



NEWS & VIEWS

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

www.lehighvalleyclc.org



September 2024

The 2024 Labor Ticket

**Oct. 21, last day to register to vote: Oct. 29, last day to apply for a mail-in ballot:
Nov 5, Election Day. Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.**



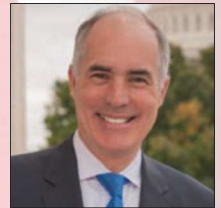
US House PA-7
Susan Wild



President
Kamala Harris



Vice-President
Tim Walz



US Senate
Bob Casey



Attorney General
Eugene DePasquale



Treasurer
Erin McClelland*



Auditor General
Malcolm Kenyatta



PA House 22nd
Joshua Siegel



PA House 131st
Meriam Sabih**



PA House 132nd
Mike Schlossberg



PA House 133rd
Jeanne McNeill



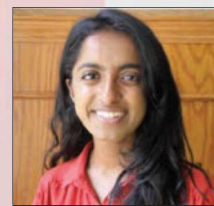
PA House 134th
Pete Schweyer



PA House 135th
Steve Samuelson



PA House 136th
Robert Freeman



PA House 137th
Anna Thomas



PA House 187th
Stefanie Rafes

(*Image credit: spotlightpa.org; **Image credit: Facebook)

AFL-CIO unanimously endorses Harris for president

July 22 Executive Council meeting supports Kamala Harris for president

by the AFL-CIO
July 22, 2024 press release



Kamala Harris
Vice-President

Following a vote of its Executive Council, which represents sixty unions and 12.5 million workers, the AFL-CIO unanimously endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris for president in the 2024 election.

“From day one, Vice-President Kamala Harris has been a true partner in leading the most pro-labor administration in history,” said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. “At every step in her distinguished career in public office, she’s proven herself a principled and tenacious fighter for working people and a visionary leader we can count on. From taking on Wall Street and corporate greed to leading efforts to expand affordable child care and support vulnerable workers, she’s shown time and again that she’s on our side. With Kamala Harris in the White House, together we’ll continue to build on the powerful legacy of the Biden-Harris administration to create good union jobs, grow the labor movement and make our economy work for all of us.”



Liz Shuler
AFL-CIO President

As vice president, Harris:

- Played a critical role in rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, investing in good-paying union jobs, bringing manufacturing back to America, lowering prescription drug costs and raising wages;
- Saved the pensions of more than 1 million union workers and retirees;
- Led the administration’s efforts to increase access to affordable child care and expand the child tax credit;
- Championed worker organizing and chaired the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, where she championed for new worker organizing and training to create pathways to good union jobs;
- Stood with striking writers.

As a US senator, she fought to expand labor protections and fair wages for agricultural and domestic workers and walked the picket line with the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) workers. She was a vigorous advocate for workers’ freedom to form or join a union, including strongly supporting the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act to reform broken labor legislation that stacks the deck against workers.

As attorney general of California, she cracked down on corporate greed, took on the big banks after the 2008 financial crisis to deliver relief for struggling homeowners and protected the most vulnerable workers by tackling wage theft and other corporate crimes.

“The AFL-CIO is proud of our early and steadfast support for the Biden-Harris administration, and now we’ll ratchet up our mass mobilization of union workers to elect Vice President Harris as president,” Shuler continued. “Like Harris, the labor movement doesn’t back down—and we’ll never shy away from a tough fight when the future of workers and unions is on the line. Together, we will defeat Donald Trump, J.D. Vance and their devastating anti-worker Project 2025 agenda in November.”



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 last Thursday of the month.

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PA AFL-CIO endorses Harris-Walz ticket “New vigor to fighting for a pro-union, pro-worker agenda,” declares President Ferritto

by the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO

On August 6, the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO committed itself to supporting Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate Governor Tim Walz this fall.



Tim Walz
Minn. Governor

“We’ve already seen how unprecedented the Biden-Harris administration’s record is on the issues facing working Americans—they have the most pro-labor, pro-worker record of any administration since FDR. We are thrilled to see Vice President Harris choose Governor Walz as her running mate,” said President Angela Ferritto, president of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO.

“On her own, Vice President Harris has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with workers and given a voice to the most vulnerable among us for her whole career. And we knew she was going to continue leading on our concerns, and today’s announcement cements that for us.

“As governor of Minnesota, Walz signed one of the most comprehensive packages of pro-worker legislation we’ve seen across the country. With the stroke of a pen, he banned unfriendly non-competes, he guaranteed Minnesotans paid sick leave, he enshrined worker protections against wage theft, and he banned captive audience meetings—among many other things. Frankly, he brings a new vigor to fighting for a pro-union, pro-worker agenda.

“I was impressed with the whole field of candidates; they were all firmly in support of our unions, and they all know that when unions are strong, America is strong. It’s incredibly encouraging to me that so many politicians are not only making space for us at the table, they’re listening to what we all need to thrive and they’re working to secure a stronger future for unions.”



Angela Ferritto
President
PA AFL-CIO



Sunday, September 1, 2024
Annual Pete DePietro Labor Day Picnic
American Club, 300 Cherry Street, Coplay
12:00 noon-5:00 p.m.

**Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Clams, Corn
Chips, Pretzels, Salads, Desserts
Draft Beer, Birch Beer, Water
Watermelon
Face Painting
Weatherproof Venue!!!**

\$20.00 per person and must be registered by August 26
\$25.00 at the door with no registration
Children 10 and under are free

Please send checks to:
Lehigh Valley Labor Council C/O Dennis Andrews
1705 Northampton St. Easton PA 18042



Dates to remember for 2024

September 1—Labor Day Picnic, American Club, 300 Cherry St., Coplay 12:00 noon—5:00 p.m.

October 21—Last Day to Register to vote in the November Election

October 29—Last Day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot

November 5—Election Day. Polls open from 7 a.m.—8 p.m.



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■ ■ ■

“It is a very poor commentary on the interest our citizens take in political affairs . . . that so many fail to register and vote when an election is pending. . . .

“If these same citizens do not approve of officials elected they are often loud in their criticisms after having done nothing to put in office men whose election would have pleased them. Not only in Bethlehem but all over the country men and women neglect their duty when it comes to politics. . . .

“We seem in this country to be air-minded, auto-minded, movie-minded, radio-minded, but not politically-minded, taken in our entirety. Why then complain at the way politics are run in the nation, state or city, if we do not do our individual bit toward realizing good government?”

Bethlehem Globe-Times, in a September 4, 1929 editorial, reminding its readers to register to vote for the upcoming election. This year, October 21 is the last day to register for the 2024 national election.



Get involved 2024 Labor Election Campaign

Want to become part of a historic election this year? Do you live in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, or Pike counties? Call or e-mail Allen Fritz, labor organizer for our region, to find out how you can help.



Allen Fritz, Zone #3 political organizer
610-621-6268
afritzwit@gmail.com

Older workers need not apply

The age-old problem of age discrimination

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council

As the twentieth century unfolded, labor union officials at a Chicago conference considered a range of longstanding issues confronting workers. Along with immigration, child labor and the eight-hour workday, they grappled in early 1902 with the issue of age discrimination on the job. Heartbreaking stories of company owners pushing older workers off their payrolls alarmed the labor leaders.

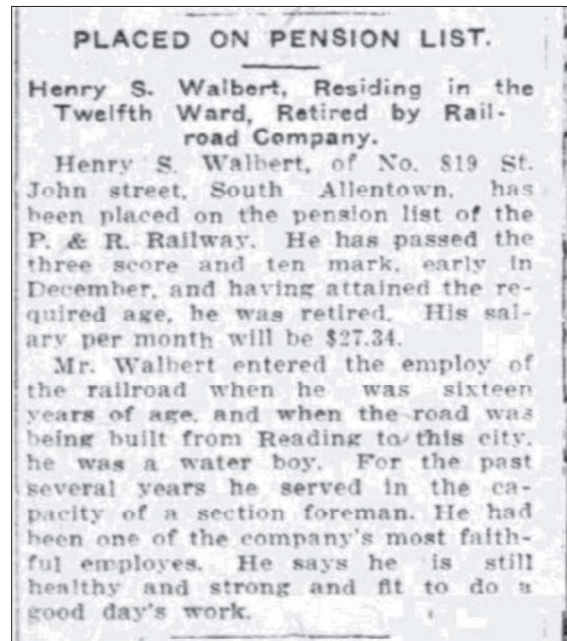
According to a February 11, 1902 *Bethlehem Globe* editorial, workers told the labor delegates “there was no place for a man to work who was past forty-five years old.” Others testified to “shaving off beards, dyeing hair that showed gray streaks (and avoiding spectacles)” to look younger. *The Globe* editor charged these employers as “cold-blooded” and “without a soul . . . entirely mechanical in behalf of money in its operations.”

The Allentown Morning Call concurred with its *Globe* counterpart. “When a man’s hair begins to turn white, it is apparently an indication that his days of usefulness are past,” noted a November 10, 1902 editorial. “No matter how worthy he may be, how faithful he may prove to his trust, the white hair and accumulation of years stand as a barrier against getting honorable employment.”

Despite the lamentations, neither newspaper’s editor offered any practical solutions. *The Globe* described the situation as “an uphill fight in the conditions that men must face.” And *The Morning Call* naively hoped that employers would “give old men a chance when they are deserving (and have) a closer adherence to the Golden Rule.”

The sentiments expressed regarding older workers during America’s Gilded Age remain in fashion among some of today’s C-suite executives and right-wing pundits. *Wall Street Journal* editorials claim a lack of a work ethic among older Americans, encouraging them to exit the work world earlier than their predecessors. The editors wrote on December 12, 2022 that the expansion of unemployment and welfare checks during the pandemic discouraged workers from seeking employment. “Anyone who wants a job can get one, but expanded transfer payments have reduced the incentive to look.” And columnist Andy Kessler wrote on November 14, 2022 that “work has become a dirty word” among millions of Americans, leading them to “slack off.”

Facts, however, paint a different picture than those found in *Wall Street Journal* opinion columns. A March 2024 New York Federal Reserve survey concluded that age discrimination on the job has increased in recent years. According to the survey, just 45.8 percent of respondents under age sixty-two said they would be likely to work past age sixty-two, a decline from 55.4 percent in March 2020 on the eve of the coronavirus pandemic. Many economists and policymakers had assumed the retirement wave during COVID-19 would recede after the economy bounced back, but the NY Fed survey suggests that the pandemic may have permanently changed the age at which workers plan to retire.



Henry S. Walbert began receiving a Philadelphia & Reading Railroad pension in 1911. He entered the employ of the PRRR as a sixteen-year-old water boy and retired over fifty years later as a section foreman. His \$27.34 a month pension is equivalent to \$930.77 in today’s dollars. Notably, he belonged to a union.

Among the largest companies in the late nineteenth century, railroads began providing pensions in the late 1800s. The railways viewed their retirement plans as a humane way to remove older, less productive employees, unable to meet the harsh demands of railroading. “It is undeniable that many of the accidents which occur are largely contributed to, if not directly caused by, the long hours of duty to which trainmen are subjected,” Edward A. Moseley, secretary of the Interstate Commerce Commission, wrote in the November 1904 *American Monthly Review of Reviews*.

Instead of reducing workday hours, however, companies refused hiring older workers. The Delaware & Hudson Railroad announced in 1904 they would not hire any man over the age of thirty-five. *The Bethlehem Globe* editor wrote on July 26 that “an employee of a railroad must (have) good hearing and good sight (and) must be able to keep awake for twenty-four or twenty-six hours at a stretch.” Railways offered pensions, not as a reward for faithful service, but as a way to rid their payrolls of older railroaders.

Today’s companies often rid their payrolls of older workers before they can attain a pension.

(Credit: Allentown Morning Call, January 27, 1911)

“Employers are not taking age discrimination seriously,” said Peter Romer-Friedman, principal and founder of Peter Romer-Friedman Law PLLC, in a February 25, 2024 *Forbes Magazine* article. “Nearly six decades after Congress prohibited age discrimination in employment, large and small employers alike seem to think that age bias is totally fine.” Company bosses, who populate *The Wall Street Journal*’s subscription list and read its opinion pages, could easily believe the blame lies entirely with older workers.

Romer-Friedman added that C-suite executives refuse to accept responsibility for their own workplaces, while “older workers are fed up with the status quo. They know their rights and have the courage to stand up to this harmful bias.”

Until recently, older workers faced hurdles when pursuing their age discrimination cases. Donald Trump had gutted the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal government's workplace civil rights watchdog, during his term in the White House. However, the Biden-Harris administration reversed the decline of the EEOC, aggressively litigating age bias in the workplace. According to HR Unlimited Inc., the Administration has already "settled several large age discrimination complaints totaling millions of dollars in fines, fees, penalties, and payments to those affected," demonstrating the administration's commitment to older workers. "Older Americans have worked their whole lives to achieve the American Dream for their families and communities," Biden announced in May and promised that he would stand firm "to ensure that every American can age with dignity and financial security that they deserve."

The Pennsylvania Railroad Company has decided to institute a retirement fund for the purpose of pensioning its employes who after a service of at least 30 years shall have reached the age of 70 years. An equitable arrangement has been made for caring for those who attain the age of 70 who have not been fully 30 years in the employ of the company. The amount of the pension is to be based on the time of service and the rate of wages received while in the employ of the company. It is estimated that this humane arrangement will cost the company in the neighborhood of \$300,000 a year. Such a thing as this cannot be too highly recommended. If a man knows that when he reaches an age when he can no longer work he will be cared for, he will do all the better for his employers in the faithfulness of his service. This is particularly the case with men employed on railroads, for the nature of their work is such that it takes all their time and attention and they cannot engage in any other outside ventures that help along so many men in other branches. But the principle is a good one to be extended to other lines of business as well. When a man has spent all his life in the service of an employer faithfully and honestly, he should not be turned out like an old horse to die when he becomes too old to work. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company in this matter has set an example that should

The Pennsylvania Railroad began pension program in August 1899. The local editor claimed its retirement plan was "humane, . . . (because a man) should not be turned out like an old horse to die when he becomes too old to work." But pensions were only available to trainmen age seventy or older, and since life expectancy barely reached fifty years in 1900, workers rarely lived long enough to claim any benefits. (*Credit: Allentown Daily Leader, August 5, 1899*)

Discriminatory attitudes toward older workers grew more entrenched after a July 13, 1904 train collision caused the death of twenty-six passengers near Chicago. The coroner's inquest blamed one of the locomotive engineers for the disaster after testimony revealed that he had been on duty more than twenty hours. Rather than calling for a reduction in workday hours, newspaper editors expected employees to adjust to inhumane schedules. A *Bethlehem Globe* editorial congratulated railways when they instituted policies after the tragedy prohibiting the hiring of workers over the age of thirty-five. "An employee of a railroad must (have) good hearing and good sight (and) must be able to keep awake for twenty-four or twenty-six hours at a stretch," physical traits that older workers do not possess, *The Globe* editor wrote. The onus belonged on older workers to "have learned in their youth some trade or profession that will secure them against displacement. . . . If a man has become useless at fifty, it proves that he could never have been useful at twenty."

Today's companies have updated the Gilded Age play-book with more sophisticated discriminatory practices against older workers. Romer-Friedman noted that companies use algorithms and digital job ads to steer job opportunities toward younger applicants and away from older prospects. Career websites of major corporations showcase twenty and thirty-year olds wearing jeans, T-shirts and hoodies.

Teresa Ghilarducci, a labor economist nationally recognized for her work on retirement security, discovered another method used to rid payrolls of older employees. As the pandemic receded into history, U.S. companies began issuing return-to-office mandates. Bosses claimed the RTO policies would boost productivity, although many workers remained unconvinced. Employees over the age of fifty were especially skeptical and expressed a desire to retire sooner if RTO mandates were implemented. According to Ghilarducci, the revelation opened the door for cutting payroll costs.

Ghilarducci discovered that surveys over the past forty years concluded that as workers aged, the most negative aspect of their job was commuting to work. "Knowing that older people don't like to commute, employers may be using the back-to-office mandate to screen out the employees they want and the ones they don't – and it's better for employers when employees quit rather than needing to fire them."

Companies often view older workers as more expensive than their young counterparts. Their wages and health care costs may be higher, and replacing them with younger and cheaper workers may help the profit margins. The RTO mandate, said Ghilarducci, proved to be "a once-in-a-lifetime chance to winnow out older workers without facing age discrimination lawsuits."

As an April 6, 2022 *Forbes Magazine* article concluded, workers did not leave their jobs voluntarily or because they lacked a work ethic during the Great Resignation. "It was the 'Great Kick Out the Door,' wrote Jack Kelly, author of the *Forbes*' article entitled "Study shows Ageism pushed older workers out of the job market during the Pandemic." The issue of age discrimination on the job will remain relevant this November as the share of adults, age fifty-five and older, holding a job has climbed over the past forty years. Rather than conceding this fact, the right-wing media casts dispersions on the work ethic of older employees.

The November 10, 1902 *Morning Call* editorial urged employers to adhere more closely "to the Golden Rule" when dealing with their older employees. The Biden-Harris administration has resuscitated an appreciation for the issues confronting older employees and recognizes the contributions they have made to the American economy.



What the media gets wrong

Coverage misleads, fails union voters

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council



Could union voters deliver the election to Donald Trump in November? Some media outlets seem to think so.

CNN reported on January 31 that Trump's efforts to win the labor vote "seem to be paying off," and the April 25 *New York Times* noted that "he has been eager to win the support of rank-and-file union members." Even *The Wall Street Journal* wrote on May 25 that "many working-class Americans feel the GOP better represents their values."

What evidence do these and other outlets offer? They claim several recent episodes suggest Trump's support among union voters: the ex-president visited the Teamsters at their Washington, D.C. headquarters for a roundtable discussion in January; he stopped at a New York City union construction site in April; and he picked Sen. JD Vance as his running mate at the Republican National Convention in July.

Peel away the photo-ops, staged events and stump speeches and another narrative emerges. Rather than appealing to working-class interests, Trump has used tactics to drive a wedge between union voters and their labor leaders who have long favored Democrats. And he has received help along the way from favorable media coverage that fails to go beyond his PR campaign or, worse, deceives its audience.

When Trump appeared before the Teamsters, they questioned him about his views on "right-to-work" legislation, a law unions have long sought to repeal. Right-to-work laws (RTW), currently legal in twenty-six states, force unions to represent workers on the shop floor even when they refuse to pay for that representation. RTW, passed in Southern and Midwestern states years ago, serve the purpose of crippling labor organizations. The Teamsters' summer edition newsletter reported that Trump thought it "was best left up to the states" to decide RTW. When President Joe Biden appeared before Teamsters officials in March, he vowed "to veto any federal right-to-work legislation." Media outlets didn't report the substance of the candidates' talks with the Teamsters. (Image)

Trump's surprise visit to a New York City construction site happened hours before his return to a Manhattan courtroom where he stood accused of falsifying business records to influence the outcome of the 2016 election. He talked briefly to a small crowd that included roughly two dozen union workers, and was later convicted on all thirty-four felony counts. Some outlets failed to mention the context of his visit and the small crowd size.

Right-wing media voiced the belief that Trump's pick of Sen. Vance proved the campaign's working-class bona fides. In a July 16 *Wall Street Journal* editorial entitled "Trump bets on a MAGA Successor," the editors claimed that Vance "has turned pro-union" and offered as evidence that he walked an United Auto Workers picket line last year. But according to the AFL-CIO's Legislative Scorecard on Washington lawmakers, Vance has never supported any labor-backed legislation. Most media outlets failed to mention Vance's dismal record on the labor federation's Legislative Scorecard. (Fig. #1 next page)

Labor Claims Big Share of Credit In Truman Win

Washington, (INS) — CIO and AFL chiefs, claiming a lion's share of credit for the Democratic victory, yesterday called President Truman's surprise triumph a mandate for repeal of the Taft-Hartley labor law.

CIO President Murray, in a congratulatory telegram to Mr. Truman, declared that "clearly the people want repeal of the hateful Taft-Hartley act."

AFL President Green expressed hope that the Democratic-controlled 81st Congress will erase the Taft-Hartley statute from the books "without delay and without quibbling."

The AFL and CIO leaders of 15 million working men and women said that the Democratic election sweep meant that labor is in politics to stay.

AFL Secretary - Treasurer George Meany described the elections as a "terrific success for union political action." Meany said:

"Labor is making no pretense of trying to run the country.

"We don't pretend to have a smooth-running, nationwide political machine. But we made a start toward a permanent political arm for the protection of American labor."

Green said that "by their votes the American people have given the next administration and the 81st Congress a mandate for progressive action . . ."

He said that by such action he meant elimination of "the anti-labor program of the past Congress, action to halt rising prices action to build millions of homes at a cost within the reach of the average family . . ."

Murray added: "Action to broaden and increase social security benefits, . . . to lift minimum wages, action — broadly speaking — to provide government with a heart, government which will devote itself to human needs."

Image: Harry Truman, Labor and the 1948 election. Union leaders called Democrat Harry Truman's "surprise triumph a mandate for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Labor Law." Passed the previous year over President Truman's veto, the Taft-Hartley Act allowed states to pass so-called "right-to-work" laws, an ironically named piece of legislation that guaranteed neither a job nor rights. Instead, the federal law allowed states to grant workers the option of not paying union dues, while forcing the union to continue providing services and representation to the "free-rider." Southern and Midwestern states quickly adopted right-to-work laws.

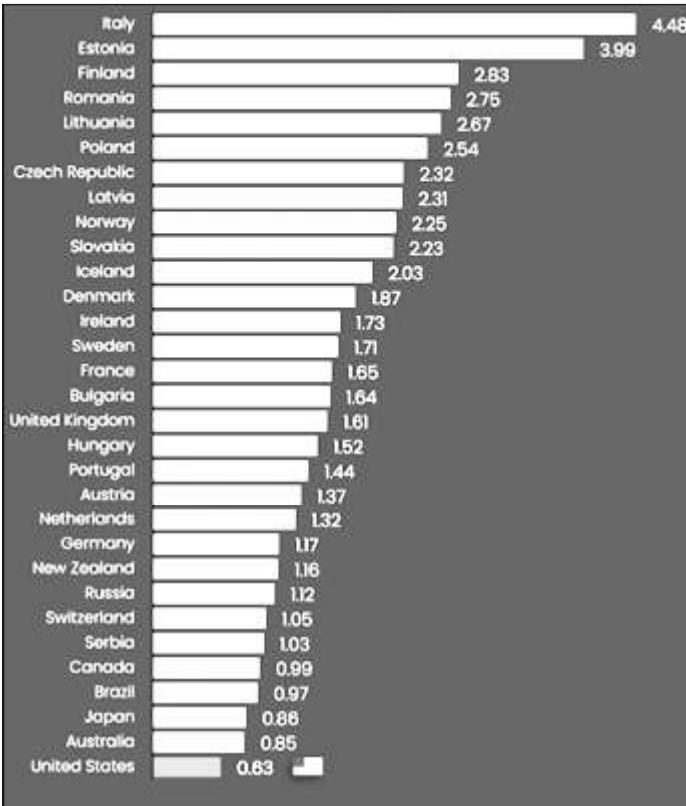
In "The Union Vote is becoming more Republican," *CNN's* Harry Enten wrote a January 31 post providing some startling statistics. Truman won union workers in 1948 by 62 points over his Republican opponent. In the 1992 election, Bill Clinton won union members by 31 points and Joe Biden's gap was narrower still when he won union voters by 22 points over Trump in 2020. When Truman won in 1948, union workers represented about thirty percent of the workforce. Today, they represent roughly ten percent. (Credit: Allentown Morning Call, November 4, 1948)

Many media voices, especially Trump-friendly personalities on television, radio and in print, have made deceptive claims of the Trump-Vance ticket's support for working people. And when not making deceptive claims about their platform, they have attempted to divide workers. They have blamed school teachers for the current condition of public education, building trades workers for our nation's crumbling infrastructure, and government employees for declining social services. All the while defunding public education, failing to invest in rebuilding our infrastructure, and tearing apart the social safety net in order to pass massive tax cuts that benefit the wealthiest Americans and corporations.

Labor leaders on the local, state and national level have not been loud enough to debunk these falsehoods, allowing them to go largely unchallenged. As a result, opinion writers and internet influencers hostile to workers and their interests have defined who union members are and what they stand for to an uninformed public and rank-and-file. It is no wonder that *New York* magazine wrote in the aftermath of the 2016 election, "Trump won because of Facebook."

Union voters, who have followed Trump and his MAGA allies over the years, know that photo-ops, staged events and stump speeches are gestures lacking meaning and support. Don't let them and their mouthpieces in the media fool you this November.





The price of a First-Class stamp remains a bargain. A US Postal Service (USPS) First-Class Forever stamp rose to 73 cents on July 14. According to a USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) report published on March 28, 2024, the USPS continues offering the best bargain among thirty peer countries.

As the chart above demonstrates, the USPS charged 63 cents for a standard domestic letter in June 2023. This represented the least expensive stamp in the OIG study after adjusting for purchasing power parity, a metric incorporating a country's productivity, economic growth, and cost of living. The utilization of purchasing power parity standardizes stamp prices against the US dollar, ensuring appropriate comparisons across a variety of economies.



First-class, one ounce letter mail rate rose to 73 cents on July 14, a bargain compared to other countries.

The USPS continues to maintain its price advantage as 2024 unfolds. At the urging of the American Postal Workers Union, National Association of Letter Carriers and others, the USPS recently announced its intent to eliminate presort discounts that they granted to large private mailers for years. These postage discounts represented corporate welfare that gutted union postal jobs and stripped the USPS of much-needed revenue. According to the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) profit-seeking private companies currently sort eighty to ninety percent of all letter mail volume. "We will continue," the APWU wrote in July 2023, "to urge postal management to shrink these corporate welfare schemes and reinvest in postal workers, the postal network, and our unrivaled ability to provide quality and affordable services to the mailing public." For more information, visit www.uspsoig.gov (Credit: USPS Office of Inspector General)



Fig. 1: AFL-CIO Legislative Scorecard

(www.aflcio.org)

Lifetime Score on labor-backed legislation

<i>US Sen. Bob Casey</i> (2006-....)	99%
<i>US Sen. Kamala Harris</i> (2016-2020)	98%
<i>US Sen. J.D. Vance</i> (2022-....)	0%
<i>US Rep. Susan Wild</i> (2018-....)	99%
<i>US Rep. Tim Walz</i> (2006-2018)	93%



Local labor leaders threw their support behind President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940. With Europe already plunged into the Second World War, voters in America faced an unprecedented decision: the election of FDR to a third term.

Union members of both the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) — rival labor federations that merged in 1955 — "reiterated (their) wholehearted support" for the Democrat's third term just days before the 1940 Election. A street parade led by a sound truck and a long caravan of decorated vehicles carried the message "Forward with Roosevelt" into many sections of Allentown. The parade's climax concluded with speeches by local labor leaders and Cornelia Pinchot, the wife of Pennsylvania Gov. Gifford Pinchot.

Local union members also "repudiated the stand taken by (CIO President) John L. Lewis," who had backed FDR's Republican opponent. Historians remain divided as to why Lewis, who had supported the president's New Deal, had switched sides, but his position in 1940 earned him the acrimony of many union members. On election day, eight-five percent of CIO members cast their ballots for FDR, prompting Lewis to resign the presidency of the CIO.

The story reminds us that union members have historically played an active role in politics and, although far from unanimous, have generally supported Democratic candidates. (Credit: Allentown Morning Call, October 30, 1940)



John L. Lewis
(Credit: Wikimedia Commons)

Union Laborites Have FDR Rally

Mrs. Gifford Pinchot and David Williams Among the Speakers

Organized labor of Allentown—members of both A.F. of L. and C.I.O. affiliates—last night reiterated its wholehearted support of Franklin D. Roosevelt's third-term bid for the Presidency and repudiated the stand taken by John L. Lewis when he called upon labor to support the Republican standard bearer.

The formal resolutions, adopted by what appeared to be the unanimous vote of the union members who packed the lodge room in the Eagles home, came as the climax to a rally at which Mrs. Gifford Pinchot, Charles Erwin of the Congress of Industrial Organization, and David Williams of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor urged a vigorous last-minute campaign to assure the re-election of the President.

The rally, sponsored by Lehigh county organized labor's committee for political action, followed a street parade in which a sound truck and a long caravan of decorated cars carried

Continued on Page 21, Column 7



Cornelia Pinchot
(Credit: US Forest Service)





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THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2024
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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