



NEWS & VIEWS

LEHIGH VALLEY LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO
"UNIONS JOINING TOGETHER AS ONE"

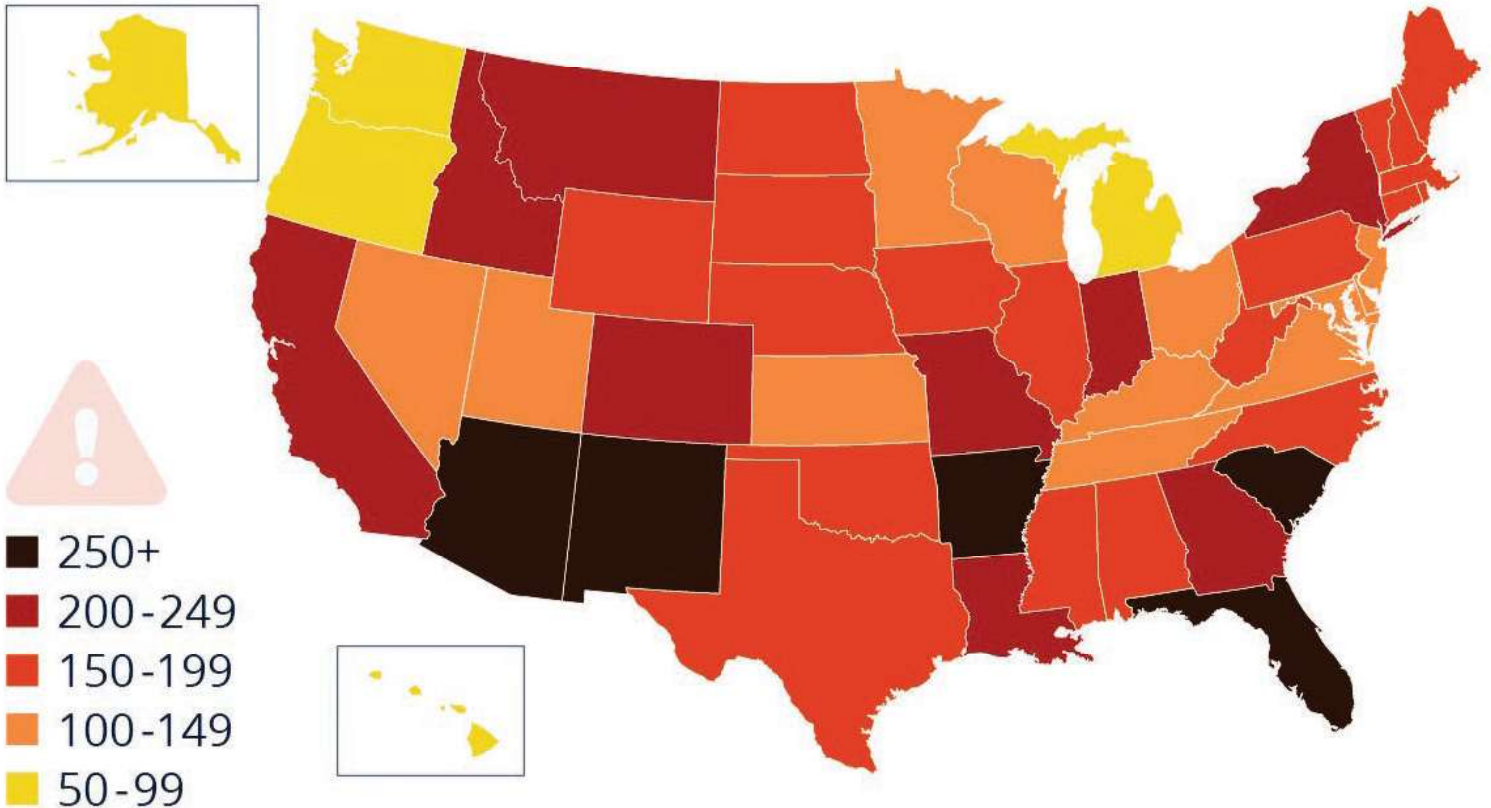
www.lehighvalleyclc.org



April 2026

The struggle for workplace safety

Years needed for the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) to inspect all job sites by state at its current staffing levels.



Too many workers remain at serious risk of injury, illness or death on the job. In Pennsylvania, only one OSHA inspector exists for over 83,000 workers, and it would take 162 years to inspect each worksite in the state. Sunday, April 26 marks the 35th annual Lehigh Valley Workers' Memorial Day ceremony. See page two for more on the event. *(Image credit: Statista. Source credit: AFL-CIO, 2023)*

Workplace deaths decreased in 2024

Trump administration threatens that progress

by Liz Shuler, President
AFL-CIO

Press Release February 23, 2026

The labor movement mourns each of the 5,070 workers who lost their lives on the job in 2024. Every one of these deaths is not only an invaluable life lost, but also brings immeasurable grief and hardship for families and communities. While it is a relief to see that number decrease in 2024, which took place during the Biden administration, let's be clear: The number of annual workplace deaths should be zero. And now, the current administration's billionaire-first agenda puts that progress in jeopardy.



The Trump administration has slashed worker safety rules, undermined the federal agencies that hold employers accountable, pushed out and disrupted the dedicated experts who inspect worksites for safety violations, and given handouts to big corporations and special interests actively working to weaken safeguards for workers. This government must enforce the workplace safety laws already on the books, fully staff and fund agencies like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Mine Safety and Health Administration, and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and empower OSHA inspectors to conduct investigations into unsafe workplaces.

At the AFL-CIO, we're committed to preventing workplace deaths by demanding comprehensive and robust federal laws and safety guardrails to protect workers on the job. We will continue to oppose President Trump's anti-worker agenda so every single worker can return home safely at the end of their shift.

Key statistics on OSHA inspector staffing

Federal inspectors dropped from 846 in February 2024 to 736 in June 2025. More recent reports indicate federal compliance officers fell to 629 in early 2026.

The current staffing level means federal OSHA can only inspect workplaces once every 186 to 190 years.

When combined with state-plan inspectors, there are fewer than 1,900 inspectors covering 160 million workers.

The cuts have resulted in one of the lowest OSHA staffing levels in over forty years, despite an increase in the number of workplaces.

While workplace inspectors total less than 1,900, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have ballooned by 120 percent, now standing at 22,000.

Data "shows a twenty percent decrease in worksite inspections by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration during a six-month period last year compared with the same period in 2024. . . . The drop in inspections comes on top of efforts by Trump to roll back regulations for worker safety and protections."

The New York Times, February 18, 2026, "Workplace Inspections by OSHA dropped over a six-month period of 2025."



The 1986 1st National Bank of Bath shooting 35th Lehigh Valley Workers' Memorial

(Remembering one of our area's bloodiest workplace tragedies)

Sunday, April 26, 2026 @ 1 p.m.
Bethlehem Rose Gardens
Eighth Ave. & Union Blvd.,
Bethlehem

(In case of inclement weather,
ceremony held inside the DAR {log
cabin} House located next to the
Workers' Memorial monument.
Refreshments after the ceremony.)

Lehigh Valley Labor Council AFL-CIO

www.lehighvalleyclc.org
Phone 610-366-1358

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Gregg Potter	Executive Vice-President	IUOE #542
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United Way Labor Liaison

John Werkheiser	UFCW #1776
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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.

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Labor council award dinner April 18

Annual event features night of solidarity at the Northampton Memorial Community Center

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

Union leaders, labor advocates, and rank-and-file members will gather for the Lehigh Valley Labor Council's Annual Award dinner on Saturday, April 18 at the Northampton Memorial Community Center.



The night of solidarity will once again be held at 1601 Laubach Ave., Northampton. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres begin at 5:30 p.m. with music by Courtney Cassium and Aidan Heil. A family style dinner follows at 7 p.m. Coffee and dessert will be served before our awards program.

Wendell Young IV will be our keynote speaker. He has served as president of the United Food & Commercial Workers #1776 Keystone State since 2005. The union represents 35,000 members from across Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York and West Virginia.

Our honorees include:

City of Allentown	<i>Labor/Business Partner</i>
Pa. Sen. Nick Miller	<i>Legislator of the Year</i>
Laborers International Union #58	<i>Local of the Year</i>
Andy Kubat, Postal Workers #268	<i>Lifetime Service Award</i>
Jim Irwin, Operating Engineers #542	<i>United Way Labor Award</i>
Quintes Taglioli	<i>President's Award</i>
John Leonard, Allentown Police	<i>Gregg J. Potter Award</i>

We have sponsorship opportunities for our event:

Presenting Sponsor	\$3000
Three tables of eight	
Inside cover Ad Booklet	
Union/Corporate Signage at Event	
Multiple Acknowledgements Verbal/Printed	
Representative to address audience	
Platinum Sponsor	\$2500
Two tables of eight	
Full Page Ad	
Union/Corporate Signage at Event	
Multiple Acknowledgements Verbal/Printed	
Diamond Sponsor	\$2000
One table of eight	
Full Page Ad	
Verbal/Printed Acknowledgements	
Single seat pricing is \$100 and a table of eight is \$800.	

All booklet advertising is in color and sized 4 1/4 by 5 1/2.

Advertising costs are:

Inside/Outside Cover	\$400
Full Page	\$300
Half Page	\$175
Quarter Page	\$125

Deadline for seating and all advertisements is April 11 by the close of business. Please send payment to:

Dennis Andrews, Lehigh Valley Labor Council
1705 Northampton Street
Easton PA 18042



Mark your calendar

Lehigh Valley Labor Council's 2026 events

- April 15: Labor Council monthly meeting
- April 18: Labor Council Annual Awards Dinner, Northampton Community Center, Northampton
- April 24-25: Pennsylvania Labor History Society Conference, Philadelphia
- April 26: Lehigh Valley Workers Memorial, Bethlehem Rose Gardens, Bethlehem
- May 4: Last day to Register to vote in the Municipal primary election
- May 9: National Association of Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Visit for more information: <https://www.nalc.org/community-service/food-drive>
- May 12: Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot.
- May 19: Last day for County Boards of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (must be received by 8 p.m.)
- May 19: Municipal Election. Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- May 19: Municipal Election. Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- May 20: Labor Council monthly meeting
- June 16: Pennsylvania Building Trades Convention
- June 17: Labor Council monthly meeting
- July 15: Labor Council monthly meeting
- August 19: Labor Council monthly meeting
- September 6: Labor Council Labor Day Pete DePietro Picnic, American Club, Coplay



VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

BECAUSE YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Saturday
April 11th, 2026
11am-3pm

PENNSYLVANIA ELECTION DATES

MAY 19TH, 2026
NOVEMBER 3RD, 2026

2101 MACK BLVD . ALLENTOWN, PA 18103

Voter Registration Drive at the United Auto Workers Hall #677, 2101 Mack Blvd., Allentown Saturday, April 11 11 a.m.—3 p.m.



The William Werkheiser Award is now the Gregg Potter Award.

A new chapter in the prestigious award's history. To be bestowed at the April 18 dinner

by John Werkheiser, United Food & Commercial Workers #1776
Lehigh Valley Labor Council

Every year since 1988, area labor leaders bestowed upon individuals or agencies the William Werkheiser Award. It is given to those who have demonstrated exemplary leadership in community service. The honor is named after its first recipient, my father, William “Bill” Werkheiser. This year marks a new chapter in the esteemed award’s history.



About two years ago, I came to the realization that many activists in our area’s labor movement may not have had the opportunity to meet my father. He passed away twenty-five years ago, and those who remember him are now retired or nearing retirement.

I believe that an award recognizing involvement in community service should bear the name of someone who serves as an inspiration—someone whom people know, admire, and aspire to emulate.

In this regard, I can think of no one more deserving than Gregg Potter, our labor council’s current executive vice-president. He has a long history and deep commitment to serving the Lehigh Valley community in numerous ways. Having had the privilege of closely knowing both Gregg and my father, I can confidently say that Gregg’s contributions far exceed those of my father. Nobody has dedicated himself more to helping our area’s working families than Gregg. It is for this reason that our council has decided to rename the award in his honor. Our labor council will proudly present the first Gregg J. Potter Community Service Award at its April 18 dinner.



William “Bill” Werkheiser (right) stands at the podium in 1995 with John Reck, a steelworkers union official and director of community services for the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO. Each year at the Lehigh Valley Labor Council dinner, delegates bestow the William Werkheiser Award upon a person, persons, or an agency that has demonstrated strong community service leadership. Werkheiser’s dedication to helping working-class families in the Lehigh Valley served as a model to future award recipients.

His son, John Werkheiser, urged the Lehigh Valley Labor Council to rename the community service award. This year marks the first year the council will grant the Gregg J. Potter Community Service Award.

The history of this community service award dates back nearly forty years when my father received the first honor on April 26, 1988 from Ed Rice, the United Way Labor Liaison for Northampton County. Thereafter, the award was named the William Werkheiser Community Service Award and given at the annual United Way Labor Campaign kickoff dinner held at the Stockertown Memorial Hall in Stockertown. In 2000, the Northampton County Labor Council merged with the Lehigh County Labor Council, prompting area labor leaders to move the award ceremony to the Lehigh Valley Labor Council dinner. The labor council has hosted the annual award ceremony every April at the Northampton Memorial Community Center in Northampton.

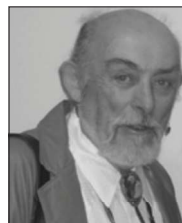
For those who did not know William Werkheiser, he was born in 1924 and began his career at Bethlehem Steel in 1942. He was a proud member of the United Steelworkers of America #2600, one of three local unions at the South Bethlehem steel mill. Over the course of forty-three years, he served in various capacities, including local recording secretary, shop steward, trustee, and chair of the union’s local community service committee. After retiring in 1986, fellow retired steelworkers elected him as the first president of the local Steelworkers Organization for Active Retirees in 1992. “We have to teach the young-er people and work as a group to preserve what we have already gained,” he remarked to the *Allentown Morning Call* upon his election as SOAR president. “Some things we worked so hard to get are being taken away.”

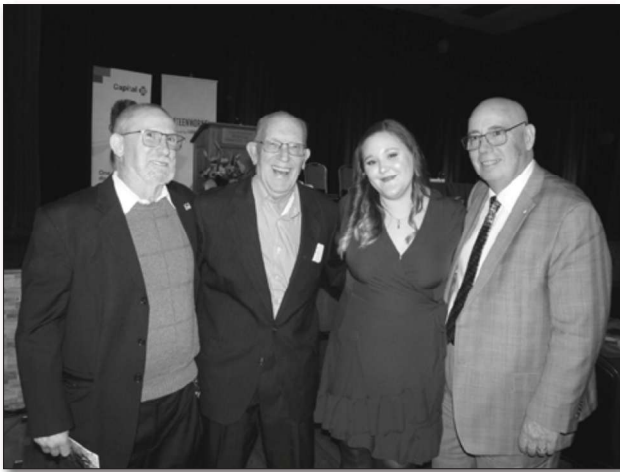
He served as his local union’s delegate to the former Northampton County Labor Council for forty years and was a charter member and former officer of the Pennsylvania Labor History Society. He also served on many community service committees and projects. Some of these included memberships on the Hospital Central Services Committee, Bethlehem Committee on Alcoholism, Bethlehem Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Forks of the Delaware United Fund (now United Way). He died in February 2001.

I hope you join me on April 18 at our annual award ceremony as we mark a new chapter with the Gregg J. Potter Community Service Award.

Year	William Werkheiser Award	Organization
1988	William Werkheiser, Steelworkers #2599	
1989	Dave “Rebel” Landers, United Steelworkers #2599	
1990	Frank Andrecs, United Steelworkers #2599	
1991	Steve Curto, United Food & Commercial Workers #1776	

Steve Curto (right), **Joe Wilfinger** (left), and **John Weiss** (below right). Curto received the Werkheiser Award in 1991, and Wilfinger and Weiss in 1996.





Dennis Andrews (left) **Mike Wallery** and Samantha Moyer stand with **Gregg Potter** (right). Andrews won the Werkheiser Award in 2014, Wallery in 1992, and Potter in 2005.

- 1992 Mike Wallery, United Steelworkers #8661
- 1993 Ed Rice, United Steelworkers #5503
- 1994 Gail Meyer, Union of Needle Trades & Textile Employees
- 1995 Bill Gibson, United Brotherhood of Carpenters #600
- 1995 Linda Clark, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees #1435
- 1996 Joe Wilfinger, United Steelworkers #2599
- 1996 John Weiss, United Steelworkers #2599



Jim Roth (left), **Juan Orta** (right) and **Gail Meyer** (below). Roth received the Werkheiser Award in 2000, Orta in 2011, and Meyer in 1994.



- 1997 John Werkheiser, Food & Commercial Workers #1776
- 1998 Second Harvest Food Bank
- 1998 Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley
- 1999 Carpenters Union, United Brotherhood of Carpenters #600
- 2000 Suzanne Styers Boundy, Service Employees International Union #668
- 2000 Jim Roth, Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical & Energy Workers 2-10018
- 2001 Gail "Brownie" Brown, International Brotherhood of Teamsters #773
- 2002 Dawn D'Andria, Service Employees International Union #668
- 2002 Charmaine Rundle, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees #1435
- 2003 David B. Binder, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #1600
- 2004 Neil P. Brown, Service Employees International Union #668

- 2005 Gregg J. Potter, Communication Workers of America #13500
- 2006 Robert A. Lalo, Communication Workers of America #13500
- 2007 Dale Krasley, United Auto Workers #677
- 2008 Ellen J. Redline-Weiss, American Federation of State County, and Municipal Employees #1435
- 2009 Steve Banus, International Brotherhood of Teamsters #773
- 2010 George H. Treisner Jr., Penna. State Education Association
- 2011 Juan Orta, Amalgamated Transit Union #956
- 2012 Ray "Biggie" Heiser, International Brotherhood of Teamsters #773

Dave Binder (right), and **Ellen Redline-Weiss** (below left). Binder received the Werkheiser Award in 2003 and Redline-Weiss in 2008.



Jodi and Irv Weinrich (above right), **Fran Loughney** (above left) and **Anne Radakovits** (right). Jodi and Irv Weinrich received the Werkheiser Award in 2017, Loughney in 2015 and Radakovits in 2024.



- 2013 Christine Hanke, Penna. State Education Association
- 2014 Dennis Andrews, United Steelworkers #412
- 2015 Francis "Fran" Loughney, United Brotherhood of Carpenters #600
- 2016 DecAna Bedics, International Brotherhood of Teamsters #773
- 2017 Irv and Jodi Weinrich, Workers United Penna. Joint Board
- 2018 Rob Franklin, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #375
- 2019 Dennis Hower, International Brotherhood of Teamsters #773
- 2020 Council dinner cancelled. Covid-19 pandemic
- 2021 Jeanne McNeill, Pennsylvania state Rep. 133rd District
- 2022 Council dinner cancelled. Scheduling conflict.
- 2023 Community Action Team of the Penna. Joint Board Workers United
- 2024 Anne Radakovits, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees #1979
- 2025 Paula Small, International Brotherhood of Teamsters #773

Year *Gegg J. Potter Award* *Organization*
 2026 John Leonard, Allentown Police, Queen City Lodge #10



Knowing your rights on the job

Autoworkers #677 held grievance seminar on February 1

by Mike Shupp, President
United Auto Workers #677



Labor activists, shop stewards and rank-and-file members gathered at the United Auto Workers Hall #677 for labor law, shop steward and legislative training on February 21. Roughly forty labor activists attended.

On February 21, labor members and leaders gathered to deepen their understanding of grievances and the rights that give them force. Our strength does not rest solely in our collective bargaining agreements. It

also lives in our Weingarten rights, the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA), the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA), and the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (NLRA), to name just a few.

These are not abstract statutes. They are tools. When understood and used, they strengthen every union member. They reinforce employers' obligations to provide not only wages and benefits, but dignity, safety, and a voice on the job.



Here's the hard truth: the companies we work for have no duty to educate us about these protections. Many managers don't fully understand them. Some choose not to recognize them, even when they do. That reality is exactly why unions matter. Without informed members and trained leaders, rights on paper become rights ignored. With education, they become enforceable.

For those who step up to lead, the road is not easy. It demands time, resilience, and sometimes personal sacrifice. Doubt creeps in. You ask yourself, *Why am I doing this?*

Because knowledge is armor. It shields us from misinformation and intimidation. It gives us clarity when pressure mounts. And no one can take it from you once you have it.

Walter Reuther once said, "There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow men. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well."

Pursuing knowledge is the first step in honoring that calling. Sharing it with our brothers and sisters is the second. Accepting that there is always more to learn, and more to teach, keeps the movement strong.

To everyone who committed their time and energy to this training: well done. Keep going. The work matters.



“ ”

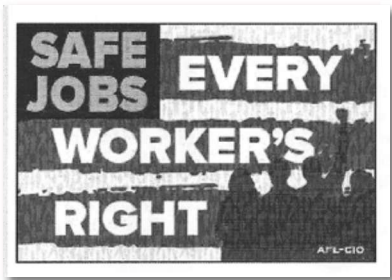


“The fate of virtually everyone on the planet is being impacted by the toxic cocktail of character flaws, insecurities, and pathologies that are shaping the actions of the President of the United States.

“Economic chaos and hardship ranging from spiking energy prices to the destruction of the global trading system; wars, military and diplomatic decisions that are causing death and suffering to millions and striking profound insecurity in the hearts of the rest of the plant; assaults on the rule of law and democracy that are not only causing misery and inequity for Americans by robbing the world of an important champion for a more just planet; attacks on science and medicine that are doing profound damage both to individuals and families but also the environment of the entire planet at a time of climate crisis; the active promotion of racism, misogyny, religious intolerance and hate that is inevitably altering global discourse and behaviors . . . look anywhere and there is evidence that a sick man holds the most powerful job in the world.”

David Rothkopf, “Living in a Time of Lunatics and Monsters,” March 7, 2026 post on substack. Rothkopf is a foreign policy and national security analyst, authoring several books including *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World they are Making*, and *Traitor: A History of American Betrayal from Benedict Arnold to Donald Trump*.

Visit: <https://davidrothkopf.substack.com>



The Union Steward

by Anonymous

Who are these of lowly pay,
With haggard look and hair of gray?
They get no rest by day or night
They're always wrong. They're never right.
They do not have a law degree,
But go to bat for you and me.
Though seldom have they been to college,
They must possess the widest knowledge,
Of labor grades and when to grieve,
Vacation pay and sickness leave.
Of overtime and who's to do it,
Of coffee time and who's to brew it.
The how and which and why and when,
And all the problems of women and men.
If, with forepersons they agree,
Then they're rats who've got weak knees.
If, to the workers they try to cater,
They're branded as agitators.
Those who have to take this slop
Are called the *Stewards* of your shop.

Make a clean sweep

Stop the chaos, disruption, incompetence this November

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council



Words seem inadequate to comprehend the moment we find ourselves in. The chaos, disruption and incompetence that has characterized the Trump administration over the past twelve months is beyond anything we have witnessed in our lifetime.

No other president since the Second World War inflicted such unnecessary economic harm by imposing and then partially lifting tariffs on over ninety countries. No other leader deployed masked federal agents into stores, worksites and cities to indiscriminately round up migrants and citizens alike, leading to tragic outcomes. No other president dragged the nation into a war ill-prepared and under shifting justifications. And no other White House occupant provoked this chaos and disruption while regularly engaging in puerile insults and name calling. This ignominious legacy belongs solely to Donald Trump.

Yet, Trump's MAGA allies in Congress and the media rush to his defense, making outrageous claims and excuses that lack credibility.

Give Trump credit, though; he understands his voters. He boasted during a January 23, 2016 visit to Iowa that his presidential campaign would not suffer even if he shot someone in the middle of a crowded street. “I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody, and I wouldn't lose any voters,” he declared, referring to a major street in Manhattan, New York. Trump's cult-like support is unwavering, and his conduct over the past ten years proves that his allies will not abandon him, regardless of the calamities he creates.

We neither have to shake our heads nor look down in despair. We are not powerless. We have agency knowing that in America democracy is legal 365 days of the year. If you are not registered to vote, make a plan to do so. May 4 is the deadline to register for the May 19 Primary Election.

The name Donald J. Trump may not be on the ballot this November, but his loyalists in Washington and Harrisburg will be. In the Lehigh Valley's 7th congressional district, MAGA congressman Ryan Mackenzie faces re-election. This primary election is our chance to elect a strong worker-friendly candidate to challenge him on November 3. State House and state Senate seats are also up for grabs, offering us further opportunities to unseat Trump's enablers.

Beyond voting, we can amplify our voices by writing letters to the editor of our local newspapers calling attention to Trump's chaos and disruption that hurts working families. We can attend weekly rallies at Mackenzie's local offices and participate in Lehigh Valley Labor Council activities to learn about the candidates and their stances on issues important to us. See page three for a partial list of our calendar or visit our website at www.lehighclc.org.

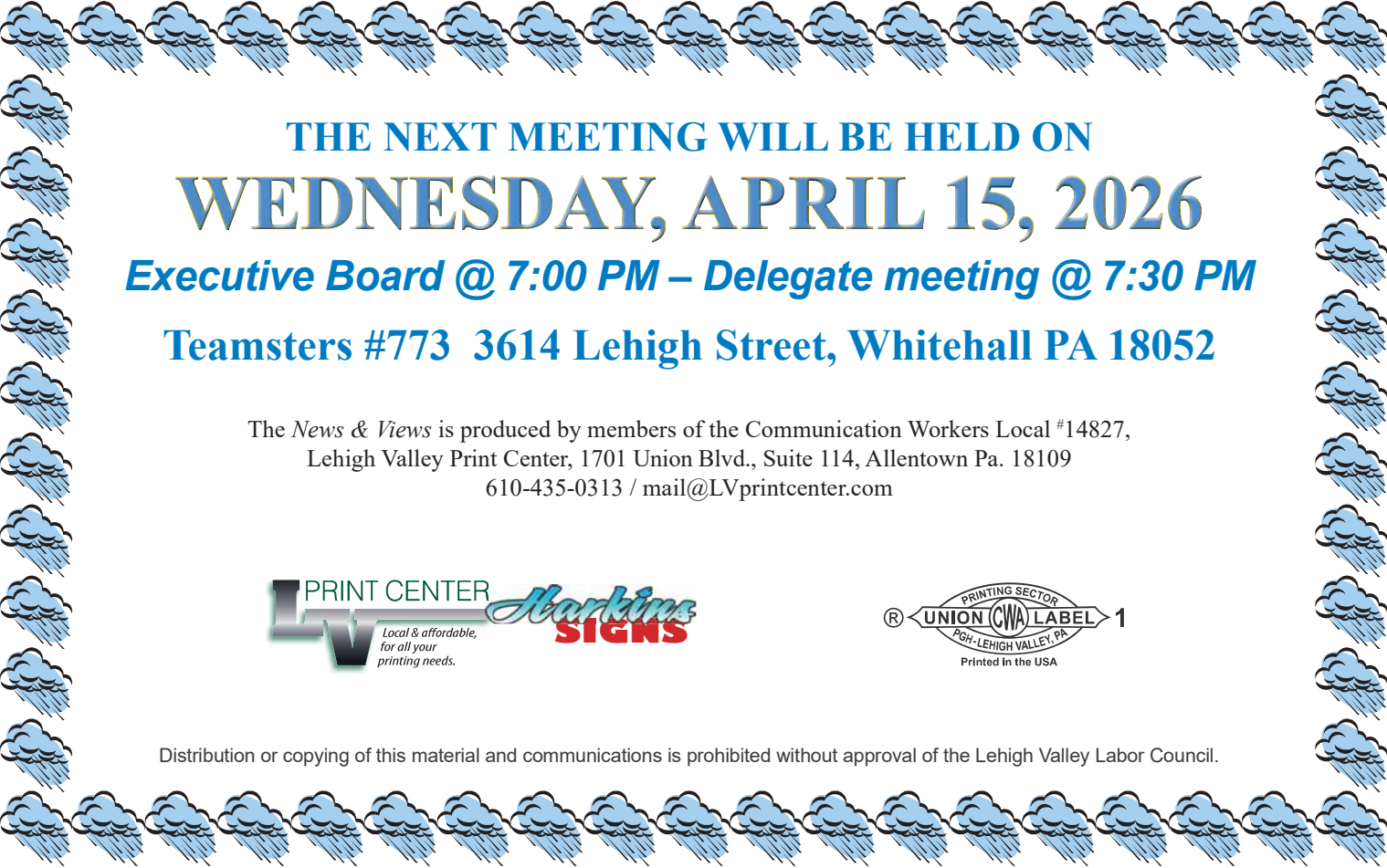
Together, we can stand in solidarity and put an end to the chaos, disruption and incompetence by making a clean sweep this November.





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THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 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,
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