The United Worker

Volume 41, Number 4                           October-December                                                             2015

Workers’ Rights at Stake in Supreme Court Case

The labor movement is under attack by corporate interests yet again, and this time it’s up to the U.S. Supreme Court to decide whether or not to stand up for workers’ rights.

Although the Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association case includes some complexities, it boils down to this, according to the AFL-CIO: “Greedy CEOs and wealthy special interest groups want to manipulate economic rules in their favor and make it even harder for our public servants—our teachers, firefighters and nurses—to speak up together and fight for what’s good for our families. A bad decision from the Supreme Court could limit working people’s ability to negotiate better wages, benefits and working conditions. America’s economy is already out of balance. A bad decision here will make it worse.”

The Obama administration and many others have filed legal briefs supporting workers’ rights in this case. In Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, Rebecca Friedrichs, a public school teacher in Orange County, California, along with nine other teachers and a trade association filed a suit objecting to the agency fees they’re required to pay to the California Teachers Association (CTA). Friedrichs is being supported by the Koch Brothers-funded Center for Individual Rights (CIR), which was formed in 1989 to push conservative legal action in a more aggressive direction, specifically on issues of affirmative action and so-called “speech codes.”

In addition to the Koch Brothers, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, John M. Olin Foundation, F.M. Kirby Foundation, Sarah Scaife Foundation, and the Carthage Foundation have all contributed more than $1 million to the CIR. The CTA, along with the National Education Association, is defending the previous ruling made in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education in 1977, which protected the rights of unions to charge agency fees in order to better represent both members and nonmembers in a union workplace.

To help spread the message, the AFL-CIO (to which the UIW is affiliated) has joined forces with America Works Together, a coalition of working people and their allies. Together, the coalition members are exposing the truth behind this lawsuit: It’s not about collecting agency fees, it’s about CEOs trying to weaken the negotiating power of the working class.

Primarily, the lawsuit seeks to invalidate the previous ruling made in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education. If the prosecution were to fail in that, they raise a second issue which specifically targets the legality of agency fees required by law of public service employees who are not union members but still receive the same benefits as members. These fees are usually substantially less than union membership, and are used solely for representing the employees in workplace matters.

As explained by America Works Together, “Everyone can choose whether or not to join a union at work, and nothing in this case will change that. When the majority of people vote

Economy Adds 211,000 Jobs in November, Unemployment Remains at 5 Percent

The U.S. economy added 211,000 jobs in November and unemployment was 5.0%, remaining unchanged from the previous month, according to figures released December 4 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This continues the record string of months with job growth, wrote AFL-CIO journalist Jackie Tortora.

In response to the November jobs numbers, AFL-CIO chief economist William Spriggs said: “The overall job growth in November is promising, but the lack of significant manufacturing growth reflects economic uncertainty. A rate hike by the Federal Reserve, in a world where the central banks for other major currencies have been lowering their rates to boost their economies, would lead to speculation on the dollar that will make it rise and disadvantage our export sector and its related jobs.”

“The uncertainty is heightened by China’s dumping of cheap steel and aluminum in the wake of adjusting to the slowdown in the Chinese economy. Meanwhile wage growth is still not commensurate with productivity growth, contributing to the growth in inequality.”

“Economy continues.”

The U.S. economy added 211,000 jobs in November and unemployment was 5.0%, remaining unchanged from the previous month, according to figures released December 4 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). This continues the record string of months with job growth, wrote AFL-CIO journalist Jackie Tortora.

In response to the November jobs numbers, AFL-CIO chief economist William Spriggs said: “The overall job growth in November is promising, but the lack of significant manufacturing growth reflects economic uncertainty. A rate hike by the Federal Reserve, in a world where the central banks for other major currencies have been lowering their rates to boost their economies, would lead to speculation on the dollar that will make it rise and disadvantage our export sector and its related jobs.”

“The uncertainty is heightened by China’s dumping of cheap steel and aluminum in the wake of adjusting to the slowdown in the Chinese economy. Meanwhile wage growth is still not commensurate with productivity growth, contributing to the growth in inequality.”

“The Fed needs to stay focused on what is happening to real wages and workforce participation with an eye toward making sure real median wages rise with productivity,” Spriggs concluded. “Working families deserve an economy that works for all, and we will continue to work toward that goal.”

The biggest job gains were in construction (46,000), food services and drinking places (32,000) and retail (31,000).

The mining industry lost 11,000 jobs. According to BLS, other major industries saw little change in November including manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, financial activities and government.

Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rates for adult men (4.7%), adult women (4.3%), blacks (9.4%), Asians (3.9%) and Latinos (6.4%) showed little or no change in November.

See CEOs, Page 3

Happy Holidays
From the President

Working for a Bright Future

As we head into the New Year, my optimism about organized labor’s future comes from my unwavering belief in what our movement stands for: dignity in the workplace, fair treatment, protections for employees, fair wages, and decent benefits.

At the same time, we have no shortage of challenges. It’s getting harder for working families to get by, let alone get ahead. Our work has created record wealth for an economic recovery that’s being seen everywhere except in ordinary people’s wallets. It’s no stretch to say that our economic rules unfairly favor corporate CEOs and the rich because they manipulate the laws and regulations in their favor.

Outside of our movement, almost no one stands up for average Americans these days, and now there is a Supreme Court case—Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association—that threatens to make things even worse (see related story on page 1). Everyone who works should able to make ends meet, have a say about their futures and have the right to negotiate together for better wages and benefits that can sustain their families. But this case, which is being pushed by special interests and corporate CEOs, puts everything in jeopardy by attempting to destroy existing protections for hard-working families and our communities.

It deals with the rights of people who work in public service such as teachers, firefighters, nurses, and social workers. In short, the case challenges the authority of the union (California Teachers Association) and other public employee unions to collect “fair share” or agency fees from union and non-union members for costs related to negotiating and protecting workers’ benefits and working conditions.

The bottom line is this case is about weakening workers’ rights and silencing their voices. There is nothing fair about taking away those rights. For comparison, how would a homeowners association operate if half of them refused to pay dues?

Collective bargaining and the hard-earned protections of union contracts have helped form the foundation for people to work together for better public services including smaller class sizes, quicker response times during emergencies, better staffing for hospitals and more vibrant communities. It’s vital to our society.

The Friedrichs case is currently pending before the court with oral arguments scheduled for January 2016. If the plaintiffs win, dues and other fees for union members as well as non-union members will no longer be mandatory. It is my position that the U.S. Supreme Court should reject this attempt by wealthy special interests to make it ever harder for working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

Fortunately, history is on our side and I am cautiously optimistic that the justices will consider it during their deliberations. History and the experiences of working people around the world have proven that when workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively, societies enjoy shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because workers have the right to negotiate and bargain collectively, societies enjoy shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

Fortunately, history is on our side and I am cautiously optimistic that the justices will consider it during their deliberations. History and the experiences of working people around the world have proven that when workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively, societies enjoy shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

It’s vital to our society.

The Friedrichs case is currently pending before the court with oral arguments scheduled for January 2016. If the plaintiffs win, dues and other fees for union members as well as non-union members will no longer be mandatory. It is my position that the U.S. Supreme Court should reject this attempt by wealthy special interests to make it ever harder for working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

Fortunately, history is on our side and I am cautiously optimistic that the justices will consider it during their deliberations. History and the experiences of working people around the world have proven that when workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively, societies enjoy shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

It’s vital to our society.

Friedrichs case. The Obama administration is aware shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

It’s vital to our society.

Friedrichs case. The Obama administration is aware shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

It’s vital to our society.

Friedrichs case. The Obama administration is aware shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

It’s vital to our society.

Friedrichs case. The Obama administration is aware shared, sustainable prosperity. That’s not because of handouts, but because working people to come together, speak up for one another, and get ahead.

It’s vital to our society.
22 Attorneys General Unite Against Friedrichs

A coalition of 22 state attorneys general is urging the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold existing law that protects the right of public-sector unions to collect “fair share” fees from workers who do not choose to join the union but are covered by collective-bargaining agreements that benefit them, according to the United Federation of Teachers.

The high court’s decision in Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association has grave implications for organized labor throughout the country, said New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who is leading the coalition that filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case.

“This case has the potential to undermine the vital protections that unions provide in New York, Connecticut and other states,” Schneiderman said at a Nov. 15 press conference on the steps of City Hall, where he was surrounded by labor leaders and elected officials.

UFT President Michael Mulgrew said the Friedrichs case was the handiwork of right-wing operatives intent on destroying unions and the handiwork of right-wing operatives who led the coalition that filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the case.

“The Supreme Court is supposed to fix problems with the law, but this case is the law,” Mulgrew said. “It is an attack on the middle class and working people of this country. This is America. People have a right to organize and to have their voices heard.”

The 10 teachers who are plaintiffs in the case are being represented pro bono by the Center for Individual Rights, a law firm that has received millions of dollars in funding from conservative foundations.

Groups including the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation and the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice have filed friend-of-the-court briefs on behalf of the Friedrichs plaintiffs. Those groups argue that the act of collective bargaining with the government is, in itself, a political activity that violates the free speech rights of workers who do not wish to be members.

In addition to New York, the attorneys general signing onto theamicus brief hail from Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, Maryland, Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington state, Alaska and Hawaii.

UIW/SIU Headquarters Hosts Benefits Conference for all Union Employees

The Seafarers Officers & Employees Welfare Plan (SOEWP) sponsored an Employee Benefits Conference December 2 at UIW/SIU Headquarters in Camp Springs, Maryland. Hosted by UIW/SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindele, who also serves as SOEWP administrator, the conference was held in morning and afternoon sessions.

Each featured remarks from Heindele (seated far right in the photo at right) and Benefits Director Teresa Zelko (at the podium). Presentations on medical and prescription benefits were provided by CIGNA Representative Andrea Russell (seated far left) and OptumRx Representative Mark Leary (center), respectively. Among the main topics discussed during the conference were life insurance, short term disability and employee Assistance Program.

The photo above shows union members attending the afternoon session of the conference in the headquarters cafeteria. An identical forum was conducted December 1 at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland, according to Zelko. The SOEWP provides benefits to employees and officials at headquarters, Piney Point, and SIU ports.

CEOs, Special Interest Groups Launch Assault on Union Workers

Continued from Page 1

to form a union, however, the union is required by law to represent every one in the workplace, whether that employee is a union member or not. Employees who don’t want to belong to a union only have to contribute to the costs of the representation they receive. As all public employees enjoy the benefits, job security and other protections the union negotiates, it is only fair that all employees contribute to the cost of securing those benefits and protections.”

The members of the coalition are using the strength of their numbers to stand up for the rights of workers. The potentially far-reaching effects of a Supreme Court ruling makes this attack on the negotiating power of working men and women even more critical to defeat. By standing together, they hope to counteract the negative voices that are concealing their real agenda behind this case.

According to a spokesperson for America Works Together, “Everyday Americans are working more than ever before. Our work has created record wealth for an economic recovery that’s been everywhere but ordinary peoples’ wallets. Our economic rules unfairly favor corporate CEOs and the rich because they manipulate the rules in their favor. Almost no one stands up for average Americans these days, and now this Supreme Court case threatens to make it even worse.”

As the coalition states, “The best way for working people to get ahead is to work hard and band together with others to win better wages and benefits that can sustain their families and win improvements on the job to make their work more effective. This case is just the latest tactic by the same wealthy special interests which have been attacking working people for decades.”

No decisions were made on this issue in the lower courts. Lawyers for the plaintiffs acknowledged that their lawsuit hinged on having the Supreme Court reverse its prior Abood decision and so asked lower courts to expedite their rulings so they could quickly appeal to the Supreme Court. California Attorney General Kamala Harris argued the lack of a record showing the teachers were harmed was one reason the Supreme Court should not have taken the case.

The Supreme Court is supposed to hear arguments on January 11, 2016, with the opinion of the court and the official vote to follow.
Ten individuals participated in the 2015 Halloween Contest at UIW/SIU headquarters in Camp Springs, Maryland. Included were: (above, from left to right) Teresa Zelko, witch; Anneliese Sonon, black kitty; Sandy McDonald, pumpkin head; Shelia Davis, spider woman; Kecia Matthews, web; Tanzi Crayton, wicked witch of the Southeast; Jenny Oliver, spider queen; Pamela Harris-Dutrow, spider; Suzanne Hildebrandt, masquerade princess; and LeeTonja Scott, Frankie’s girl.

Top finishers during the UIW/SIU headquarters Halloween Contest were: first place, Suzanne Hildebrandt, masquerade princess (center); second place, LeeTonja Scott, Frankie’s girl (right); and third place, Jenny Oliver, spider queen, (left).

Halloween Costume Contest Brings Out Strange Beings

Nearly 20 union members at UIW/SIU headquarters in Camp Springs Maryland, and the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education (PHC) in Piney Point, Maryland, adorned themselves in a variety of outfits Oct. 30 to compete in annual Halloween Costume Contests at both locations.

Contestants dressed themselves in their finest and most imaginative getups in hopes of laying claim to one of three top prizes that would be awarded at each contest location. As in years past, this year’s event produced some real marvels. Contestants at both locales went to great lengths brainstorming, designing and bringing their creations to life. As evidenced by the photos appearing on this page, each of the competitors was highly imaginative in their costume designs; some really pushed the creativity envelope.

When all was said and done, it was Suzanne Hildebrandt walking off with first place honors at UIW/SIU headquarters for her rendition of “masquerade princess.” Claiming second place was LeeTonja Scott who thrilled onlookers with her version of “Frankie’s girl.” Rounding out the costume winners at UIW/SIU headquarters was Jenny Oliver for her version of “spider queen.”

The Member Assistance Program landed honors for the best Halloween decorated work area at UIW/SIU headquarters while Christine Alexander won the candy corn in a jar guess contest.

In the PHC competition, Becky Howe took top honors for her superb rendering of “scarecrow.” She was followed by Jenell Gandy who dressed out as “sea anemone with Nemo.” The third place winner was Pat Benoit Norris who showed up as the undisputed and very authoritative “king of claims.”

Winners in both contests were awarded gift cards for various amounts in recognition of their achievements. Organizers hailed both events as overwhelming successes.

The top finishers in the Piney Point competition were Becky Howe, scarecrow (right); Jenell Grandy, sea anemone (center); and Pat Benoit Norris, king of claims.

Pictured in the photo above are contestants from the Piney Point contest. Standing (from left) are: Minette Clark, Energizer Bunny; Kim Greenwell, masquerade girl; Pat Benoit Norris, king of claims; Becky Howe, scarecrow; Jenell Gandy, sea anemone; Kristen Knoukey, Star Trek trekkie; Tushima Clayton, Geisha girl; and Kayla Walters and Samantha Green who teamed up as teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Also pictured (directly behind the Geisha girl) but blocked out in this shot was Heather Peterson, crazy cat lady.
Scholarships

Helping union families realize their dreams

Going back to school? Sending your children to college? Learn more about the scholarship opportunities available to you as a union member. Union Plus supports working families by providing $150,000 annually in scholarships to help you focus on your studies instead of your tuition bill.

Who may apply:
Current and retired participating union members, their spouses and their dependent children.

What kind of school is eligible:
The scholarship is open to students who attend or plan to attend a U.S. college, university, community college, or a technical/trade school. Students attending undergraduate or graduate schools are eligible.

Scholarship amounts:
Recipients will receive $500 to $4,000.

Deadline to apply:
January 31, 12 p.m. (noon), Eastern Time

Recipients announced: May 31

Union Plus also offers:
• Discounts on college test prep from The Princeton Review
• College planning tools and guides
• Computer discounts through Dell and HP
• Discounts on textbooks

Details and online application available at:
UnionPlus.org/Scholarships
Notice to Employees Covered by Union Membership Agreements Regulated Under the National Labor Relations Act

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRA) guarantees certain rights to union members and imposes certain responsibilities on union officers. The Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) enforces many LMRA provisions while other provisions, such as the bill of rights, may only be enforced by union members through private suit in Federal court.

Union Members' Rights

- **Bill of Rights:** Union Members Have:
  - Equal rights to participate in union activities.
  - Protection from unlawful searches.
  - Voice in setting rules of dues, fees and assessments.

- **Protection of the right to sue:**
  - Safeguards against improper discipline.
  - Copies of Collective Bargaining Agreements: Union members and nonunion employees have the right to receive or inspect copies of collective bargaining agreements.

- **Provision for an initial information report:** Union members are required to file an initial information report (Form LM-1), copies of constitutions, and bylaws, and an annual financial report (Form LM-2/3/4) with OLMS. Unions must make the reports available to members and permit members to examine supporting records for just cause. The reports are public information and copies are available from OLMS.

Officer Elections: Union Officers Have The Right to:

- Nominate candidates for office.
- Run for office.
- Convene meetings of the union.
- Protect the conduct of an election.

- **Local union members have the right to an adequate procedure for the removal of an elective officer guilty of serious misconduct.**

- **Trusteeships:** Unions may only be placed in trusteeship for a past year for the reasons specified in the LMRA.

- **Prohibition Against Certain Discrimination:** A union or its officers may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

- **Prohibition Against Violence:** No one may use or threaten the use of force or violence to interfere with an employee's membership in a labor organization.

- **Union Officers Responsibilities:**
  - **Financial Safeguards:** Union officers have a duty to manage the funds and property of the union solely for the benefit of the union and its members in accordance with the union's constitution and bylaws. Union officers or employees who misuse or steal union funds or other assets must be held to commit a federal crime punishable by a fine and/ or imprisonment.

- **Bonding:** Union officers or employees who handle union funds or property must be bonded to provide protection against losses if their union has property and annual financial reports which exceed $5,000.

Labor Organization Reports: Unions Must:

- File an initial information report (Form LM-1) and annual financial reports (Form LM-2/3/4) with OLMS.
- Return the reports necessary to verify the reports for at least the last five years.

Officer Reports:

- Union officers and employees must file reports concerning any loans and benefits received from, or certain financial interests in, employers whose employees their union represents and businesses that do their union's business.

Union Officers: Unions Must:

- Hold elections of officers of local unions by secret ballot at least every two years.
- Conduct regular elections in accordance with the constitution and bylaws and preserve all records of the election.
- Mail a notice of election to every member at least 15 days prior to the election.
- Comply with a candidate's request to distribute campaign material.
- Not use union funds or resources to promote any candidate (nor may employer funds or resources be used in support of candidates).
- Permit candidates to have election observers.
- Allow candidates to inspect the union's membership list once within 30 days prior to the election.

Restrictions on Holding Office: A person convicted of certain crimes may not serve as an officer, employee, or other representative of a union for a period of five years.

Learn: A union may not have outstanding loans to any one officer or employer that in total exceed $20,000 at any time.

Tax: A union may not pay the tax of any officer or employer unless it is excused by the Internal Revenue Service because of any willful violation of the LMRA.

Note: The above is only a summary of the LMRA. Full text of the Act, which comprises Sections 401-531 of Title 29 of the United States Code, may be found in many public libraries and in the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, Office of Labor-Management Standards, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Room N-5618, Washington, DC 20001, or on the internet at www.dol.gov.
Robust Business Creation in Missouri Further Exposes So-Called Right-to-Work

Editor’s note: This article first appeared in the St. Louis Labor Tribune. It was written by Tim Rowden, the publisher’s editor, and also was circulated by Press Associates, Inc.

According to the data compiled by corporate creators of so-called “right-to-work” laws, RTW is supposed to be good for business creation because, though the company titans won’t say it, RTW boosts business creation by cutting wages. But somebody forgot to tell businessness in Missouri. Leading up to legislation defeat of RTW this year, the Show Me State led the nation in business creation. The data, from the Census Bureau, show that in 2013, the latest full-year statistics available, fewer businesses were created (nationwide) that year compared to 2012. But Missouri jumped 14.7 percent in business creation. Even the 10 other states with increases lagged far behind.

Kentucky finished second with a 6 percent increase in business creation. Kentucky is also not a RTW state. But its newly elected right wing Republican governor has put changing that status atop his agenda. Statistics show that RTW states consistently produce lower pay – thousands of dollars per year per worker – and fewer protections for workers. But business interests tout their pro-business campaigns by saying RTW creates new businesses, which in turn create jobs. The data, released by the U.S. Census Bureau and analyzed by the Kauffman Foundation, show there were 1,293 more businesses created in Missouri in 2013, than were available, than in 2012. Missouri had 7,759 new businesses in 2012, and that number swelled to 9,052 in 2013. All states created more businesses but only 11 states reported increases in new business creation in 2013, compared to 2012. Only three right-to-work states – Nevada, Arizona and Mississippi – saw any kind of new business growth. Mississippi and Arizona grew less than half a percentage point, while Nevada, at 4.25 percent, led Nevada. The other eight growing states, led by Missouri and Kentucky, were non-RTW.

“Business is created through innovation and workers earning a decent wage, which they can then invest in the economy. He added: “Because of Missouri organized labor, there is a well-trained work force and a good future that is ready willing and able.”

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, who vetoed the business-passed RTW legislation in 2012, hailed the findings. The legislature’s Democratic minority were joined by produce Republicans to uphold his veto on Sept. 16.

“Small businesses are the engines of our economy, and that’s why we’ve worked hard to help entrepreneurs turn cutting-edge ideas into high-paying jobs for Missourians,” Nixon said in a statement.

“This report – showing Missouri is not only bucking the national trend, but leading the country in new business creation – is in proof positive for our efforts are paying off in a big way.”

While Missouri, Kentucky and six other non-RTW states grew, over the same time period, 39 states saw a decrease in new business creation. Of the states that did see an increase in the number of new businesses, Missouri outperformed them dramatically – experiencing a bigger growth in new business creation than all 10 of those states, including the three RTW states on the growth list, combined. The news comes as Missouri ranked in the top 10 – first for the first time – for startup funding in 2015, according to Forbes. This, despite Republican legislators’ claims that a right-to-work law is needed to grow the state’s economy.

Right-to-work doesn’t grow the economy, it depresses wages, meaning consumers have less buying power and are less likely to support new businesses. The fiscal 2016 budget Nixon signed includes nearly $16 million for programs at the Missouri Technology Corporation, a public-private partnership promoting entrepreneurship. The partnership was created in 1994 to promote entrepreneurship and foster the growth of high-tech companies, but was significantly underfunded until Nixon took office.

Under Nixon’s leadership, MTC has provided more than $24 million to 79 start-ups, helping those companies lever- age $200 million in private capital to commercialize their products and services, create jobs and grow.

The number of workers who died on the job in the United States rose 2 percent last year, according to new data released by the Labor Department. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 4,679 fatal work injuries last year, up from 4,587 in 2012. The preliminary data, released last fall, will be finalized at a later date; the number of deaths is typically revised upward. Despite the higher number of deaths, the rate at which workers died on the job was essentially unchanged from the previous year, at 3.3 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers. That’s because U.S. work-related logging more hours in the improved economy.

In a statement, Labor Secretary Tom Perez said that the rate at which workers die is still much too high.

“Far too many people are still killed on the job – 13 workers every day taken from their families tragically and unnecessarily,” Perez said. “These numbers underscore the urgent need for employers to provide a safe workplace for their employees as the law requires.”

The number of workers who died on the job in the United States rose 2 percent last year, according to new data released by the Labor Department. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 4,679 fatal work injuries last year, up from 4,587 in 2012. The preliminary data, released last fall, will be finalized at a later date; the number of deaths is typically revised upward. Despite the higher number of deaths, the rate at which workers died on the job was essentially unchanged from the previous year, at 3.3 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers. That’s because U.S. work-related logging more hours in the improved economy.

In a statement, Labor Secretary Tom Perez said that the rate at which workers die is still much too high.

“Far too many people are still killed on the job – 13 workers every day taken from their families tragically and unnecessarily,” Perez said. “These numbers underscore the urgent need for employers to provide a safe workplace for their employees as the law requires.”

GLUIDILLO FIGUEROA

GLADYS HARRIS
Pensioner Gladys Harris, 72, passed away June 25. Sister Harris donned the union colors in 1975 while working at Dixie Manufacturing Co. Born in Virginia, she began receiving compensation for her retirement in 2005. Sister Harris lived in Norfolk, Virginia.

DOUGLAS KLEIN

LOUIS LIZARDO
Pensioner Louis Lizardo, 84, died September 25. Brother Lizardo signed on with the union in 1959 while employed at Paulsen Wire Rope. A native of New Jersey, he started receiving compensation for his retirement in 1996. Brother Lizardo was a resident of Middleburg, Pennsylvania.

WILLIE MCDONALD
Pensioner Willie McDonald, 81, passed away August 1. He received under the union umbrella in 1967 while employed at Container Recyclers, LTD. Born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Brother McDonald began collecting retirement st- pends in 2003. He lived in Philadelphia.

LEROY OTTO

LARRY SADLER
Pensioner Larry Sadler, 64, passed away August 6. A native of Coleman, Texas, Brother Sadler signed on with the UIW in 1978 and spent his entire career as an employee of Crowns Cork and Seal. Brother Sadler went on pension in 2010 and made his home in Tuscola, Texas.

WILBERT WHITLEY
Pensioner Wilbert Whitely, 69, died August 23. Brother Whitely donned the UIW colors in 1970 while working at the F.M. Stevenson Co. Born in Maryland, Brother Whitley started receiving compensation for his retirement in 1994. He was a resi- dent of Baltimore.

ROBERT ZIMMERMAN

Pablo Aviles Victory Refrigeration Pennsauken, N.J.
Barbara Bernotas A&E Products Coal Township, Pennsylvania
Saturnino Bolanos Crown Cork & Seal Abilen, Texas
Lynda Gonzales Crown Cork & Seal Abilene, Texas
Robert Haller Progressive Driver Services Waverly, Ohio
Barry Hand Victory Refrigeration Elmire, New Jersey
Judy Harris Armaly Brands Franklin International Columbus, Ohio
John Di Perri Victory Refrigeration Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Humberto Almaraz Ponce La Victoria Riverside, California
Donna Reese A&E Products Ringtown, Pennsylvania
Fujiko Robinson East Wind Industries Newark, Delaware
Fortino Romero Del Monte Corporation Sun Pedro, California
Herminio Rosado American Carting Bronx, New York
Steve Webb Crown Cork & Seal Abilene, Texas
Wille Whitmore Plymouth, Inc. Newport News, Virginia

Gone But Not Forgotten

Pablo Aviles Victory Refrigeration Pennsauken, N.J.
Barbara Bernotas A&E Products Coal Township, Pennsylvania
Saturnino Bolanos Crown Cork & Seal Abilen, Texas
Lynda Gonzales Crown Cork & Seal Abilene, Texas
Robert Haller Progressive Driver Services Waverly, Ohio
Barry Hand Victory Refrigeration Elmire, New Jersey
Judy Harris Armaly Brands Franklin International Columbus, Ohio
John Di Perri Victory Refrigeration Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Humberto Almaraz Ponce La Victoria Riverside, California
Donna Reese A&E Products Ringtown, Pennsylvania
Fujiko Robinson East Wind Industries Newark, Delaware
Fortino Romero Del Monte Corporation Sun Pedro, California
Herminio Rosado American Carting Bronx, New York
Steve Webb Crown Cork & Seal Abilene, Texas
Wille Whitmore Plymouth, Inc. Newport News, Virginia
The United Worker

12/16/2015  6:16:24 AM

Even Football Super Stars Benefit from Unions

Editor’s note: The following article appeared in the November 10 e-edition of the Providence Journal. It was written by George Nee, president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO.

Last Thursday [September 17, 2015], Tom Brady was able to lead the New England Patriots onto the field against the Pittsburgh Steelers because he is a member of a union: the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA). We are proud of the fact that Brady and the other 51 members of the New England Patriots Chapter are affiliated with the Rhode Island AFL-CIO.

Amp the pomp and circumstance of the Patriots raising their fourth Super Bowl banner over Gillette Stadium, one could be pardoned for thinking that this was football as usual in New England. However, the past several months have been Brady’s season of discontent, which mercifully came to an end when a federal judge in New York overturned NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell’s four-game “DeFaultate” suspension. Thanks to the protections provided by the NFLPA contract, Brady took the field as the starting quarterback for the New England Patriots, just as he has every season since 2002.

Since Brady is a member of the NFLPA, he plays under the NFL and the union’s collectively bargained contract, which lays out work rules, pay and benefits, health and safety regulations and – most importantly for Patriots fans – disciplinary measures and due process.

There are many occupations where workers are represented by a union, and all are afforded rights that provide for good wages and benefits, safe working conditions, and a voice on the job. Many people regard construction workers, teachers and school support staff, state and municipal workers, truck and bus drivers, nurses and allied health care workers, and grocery store workers as traditional union members.

Today’s labor movement is much more diverse and varied than it once was. The union ranks include scientists, engineers, reporters, airline pilots, doctors and, yes, even professional athletes who are protected by a union, just as traditional union workers are.

Workers who are not covered by a union contract are considered to be “at will” employees who can be disciplined or even fired at the whim of their boss with no recourse or due process. If the four-game suspension had been allowed to stand, Brady would have suffered a 25 percent pay cut, costing him millions of dollars in salary and performance bonuses.

Yes, Brady is a highly paid professional athlete, but his livelihood was still jeopardized because of an autocratic and vindictive boss. To put the suspension into perspective, imagine if an average Rhode Islander earning $48,838 were to be treated the same as Brady. He or she would be barred from going to work and providing for his or her family for 13 weeks, costing more than $12,000 in salary.

If you have a Roger Goodell in your workplace, you can stand up to him and do what Tom Brady and millions of other American workers have done and join a union. Having a union provides workers with a voice on the job, dignity on the job and respect on the job, as well as a path to the middle class.

As President Obama said at a Labor Day breakfast in Boston: “Even Brady’s happy he’s got a union. They had his back. You know if Brady needs a union, we definitely need unions.”

Union Employees Receive Influenza Shots

Workers Post Varied Wins

Workers across the country have stood up in the past months to win better wages and working conditions. According to the AFL-CIO, the following victories recently have been registered:

**UAW Members Ratify Contracts with Detroit’s Big Three:** In the past two months, workers at General Motors Co., Ford Motor Co. and Fiat Chrysler have ratified new contracts. The contracts, representing some 420,000 American workers, give autoworkers better pay, better benefits and bonuses.

**Phoenix Airport Fueling Agents Join the IAM:** More than 120 fueling agents at Swissport in Phoenix voted to unionize as a part of the Machinists. The workers chose to unionize over concerns with substandard wages, working conditions and the security of their jobs. Their collective action comes after a strong anti-union campaign.

**Broadcast Workers Win First Contract:** Workers at the Big Ten Network ratified their first college sports network union contract with the Theatrical Stage Employees. About 125 local freelance broadcast workers will receive pay increases, health benefits and annuity contributions as a part of their first contract.

**B&H Workers Vote to Unionize:** Employees at the biggest non-chain photo store in the United States, B&H, joined the United Steelworkers, by an overwhelming 200-88 margin. The workers sought to form a union after complaining about unsafe working conditions and harassment issues.

**AFGE Organizes Five Union Elections:** AFGE welcomed new members from four different government agencies. These included 475 professional employees at the San Diego Veterans Affairs hospital, 200 physicians and dentists in Phoenix, five U.S. Environmental Protection Agency employees in Dallas, 37 guards at Fort Meade, Maryland, and 25 vocational rehab counselors at the VA in San Diego.

**Media Publishing Employees Unionize for Fair Representation:** Al Jazeera America employees unionized for representation and job security, after management originally fought the organizing efforts. This organizing effort follows suits from several digital publications whose workers chose to unionize in 2015. The Al Jazeera digital journalists will be represented by the Communications Workers of America.

Affordable Care Act Requires Health Plans to Report Coverage to IRS

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), most legal residents of the United States are required to have health insurance, or pay a tax penalty. In order to document this health coverage, employers and health insurers are required to report to the IRS about the health insurance that they are providing.

Beginning next year, health plans (including those that cover UIW members and their dependents) will be required to submit annual reports to the IRS and to all respective plan participants, listing all individuals in the family who were eligible for coverage and the months that they were eligible.

For UIW members and others who were eligible for health benefits in 2015, this report will provide proof to the IRS that you received health coverage that meets the requirements of the ACA. Under the law, this is called “minimum essential coverage.”

You should expect to receive a document from your health plan by February 1, 2016 called the Form 1095-B. This document will contain information about the health plan and will list you and the names and Social Security numbers or ITINs of the members of your family that were eligible for health coverage during 2015. You should keep this document as you will need it when you file your