiss



**Labor and Roosevelt Elementary school volunteers** helped sort toys, games and gifts at the Lehigh Valley Labor Council's annual toy drive at Roosevelt Elementary School, Allentown, on December 15. Donations went to 645 Roosevelt students and many others at Sheridan. Our event received widespread local coverage. (Credit: Marco Calderon Photography)

This is well below both state and national median income. Forty-two percent of these homes have a single mother as head of the household, a figure above state and national levels. Not surprisingly, therefore, over fifty-three percent of families receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, formerly known as Food Stamps. This is also well above state and national levels.

Making matters worse, Allentown school children face a funding challenge that students in other districts do not share. Allentown students receive over fifty percent of their education funding from Harrisburg lawmakers: this is not sustainable. In nearly every metric, Allentown School students face multiple economic challenges.

Neighboring Parkland School District (PSD) also has pockets of financially-challenged families, but the differences between it and the Allentown School District could not be starker. According to the latest statistics from the NCES, PSD receives only eighteen percent of its funding from the state, the median income of Parkland households with children is \$154,663, seventy-seven percent of households are occupied by a married couple, and less than eight percent receive SNAP benefits.

Other statistics highlight the wealth disparities between the two school districts. The average price of a home sold in Allentown is \$243,000 and only five percent were built after 2000. The average price of a home sold in the PSD is \$609,664 and nearly thirty percent have been built after 2000. The Allentown School District has a high percentage—thirteen percent—of students with disabilities, and Roosevelt educates the highest number of disabled children in the district. Children from wealthier communities have significant educational advantages and to see how your local school district compares, visit [nces.ed.gov](http://nces.ed.gov). The website is a wonderful resource for anyone interested in our children's future.

Understanding the challenges facing Allentown's students, heightened by the current economic climate, has aided the council with our community service projects. We could make similar arguments for other schools and other districts, but we know we have made a difference at Roosevelt each year.

## TeenWorks dinner slated for January 24, 2026 Is your union a partner?

by John Werkheiser, United Way Labor Liaison  
Lehigh Valley Labor Council



**S**upport for the Greater Lehigh Valley United Way TeenWorks program has grown over the years, as it has successfully created a space that empowers teenagers to give back to their community and bring their service projects to life. This growth would not have occurred without the support of our local union partners.

We invite you to see the impact of your contributions in person at our celebration on January 24, 2026 and consider sponsoring this special event. If you wish to learn more, visit: [www.unitedwayglv.org/teenworks/](http://www.unitedwayglv.org/teenworks/)

Our January 24 dinner event will be held at the Northampton Memorial Community Center, 1601 Laubach Ave., Northampton. Seating is \$75 per person and we have various sponsorship levels that will align with your union's goals. We will also publish your local's ads—full-page, half-page or quarter-page—in the TeenWorks dinner booklet. For more about how you and your union can help create a brighter future for Lehigh Valley students, contact me at: [johnw@unitedwayglv.org](mailto:johnw@unitedwayglv.org)

With strong support from local labor unions and others, TeenWorks has invested in more than 500 community service projects driven by teens and local youth-based organizations. Make a pledge to these exceptional young leaders.

### Is your union a TeenWorks Partner?

*Learn more about why all the following local unions are supporting the United Way's TeenWorks program at: [www.unitedwayglv.org/teenworks/](http://www.unitedwayglv.org/teenworks/)*

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees District Council #88

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local #1435

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local #2592

Allentown Education Association

Allentown Firefighters Local #302

American Postal Workers Union Local #268

Bethlehem Education Association

Bethlehem Firefighters Local #735

Capital BlueCross

United Brotherhood of Carpenters Local #167

Cohen Feeley Altemose & Rambo

Communication Workers of America Local #13500

Easton Area Education Association

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local #126

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local #375

International Union of Operating Engineers Local #542

Lehigh Valley Labor Council

PA Joint Board Workers United/Service Employees

International Union (SEIU)

Pennsylvania State Education Association, Eastern Region

SEIU/Pennsylvania Social Services Union Local #668

United Association of Steamfitters Local #420

International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local #773

United Auto Workers Local #677

United Food & Commercial Workers Local #1776

United Steelworkers Local #2599

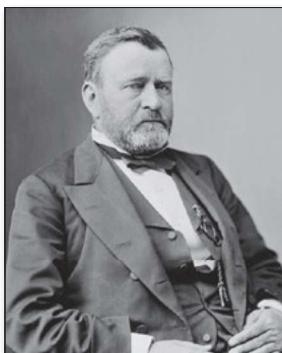


## Could the AI boom go bust?

Artificial intelligence and the Panic of 1873

by Ron Ennis, Editor  
Lehigh Valley Labor Council

**H**istory records President Ulysses S. Grant visiting financier Jay Cooke at his expansive two-hundred-acre estate in Wyncote, Pennsylvania on September 15, 1873. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* remarked that Grant "was the recipient of the generous hospitality for which the princely residence of Mr. Cooke has become distinguished." Historians, however, do not know what the two men discussed on that cool, Monday evening. (Fig. #1)

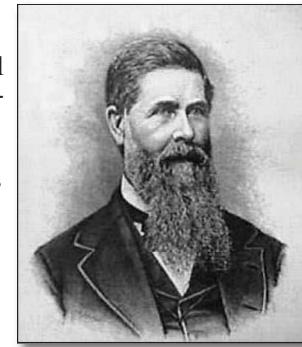


**Fig. 1:** President Grant during the time of his visit to Jay Cooke. (Credit: Library of Congress)

According to economic and business author Mickey Butts in the September 18, 2023 *Smithsonian Magazine*, Cooke sold more than \$1.6 billion in bonds. His financial windfall attracted congressional attention when he had failed to promptly deposit the bond proceeds into federal coffers. Despite accusations of wartime profiteering, the *Inquirer* editor noted in April 1864 that Secretary Chase defended Cooke in a "well-merited tribute of respect for the eminent services of a distinguished citizen." A congressional inquiry never materialized. (Fig. #2)

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Cooke focused his energies toward financing one of the Industrial Revolution's greatest inventions: railroads. "If the Fortune 500 had been around then, railroad firms would have been at the top of the list," Butts wrote. Between 1866 and 1873, rail workers laid 35,000 miles of new track across the country. Money poured into railroad infrastructure, sparking numerous investment schemes that occasionally involved considerable financial risk. (Fig. #3)

In the summer of 1870, Cooke assumed control of the proposed route of the 6,800-mile Northern Pacific Railroad after laborers laid the first tracks at the Great Lakes earlier that year. Heading westward, the rail network reached present-day Bismarck, North Dakota in 1873. Then, construction ground to a halt. (Fig. #4)



**Fig. 2:** Jay Cooke, ca. 1870. (Credit: Crow Wing County H.S., MN)

**IMPROVEMENTS.** — The hammers, saws and trowels of carpenters and bricklayers are heard on every side in this town. Buildings are going up with mushroom rapidity. The connecting link between Bethlehem and South Bethlehem, the New Street Bridge, is rapidly approaching completion. The Union Depot is going up with a rapidity truly wonderful. Ira Cortright, Esq., has a little army of his own engaged in transporting the bank for a railroad across the old Lehigh Bridge. Who says we are not going ahead on this side of the river?

**Fig. 3:** South Bethlehem enjoyed prosperity after the Civil War, 1867. Spurred by the railroad boom, orders for rails poured into the Bethlehem Iron Company, the borough's chief employer. (Credit: Bethlehem Daily Times, July 6, 1867)

Transcontinental railways faced staggering costs in laying and maintaining tracks, locomotives, cars and supply lines. Cooke had underestimated these expenses and overestimated his ability to market his railroad bonds that he needed to pay for its completion. Making matters worse, darkening economic clouds gathered over the nation. "Violent and severe changes in the money market have had a repressive influence on almost all departments of industrial enterprise," the editor of the *Pittsburgh Commercial* lamented on December 14, 1872. Local newspapers feared that a downturn in the region's iron industry, which depended partly on turning iron into rails, would devastate the local economy. "What if there should come any general or protracted stagnation in this branch of trade?" the *Easton Free Press* asked on August 27, 1873. "The effect would be most disastrous upon the whole community."

Perhaps during their exchange of pleasantries on that ominous evening, Cooke broached the idea of President Grant helping him raise the needed funds to keep his enterprise afloat, given that he had donated millions to the president's re-election campaign the previous year. Grant, however, chose not to reciprocate, possibly fearing that offering a federal bailout to a financier and railroad magnate would only worsen the cynical mood engulfing the nation following several other high-profile scandals. Three days later, Cooke & Company declared bankruptcy.

The collapse of Cooke's investment firm on September 18 triggered the Panic of 1873, a severe economic downturn that gripped the nation for six years. The statistics only hint at the depression's depths: eighty-nine of the nation's 364 railroads went bankrupt, 18,000 businesses failed in the first two years, and unemployment soared to fourteen percent in three years.

Lessons from the Panic of 1873 may help answer a question recently posed in the *New York Times*: what would happen if the artificial intelligence (AI) boom faltered? Chief economics correspondent Ben Casselman, and business and labor reporter Sydney Ember wrote in their November 22, 2025 article that developers and chipmakers in AI "are raking in hundreds of billions of dollars in investments. Data centers the size of theme parks are sprouting around the country." The authors wondered what would happen if the boom went bust. Could AI over-expansion, like the railroad over-expansion that sparked the Panic of 1873, prompt a similar economic decline?

Important distinctions exist between a railroad-based economy and an AI-based economy. Railroads took decades to fully integrate into the nation's fabric, while AI's adoption rate has been swifter. Railroads represented primarily a transportation technology, while AI's versatility affects numerous industries. Railroad disasters prompted workplace safety and operational regulations, yet a rising debate about ethics, misinformation, and privacy concerns has failed to sway Donald Trump and his congressional allies to support AI regulations protecting workers and consumers.

Despite the differences, there are important parallels between the two periods that offer cautionary lessons. Railroad stocks drove the economy after the Civil War, similar to AI-related companies driving the current stock market. "Economy is now addicted to AI spending," declared the *Wall Street Journal* in a November 25, 2025 headline. Railroads received land grants and loans from the federal government to expand their transportation network, just like AI-related firms have won generous tax breaks from local and state authorities for construction of their giant data centers. And railroads eventually displaced stage coach drivers and canal boat captains, similar to AI's expected affect on countless blue- and white-collar workers. In *Northampton Heritage: the Story of an American County*, Historian E. Gordon Alderfer documented the passing of the horse and carriage era in an old lament: "Now all ye jolly wagoners who have got good wives

Go home to your farms, and there spend your lives.  
"When your corn is all cribbed, and your small grain is sowed,  
You'll have nothing to do but curse the railroad."

After the New York Stock Exchange halted trading for ten days and eastern bankers suspended operations, the editor at the *Easton Free Press* attempted to allay his readers' fears as the Panic spread. "The flurry in New York and Philadelphia commenced with a few railroad-speculating brokers, and should be confined to them," he wrote. "There is no cause for people becoming scared. The country is at peace, and was never more prosperous." Three days later, the editor repeated his appeal for calm. "We would again earnestly urge upon our citizens the unreasonableness of any apprehensions that they may have in regard to the stability of our banks."

However, these editorials failed to reassure workers employed at the Bethlehem Iron Company after they read notices at the plant on September 20 that a general wage reduction "of from ten to fifteen percent will be made on and after October

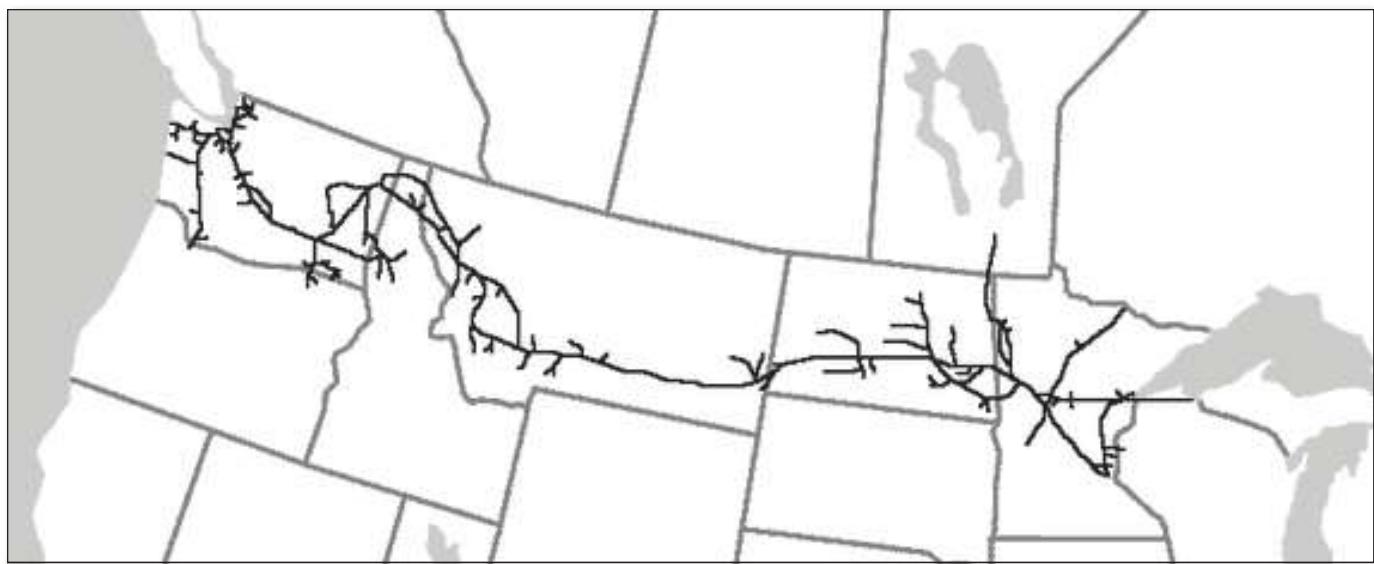
1." The company, later known as Bethlehem Steel, supplied rails to the railroad industry and saw lucrative orders vanish overnight. When a *Bethlehem Daily Times* reporter asked Superintendent John Fritz the rationale behind his wage cut demands, he replied "it was found necessary for the protection of the stockholders."

The reporter also visited the mill men and found them "grinning and bearing it." Most of the men worked a twelve-hour workday for a maximum of two dollars a day, and very few belonged to a union. One worker assured the newsman "that no remonstrance (against the company) would be offered, and no united action taken, unless it should emanate from the Puddlers' and Heaters' Association," the most skilled workers at the plant. The reporter concluded that the unorganized workers would accept the wage reductions as "a commonsense view of the matter." Two months later, the firm reportedly discharged all the single men working at the blast furnaces. The company reasoned that married men with children needed employment to maintain their families, but no exceptions appeared to be made for unmarried men who represented the sole support of their widowed mothers and fatherless siblings.

In contrast to Bethlehem furnace men's acquiescence to wage cuts, workers at other local iron companies challenged their bosses' decisions. Puddlers at the Glendon Iron Works in Easton and at the Catasauqua Rolling Mill in Catasauqua went on strike rather than accept the company owners' demands. Lacking strong unions in the midst of a depression, workers had few options. When workers struck the Lehigh Crane Iron Co., in Catasauqua, over wage cuts, the company shutdown their furnaces. "The strike has been a most disastrous one, not only to the strikers, but in its results to a very large number of citizens of the county, employed in ore beds (and) stone quarries. . . . It will also seriously affect trade of all kinds, and that for the next six months – for it will certainly be that time before the works are in full operation again," the *Free Press* lamented on February 20, 1874. Many of the region's twenty-three iron furnaces remained idle for years and later declared bankruptcy.

These severe economic disruptions spurred workers to organize. In Easton, a meeting of workingmen convened at the county courthouse to demand "a true recognition . . . of the rights of labor" at the hands of capital. Calling themselves "the Workingmen and Mechanics' Association of South Easton,"

(continued on page seven)



**Fig. 4:** The US Congress chartered the Northern Pacific Railway, granting it nearly forty million acres (62,000 sq. miles) of adjacent land grants for a transcontinental railroad near the end of the American Civil War. Construction began in 1870, with the main trunk line running from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. Construction halted during the Panic of 1873, but eventually finished in 1883. (Credit: Central Data Bank at en.wikipedia)

# Trump: a year later

A growing rift between the president and his media allies?

by Ron Ennis, Editor  
Lehigh Valley Labor Council



**N**early a year has passed since Donald Trump returned to the White House. Until recently, he enjoyed widespread, enthusiastic support from right-wing media outlets.

It is instructive to read the *Wall Street Journal* opinion pages. The aspirations of billionaires, Fortune 500 CEOs, and hedge-fund speculators are often reflected in the paper's editorials, although this seems redundant since some are media moguls who shape what millions of Americans read and hear. A review of the *Journal*'s predictions from a year ago highlights how overly optimistic they were regarding Trump, a shortcoming shared by many in the right-wing media's punditry class, and offers insight into both the past twelve months and where we might be heading.

On November 19, 2024, *Journal* columnist Gerard Baker wrote that Trump's election win gave him "the feeling of a revelation," explaining why in an article entitled "Four More Years of Trump may make America Normal Again." He reflected on Joe Biden's presidency, claiming Trump's predecessor weaponized the law against him, elites politicized science "to save the planet," and media and technology platforms restricted conservative speech. "Four years from now, there's a good chance that the nonsense we have had to endure (under Biden) will be buried, that important things will have become normal again." With Trump becoming more unhinged and three years left to go, Baker's prediction may need a revision.

Barton Swaim, a *Journal* editorial page writer, argued after January 6, 2021 that it was a "delusion" to think that Trump and his supporters "aimed at" overthrowing the government. He

blamed much of the violence that day on Democrat's Covid-19 measures and remarked in a January 18, 2025 opinion that "a majority of voters has chosen to forgive and forget." In reality, it is Swaim who chose to forget what happened on January 6, when Trump urged his supporters "to fight like hell" and subvert the will of the people in a fair and free election. Two days after Swaim wrote that piece, Trump granted blanket clemency to nearly 1,600 rioters for crimes related to the attack on the Capitol, reminding us again what Swaim desperately wants us to forget.

*Journal* contributor Tunku Varadarajan hoped that Trump would become a twenty-first century Ronald Reagan in a January 18, 2025 commentary. He based his prediction on the belief that Trump's personal effect on Americans was "electrifying." "Polarizing" would have been a more apt description. A majority of *Journal* columnists, like many other right-wing media pundits, believed a year ago that Trump could do no wrong.

The glow surrounding Trump has since dimmed. One hundred days after his inauguration, Varadarajan rescinded his likening of the current president to Reagan, calling him "a bully," "weak," with "no obvious moral core." His *Journal* columnists began expressing disappointment, too. "The impression" of Trump's team "is of escalating failure alongside escalating overreach," Baker wrote on April 22, 2025. "They seem to blunder deeper into the mire." Other right-wing media figures stopped being enthusiastic cheerleaders.

Multiple areas of disappointment among Trump's followers have emerged, and it will be interesting to watch as we head into the mid-term elections. Trump's obstruction in releasing the Jeffrey Epstein files, his harsh immigration policies, his poor handling of the economy, his unwillingness to get tough with Putin, his praise of controversial figures, and his lack of civility and decency have begun to wear thin with some of his supporters.

Will a rift grow between Trump and his media allies? We shall see in 2026.



The toy drive at Roosevelt Elementary School is the Lehigh Valley Labor Council's largest annual community service project. Some of the volunteers for this event posed for the above photograph in the school's auditorium. Many thanks to all those who donated their time and money to this wonderful cause. (Credit: Marco Calderon Photography)

President Donald J. Trump has signed a Continuing Resolution through January 30th. Thanks to the President's decisive leadership in the face of radical left-wing obstructionism, the Department of the Treasury has now resumed normal operations.

An official website of the United States government: [Here's how you know](#)



## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

**US Dept. of the Treasury website homepage, November 22, 2025.** "President Donald J. Trump has signed a Continuing Resolution through January 30th," the Treasury Dept.'s homepage stated. "Thanks to the President's decisive leadership in the face of radical left-wing obstructionism, the Department of the Treasury has now resumed normal operations." Never has a president attacked his political opponents using a taxpayer-funded website.



**CITY COUNCIL TAKES STEPS TO STOP FLOODING CITY WITH CHEAP LABOR; OUT-OF-TOWN AGENCIES BLAMED**

**Labor Camps Becoming a Menace, Says Labor Council Secretary Moser — Shipped-in Workers Frequently Stranded Here**

A resolution designed to prevent the flooding of Allentown with foreign

**WSAN Program Heard By Fan in California**

Clear across the continent to Wilmington, Calif., the strains of Gary Blackwell's orchestra were carried after being broadcast from WSAN, Morning Call, according to a request received at the studio yesterday for an Ekko stamp.

**Allentown City Council passed resolution to protect local tradesmen, 1927.** Clarence J. Moser, secretary of the Allentown Central Trades and Labor Council, informed city council members that New York and Philadelphia employment agencies "are virtually shipping men" to the city with the intent of replacing local skilled craftsmen on public construction projects. City council "passed a resolution calling upon all area contractors doing city work (that) first consideration be given to the people in our city and neighboring cities" when hiring.

This past July, the state Senate introduced SB 908, a measure to protect the wages of local tradesmen on public projects. It expands prevailing wage protections to include all off-site custom fabrication and assembly of non-standard materials, and outlaws the practice of 'split rates.' The legislation's provisions "ensure the integrity of public construction projects," the bill's backers declared.

Pennsylvania state Sen. Nick Miller, serving parts of Lehigh and Northampton counties, is the only local state senator who has currently sponsored this bill.

(Credit: Allentown Morning Call, December 14, 1927)

**The Supreme Court rules for corporations 70% of the time.**

**NO MORE CORPORATE JUDGES**

**Since John Roberts became Chief Justice of the United States in 2005, the Chamber of Commerce has won 70 percent of the time before the Supreme Court. This win streak includes landmark rulings that have allowed unlimited corporate cash to be spent on federal elections, expanded the use of forced arbitration in employment and consumer contracts, and hurt public-sector unions' ability to collect fees for services rendered to their members.**

(Credit: demandjustice.org)

“ ”



*"In the 1980s, Republicans told Americans that the modern government that had regulated business, provided a basic social safety net, promoted infrastructure, protected civil rights, and stabilized the international order since World War II was 'socialism.' . . . Cutting business regulations and taxes would usher in extraordinary economic growth that would boost the prosperity of hardworking Americans, they insisted, leaving behind those unwilling to work.*

*"Except it didn't. A February 2025 report from RAND, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization, written by Carter C. Price found that if the system in place before 1975 had stayed in place, the bottom 90% of Americans would have had almost \$80 trillion more in 2023 than they did."*

Prof. Heather Cox-Richardson, in a December 19, 2025 post. Visit: <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/december-19-2025>



## Could the AI boom go bust?

(continued from page five)

*The Free Press* wrote on January 31, 1874 that the laborers outlined several guiding principles governing their actions, including "to obtain from capital a full recognition of the rights and privileges of the workingmen, to show them . . . where capital was pressing too hard (and) how capital could receive better and surer returns by more confidential relations with labor."

Bitter antagonism flared between workers and their bosses in the wake of the Panic, simmering until 1877 when workers went on strike across the country. An estimated one hundred people lost their lives in unrest, with Pennsylvania witnessing the worst violence. Pennsylvania Railroad CEO Thomas A. Scott led the opposition to the strikers. "It is a public misfortune that Mr. Scott should present himself as a conservator of the peace of the state," a *Lancaster Intelligencer* editorial began on August 1, "because it is widely believed that he is the prime cause of its disturbance. . . . In the contest between Mr. Scott and the trainmen, the sympathy of the community is unquestionably and most justly with the latter." Known as one of the first robber barons of the Gilded Age, he was quoted as saying that the strikers should be given "a rifle diet for a few days and see how they like that kind of bread."

History may not repeat itself, but it often rhymes. The AI boom has shown little sign of slowing down, yet its continued frantic pace is doubtful. The railroad boom eventually went bust in 1873, and its aftermath suggests if AI falters, an economic decline accompanied by workplace disruption could also follow. Unorganized workers will likely bear the brunt of the impact.



LEHIGH VALLEY LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO  
PO Box 20226  
LEHIGH VALLEY, PA 18002

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LEHIGH VALLEY,  
PA  
PERMIT NO. 1895

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026**

*Executive Board @ 7:00 PM – Delegate meeting @ 7:30 PM*

**Teamsters #773 3614 Lehigh Street, Whitehall PA 18052**

The *News & Views* is produced by members of the Communication Workers Local #14827,  
Lehigh Valley Print Center, 1701 Union Blvd., Suite 114, Allentown Pa. 18109  
610-435-0313 / mail@LVprintcenter.com



Distribution or copying of this material and communications is prohibited without approval of the Lehigh Valley Labor Council.