



NEWS & VIEWS

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



May 2025

www.lehighvalleyclc.org

The 2025 Labor Ticket

for the Tuesday, May 20 Primary Election. Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

How you vote is a personal choice, but the Lehigh Valley Labor Council has endorsed the following candidates for mayoral, council and school board races after extensive interviews and research. More on page three.



Matt Tuerk
Allentown Mayor



Cynthia Mota
Allentown City Council



Cristian Pungo
Allentown City Council



Jeremy Binder
Allentown City Council



Grace Crampsie Smith
Bethlehem Mayor



Celeste Dee
Bethlehem City Council



Jo Daniels
Bethlehem City Council



Justin Amann
Bethlehem City Council



Susan Hartranft-Bittinger
Easton City Council



Frank Graziano
Easton City Council



Evette D'Amore
Allentown School Board



Silagh White
Bethlehem School Board



Shandeka Greenfield
Easton School Board



Ed Keegan
Easton School Board



Meg Sayago
Easton School Board

Council's 63rd Annual Awards dinner honors business, political and labor leaders

Held at the Northampton Memorial Community Center

The annual Lehigh Valley Labor Council's Awards banquet showcased well-deserving honorees at the Northampton Memorial Community Center on April 19.

The event featured a continuously running display of visuals highlighting local labor activities during the past year. Attendees were also treated to a rousing keynote address from Northampton County Executive Lamont McClure. But the dinner's draw has always been about local union members and their allies that give strength and voice to Lehigh Valley working families.

Labor Council President Jim Irwin began the evening's award announcements with the presentation of the Labor Partnership Award to Dickinson Cranes. The company is now in its third generation of family ownership dating back to 1948.

Executive Vice-President Gregg Potter announced the United Steel Workers #2599 as the local union of the year. The union can trace its roots back to 1883, when a predecessor labor group struck a company later known as Bethlehem Steel.



Left: United Steel Workers #2599 honored as the local union of the year at the Lehigh Valley Labor Council's annual dinner. Local officers accepting the award included (left to right) Secretary-Treasurer Keith Weaver, President Tim Rehrig, and District #10 Staff Rep. Sean Kirchhofer. **Right:** Gregg Potter congratulated Paula Small upon presentation of the William Werkheiser Award.

Labor Council's Ron Labar presented Jocelyn Lunney, of Workers United, with the Lifetime Achievement Award. State Rep. Josh Siegel and Easton City Councilman Frank Pintabone received the Legislators of the Year Award, and the President's Award went to Robert Brooks of the Pennsylvania Professional Firefighters Association.

The longstanding William Werkheiser Award was given to Paula Small, who began at the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #827 while working for Verizon. She represented her members as a steward, bargaining committee member and a benefits coordinator. After thirty years with the IBEW, she launched her second union career with the Teamsters #773, serving members as a steward and on various local union committees. She recently helped raised \$175,000 for her local's "Men Wear Pink" campaign, a fundraiser for breast cancer research. But she is best known among her labor sisters and brothers as someone who "lifts people up, brings people together, and leads with kindness, grit, and purpose."



President Jim Irwin and the Lehigh Valley Labor Council thanked all those who sponsored the council's 63rd Annual Awards Dinner on April 19.

Lehigh Valley Labor Council
AFL-CIO
www.lehighvalleyclc.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

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Supreme Court v. Trump

SMART statement on Court's demand to return union member Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia to the United States

Michael Coleman, President
International Assoc. of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers



Michael Coleman
SMART President

On Thursday, April 10, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision that backed a federal judge's order requiring the government to facilitate the return of Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia to the United States. SMART General President Michael Coleman issued the following statement in response on April 11:

"Since last week, our demand has been a simple one — one that echoed the calls of Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia's family, community and allies: Bring Kilmar home and give him the due process that is his right.

"It's been weeks since Kilmar, a sheet metal apprentice working hard to pursue the American dream, was mistakenly deported. Over those weeks, in what has been a heartbreaking and terrifying time for Kilmar's family, we have seen Americans from coast to coast raise their voices against Kilmar's deportation. And in the midst of that outcry, the United States justice system instructed the government, again and again, to bring Kilmar back to the U.S.

"In court last Friday, U.S. Department of Justice attorney Erez Reuveni admitted that there was nothing in the record to support ICE apprehending and deporting Abrego Garcia. The federal district court judge who heard Kilmar's case stated she '[hadn't] been given any evidence' to support the government's allegation of gang affiliation and ordered the government to bring Kilmar home. On Monday, a three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit unanimously denied the government's request for a stay. And yesterday, the United States Supreme Court reaffirmed the government's responsibility to facilitate Kilmar's return from El Salvador.



US Sen. Chris Van Hollen met with Kilmar Abrego Garcia in El Salvador on April 17. (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

"Our call is unchanged, and it is now backed by the Supreme Court: The government must bring Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia home and grant him due process. We are overjoyed for Kilmar and his family, and we look forward to the Trump administration taking immediate steps to bring him back to the U.S."



The Lehigh Valley Labor Council's Committee on Political Education (COPE) spent nearly nine hours on April 14 and April 15 interviewing twenty-one candidates for the May 20 Primary Election. After considering candidate responses to the committee's questions, voting records and other aspects of the campaigns, the committee presented their recommendations at the April 16 monthly labor council meeting.

Lehigh Valley Labor Council delegates voted to endorse fifteen candidates in the May 20 election. The endorsed candidates are presented on the front cover.

COPE members included: (seated left to right) Shawn Kerbein, Allentown Education Association; Ellen Marx, Service Employees International Union; Adam Perreault, Allentown Firefighters #302; Jim Irwin, labor council president and COPE chair; (standing left to right) Anne Radakovits, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees; and Mike Baker, Service Employees International Union. Also serving on the committee but not pictured above was Leslie Franklin, Allentown Education Association and Ron Ennis, American Postal Workers Union.

President Irwin thanked COPE committee members for their service and the Teamsters #773 for the use of their union hall.

KNOWN INITIALLY AS DECORATION DAY, the first national observance of Memorial Day occurred on May 30, 1868 honoring Union soldiers who had died in the War of the Rebellion, later known as the Civil War. Congress adopted in 1971 the last Monday in May as Memorial Day.

Harry B. Parks, 1943. The president of the Electrical Workers #375 was the first candidate endorsed in a primary election in the history of the Allentown Central Trades & Labor Council, a predecessor to the Lehigh Valley Labor Council. Parks unsuccessfully ran for an Allentown School Board seat in 1943, a year that saw Republicans sweep most of Lehigh County's contested offices. The *Allentown Morning Call* described him as "probably the foremost labor official in the Lehigh Valley." Organized labor in the Lehigh Valley has had a long tradition of political activity.



No way to start a trade war

And don't expect the price of eggs to come down soon, either

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council

Franks Keys Foster thought his fellow labor leaders had made a terrible decision. As he rose to speak on November 21, 1882, he would try to persuade them to end their year-long support for a high tariff. (Figure #1)

Foster, a member of the Typographical Union, remembered the acrimony that erupted twelve months earlier at the 1881 Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (FOTLU) convention in Pittsburgh. Some had urged the



Fig. 1: Frank Keys Foster, along with other national union leaders, founded the American Federation of Labor. A member of the Typographical Union, he had held many labor posts before his appearance on November 21, 1882 at the Second Annual Session of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions held in Cleveland, Ohio. (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

FOTLU to support tariff protection, others desired a resolution supporting free trade, and a third group wanted the labor movement to remain neutral. The arguments among delegates reflected differences in political affiliations, the industries in which they worked and the regions where they lived. When union delegates cast their votes, proponents of protection won a narrow victory.

Foster, known as a talented author, editor and orator, hoped his speech at the 1882 convention would assuage the bitterness from the previous year. He told his listeners he neither endorsed the free trade movement, nor the use of tariffs to protect industry. "'Protection' does not protect labor," he argued. The federal government's tariffs represented "immense subsidies paid to the iron, wool, cotton, and other favored industries," and "have only served to concentrate wealth in the hands of the few, to the disadvantage of the many." He asked that the delegation "abstain from espousing either side" and remain neutral on the tariff question. The following day, the FOTLU's board voted for neutrality.

Not every union leader expressed pleasure upon hearing the news. John J. Jarrett, the president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron & Steel Workers, wrote a letter to the convention criticizing the delegates for reversing course on protection. The tariff issue greatly affected his membership, he said, leaving him with no choice but to disaffiliate his union from the federation.

The American Federation of Labor, the successor to the FOTLU, would maintain Foster's tariff neutrality plank long after his death in 1909. AFL President William Green remarked in 1929 that the federation had "avoided most scrupulously and carefully that controversial field," and while Green approached the tariff question cautiously, his labor affiliates occasionally held strong, divergent views on the subject.



Fig. 2: The Lehigh Valley debates the tariff question, 1841. *The Lehigh County Patriot*, a German-language newspaper, declared in a headline "Tariff and Anti-Tariff:"

"The tariff question is a matter that deeply interests us in the Middle States, and is worthy of thoughtful and mature consideration. As prudent citizens, who know and value our interests, we owe it to our country, to ourselves, and to our posterity to support a sound tariff law." (Credit: *Der Lecha County Patriot*, May 12, 1841)

Decades before Foster's appeal to his fellow union leaders, Lehigh Valley workers, company owners and shop floor bosses debated the issue of tariffs. *The Easton Free Press* declared in an 1876 editorial that Pennsylvania . . . has always favored a protective tariff," and it "will hereafter yield years of fruition." *The Allentown Democrat*, however, argued that a protective tariff failed to protect workers' wages from falling or shops from closing. "We were told that a tariff of fifty cents a ton would keep out foreign (iron) ore and give home laborers abundant employment. But there is no demand for iron, furnaces and rolling mills are in many places closed, and there is little or no sale for ore. Consequently, the wages of miners have been cut down to a mere pittance," the *Democrat* editor lamented on February 13, 1884. "When the wages of a 'protected' miner are only sixty-five cents a day, it may well be asked whether 'protection' is of any good to the laboring classes." Then, like now, the benefits of taxing imported goods remained contestable. (Fig. #2)

Donald Trump, on the other hand, has pointed to tariffs as ushering in an economic "golden age" similar to what he claims happened in the 1890s. He claimed on April 8 that, "We're making a fortune with tariffs. Two billion dollars a day." Like all things Trump, his number was widely exaggerated, but that has not deterred his echo chamber in the media from heaping praise on his policy. "He's a billionaire," said Ainsley Earhardt, of *Fox & Friends* fame last month. "He knows what he's doing." *Fox Business* anchor Maria Bartiromo called Trump's tariffs "brilliant" on April 2 and when asked about stocks said "I would be buying this market with both hands." And *Fox Channel* host Jeanine Pirro said on April 3, "I don't care about my 401(k) today. . . I believe this man." Remember these remarks later this year.



Liz Shuler
AFL-CIO President

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler understands the labor federation's historical and "strategic" approach to tariffs, arguing on April 2, 2025 "that they must be accompanied by policies that invest in our manufacturing base" along with "a strong commitment to promoting workers' fundamental right to organ-

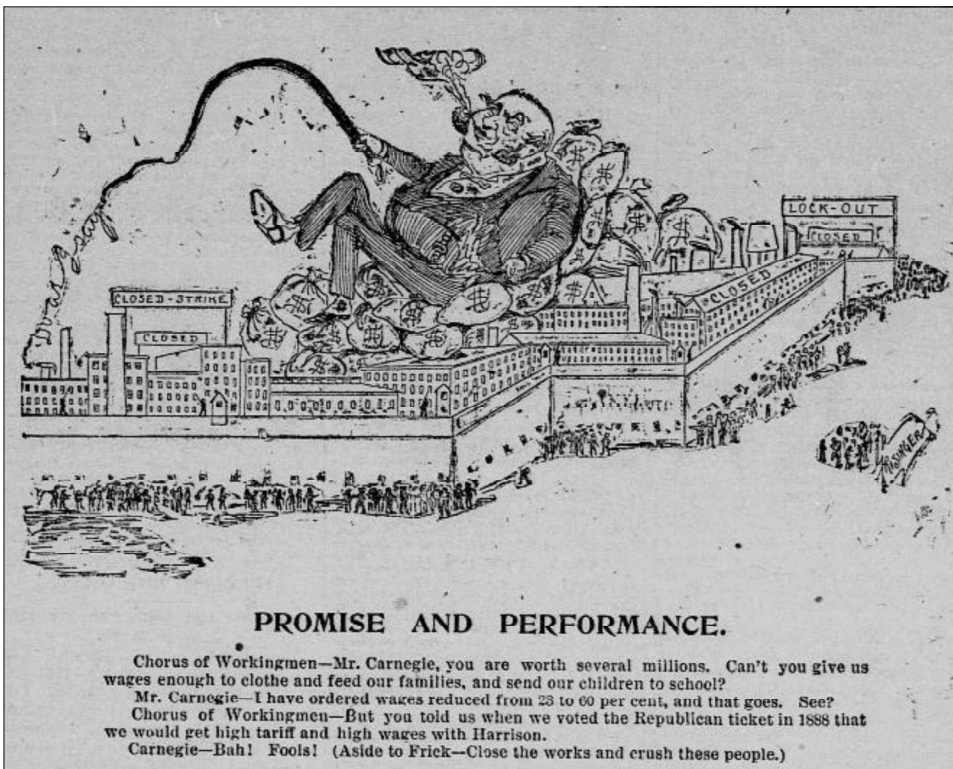


Fig. #3: Despite high tariff rates that keep out low-cost foreign steel, the accompanying 1892 political cartoon, "Promise and Performance," criticized steel magnate Andrew Carnegie and his plant superintendent Henry Clay Frick for refusing to raise wages at their Homestead, Pennsylvania plant. Historians point to the high tariff rates as an indirect cause of the violent Homestead Steel strike.

Chorus of workingmen—Mr. Carnegie, you are worth several millions. Can't you give us wages enough to clothe and feed our families, and send our children to school?

Mr. Carnegie—I have ordered wages reduced from 23 to 60 percent, and that goes. See?

Chorus of workingmen—But you told us when we voted the Republican ticket in 1888 that we would get high tariff and high wages with (President Benjamin) Harrison.

Mr. Carnegie—Bah! Fools!

Aside to Frick—Close the works and crush these people. (Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

ize trade unions and bargain collectively.” Donald Trump has permanently removed thousands of public servants from federal employment, has eroded critical investments in green technology that will provide the foundation for jobs of the future, and has gutted the federal agency responsible for discouraging the outsourcing of American jobs. His tariff’s pro-factory approach fails to prioritize “the interests of working people” and could cause “unnecessary economic pain for America’s working families.”

Even columnists writing for *The Wall Street Journal* Opinion pages agree that tariffs can cause unnecessary economic pain for America’s working families. Calling his policy “the dumbest trade war in history,” the newspaper’s editors pointed out on February 1 that tariffs are taxes, but “Mr. Trump wants American workers and employers to take one for the team. Hope you don’t lose your job or business before the golden age arrives.”

How much could the Trump Tariff Tax cost? According to an April 1 *Wall Street Journal* editorial, the tax increase could amount to \$6 trillion over a ten-year period. Most striking about Trump’s Taxes is that he thinks you won’t mind digging deeper in your pockets. “I couldn’t care less, because if the prices on foreign cars go up, they’re going to buy American cars,” he said. That shows how little Trump knows about American-made cars and trucks. An April 2, 2025 analysis by the Anderson Economic Group (AEG) noted that the president’s tariffs will cost between \$2,500 to \$5,000 for the lowest-tariffed American-made cars, which include autos with a high domestic parts content, such as the Chevy Malibu and Ford Explorer. Other vehicles, such as some Jeep, Ram and Ford Bronco Sport, may see a tariff impact of between \$5,000 and \$8,500 because many of their parts originate overseas. And American brands such as the Chevrolet Suburban, GMC Yukon and Ford Mach-e may see tariff-induced price hikes over \$12,000. AEG anticipates that auto companies will “reduce the number of models sold in the United States, shift some production to the U.S., and pass almost all tariff costs onto consumers.”

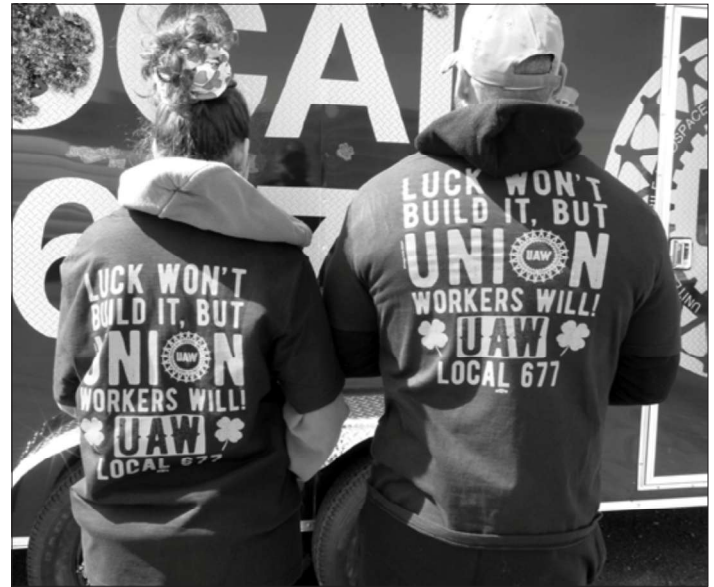
The Trump Tariff Tax will “whack Trump voters’ especially hard, wrote the *Journal* in a March 5, 2025 editorial. It warned of higher prices on electronics, energy and oil. Also expect a hit on food, as thirty percent of fruits and vegetables sold in the United States come from Mexico. After Trump declared April 2 “Liberation Day,” the *Journal* wrote in an editorial two days later that his latest tariff hikes represented “the largest tariff increase in a century.” The “bizarre, slapdash way” he “calculated the tariff rates” is expected to hurt the economy for the remainder of the year. And don’t expect the price of eggs to come down soon, either.

To avoid a severe economic downturn, the *Journal* encouraged the GOP-led Congress to pass tax-cut legislation “pronto.” The cuts would follow the outlines typically set by Republicans and their friends at the *Journal* editorial board: major tax giveaways for the wealthiest matched with gutting the social safety net. In an April 8 editorial, the editors urged the GOP to slash Medicaid by \$880 billion and do away with green subsidies that have fueled job growth in new technologies. Trump’s Tariff Tax will hurt “and Republicans should be thinking of a much bigger supply-side tax cut to offset the damage.” Two wrongs—Trump’s tariffs and tax cuts for the rich as a fix—don’t make a right, and working Americans lost their appetite for voodoo economics years ago.

Trump likes to think that his tariff tax will lead America to the golden age of the 1890s, but his recall of history is widely off the mark. That period is marked with some of the most violent labor-management conflicts in America. The benefits of high tariffs, nearly fifty percent at the time, went primarily to the steel magnate, cotton and woolen bosses. Very little of the tariff’s benefits passed to workers. (*Fig. #3*)

As Frank K. Foster reminded his fellow delegates in 1882, tariffs could never guarantee high wages for the laborer. Only workers joined together in a union are “interested in obtaining for labor a fair share of the wealth it creates.”





Hundreds of local union members marched in Allentown's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 23 (top left). Many wore their union's jackets and shirts, including (clockwise from top right) the United Auto Workers #677, the International Union of Operating Engineers #542, the Allentown Firefighters #302,) and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters #167.



Pressure mounts on Mackenzie

Is Ryan Mackenzie scared to appear in his district? His constituents visit his office every week

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council



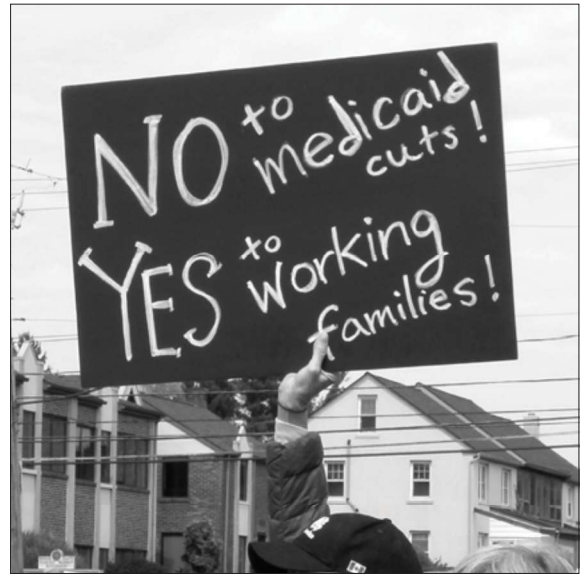
Every week, hundreds of Lehigh Valley voters have visited US Rep. Ryan Mackenzie’s office demanding answers to Donald Trump’s firing of federal workers, unleashing Elon Musk on federal agencies, and starting a global trade war that has rattled the economy.

Mackenzie hasn’t been forthcoming with answers, but now he has another reason why he may not want to meet his constituents face-to-face.

A storm of protest has swirled around Mackenzie ever since he claimed on an April 10 *CNN* Town Hall that undocumented immigrants have sparked the measles outbreak in the United States. His remarks came early in a ninety-minute program entitled “Town Hall: America Asks Congress.” He appeared on stage with three other US House members from battleground districts in a forum moderated by Jake Tapper and Kaitlin Collins, two of the network’s anchors.

Early in the program, Mackenzie defended the health and human services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has promoted eliminating fluoride from drinking water and theories linking vaccines to autism. Mackenzie then turned his attention to illegal immigration and linked it to the measles outbreaks in the country. He said:

“First of all, many of these instances that are coming into our country are from illegal immigrants who have crossed the



Hundred of Lehigh Valley voters have visited US Rep. Mackenzie’s office at 1125 South Cedar Crest Blvd. Allentown every Monday beginning at 12 noon. Voters, concerned over the direction of the country, are making their voices heard.

border with no checks, no actual health records, and they are bringing these diseases into our country.

“There is a reason why measles has started to spread in our country after decades of being almost eradicated, as you pointed out. And so I think we need to recognize that point.”

After the *CNN* forum, Mackenzie doubled down on his claim citing a measles incident at a Chicago migrant shelter in 2024. However, the federal government’s Centers for Disease Control had already reported that no link existed between the shelter and the outbreak of measles in Chicago.

Below are Mackenzie’s office locations where you can make your voice heard. Just don’t expect to see him.

District headquarters 484-781-6000
1125 South Cedar Crest Blvd.

Suite #109
Allentown, PA 18103

Northampton County office 610-333-1170
2151 Emrick Blvd.

Suite #204
Bethlehem, PA 18020

Downtown Allentown office 484-781-6932
(By appointment only, Spanish-language services available)
840 West Hamilton St.

Suite #201
Allentown, PA 18101



“ ”



“In view of the fact that God limited the intelligence of man, it seems unfair that He did not also limit his stupidity.”

Konrad Adenauer, first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 to 1963. He led his nation’s effort to restore West Germany from the destruction of the Second World War.

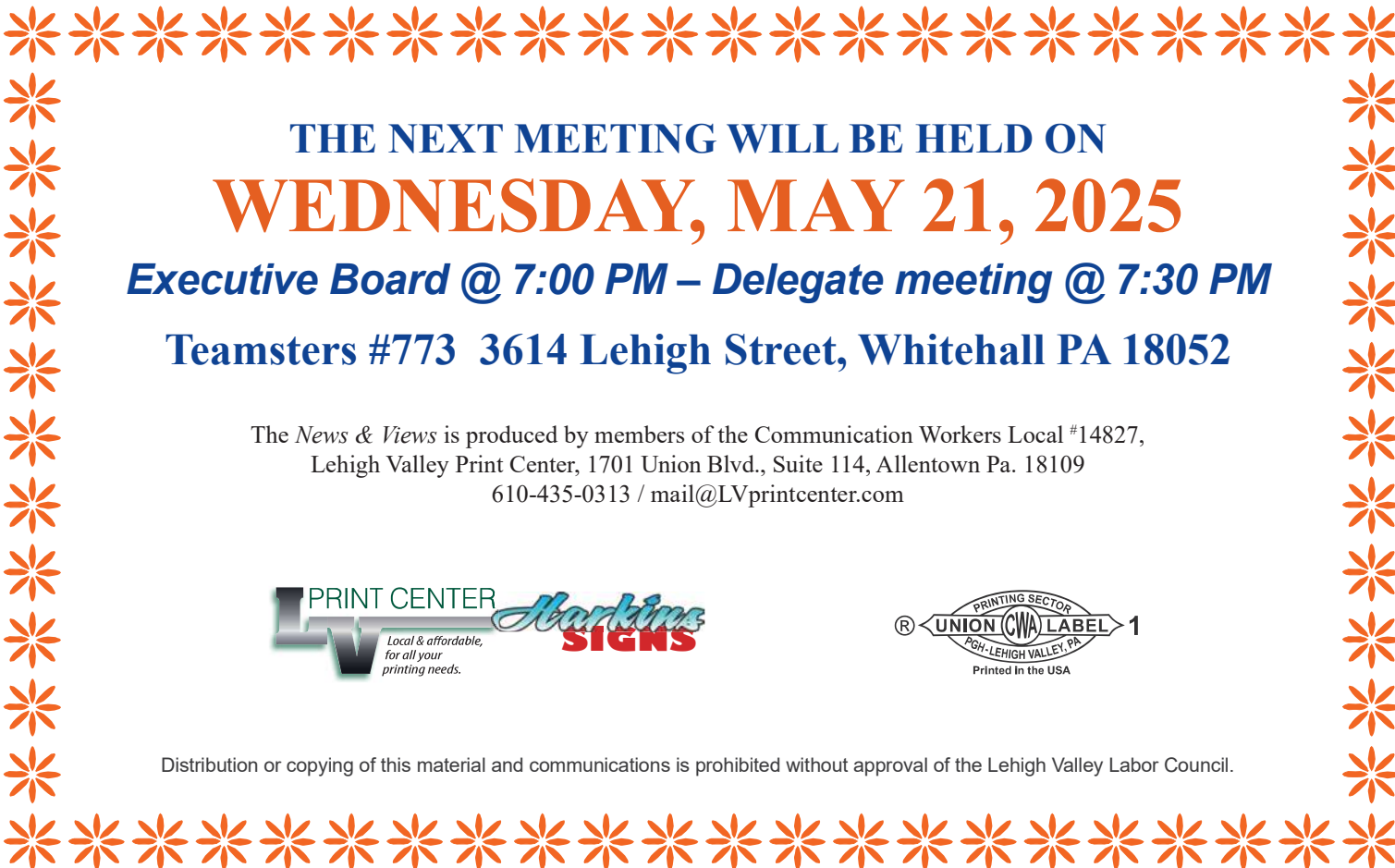


Hundred of Lehigh Valley voters have weekly visited US Rep. Mackenzie’s office at 1125 South Cedar Crest Blvd. Allentown



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THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2025

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

Teamsters #773 3614 Lehigh Street, Whitehall PA 18052

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