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Seafarers Jump to Action in The Philippines *Government Services Ships Part of Post-Typhoon Relief Effort*

Seafarers are answering the call to action following the devastation brought to the Philippines by Typhoon Haiyan.

With thousands dead, millions displaced and infrastructure in many places destroyed, the need for relief has been enormous. Heeding that call, the SIU, its members and its international partners have mobilized to do their part in helping the country recover from the second-deadliest storm in its history.

In the days following the storm, which made landfall Nov. 8, several SIU-crewed ships were activated and dispatched to the region to provide emergency supplies, medical services and housing. Stateside, the SIU activated and began soliciting donations for the Seafarers Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) to help financially with what is expected to be a daunting recovery. Individual members, meanwhile, pitched in on a personal basis, with at least two crews holding a relief fundraiser for victims of the storm.

The SIU also teamed with the affiliated International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and other international partners to provide further relief and ensure the donated funds make their way to mariners and their families.

When it came to the at-sea relief effort, several SIU-crewed ships sailed with the U.S. Navy's George Washington Carrier Strike Group (GWSG) – an assembly of vessels sent to support the Third Marine Expeditionary Brigade in assisting the Philippine government. The SIU ships participating included the *USNS Bowditch*, the *USNS Charles Drew* and the *Emory S. Land*. The *Bowditch* is operated by Maersk Line, Limited, while the latter two vessels are part of the SIU Government Services Division fleet.

"We have the ships conducting a variety of missions," said Rear Adm. Mark Montgomery, who serves as GWSG commander. "The *USNS Bowditch* is surveying water conditions in the Leyte Gulf. *USNS Charles Drew* and *USS Lassen* have helicopters and supplies that are bringing emergency supplies into Tachoban, one of the worst-hit areas. *Emory S. Land* also provides good ship-to-shore hotel services to Tachoban."

The SIU-crewed hospital ship *USNS Mercy* was also activated for service in the aftermath of the storm.



The *USS Emory S. Land* transits alongside the *USNS Charles Drew* during a fueling-at-sea in support of the Philippines disaster relief effort. Both are MSC vessels crewed with SIU CIVMARS. (Photo courtesy the U.S. Navy)

Berthed in San Diego, the *Mercy* has already spent time working in the area during a mission in 2012.

"Because of the long-standing partnership between the two nations, the U.S., working through the Philippine government, is able to rapidly respond with critically needed capabilities and supplies in times of crisis," read a news release issued by the U.S. Navy regarding the activation of the *Mercy*.

Amid all of this, the SIU crews of the *USNS 2nd Lt. John Paul Bobo* (operated by Maersk) and *USNS Pili-laau* (operated by AMSEA) also made the trip to the Philippines for disaster relief.

On the financial front, the SIU's decision to activate the SDRF allowed those who weren't traveling to the region to do their part in the relief effort. Designed to aid devastated mariners and their families, the fund is activated following disasters around the world and has helped thousands of people get back on their feet.

The crew aboard one SIU vessel – the Maersk-operated *USNS Henson* – took it upon themselves to start raising money immediately. AB **David Arcilla** said the crew of the *Henson* knew right away they wanted to help

victims of the storm. "The real reward for us is being able to alleviate some of the suffering and comfort others in their time of need," Arcilla said.

The generosity was greatly appreciated. In a heartfelt message to the SIU and its members, Dr. Conrad Oca, president of the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines, said he was touched by the "genuine concern for our less fortunate brothers and sisters who have become helpless victims" of the storm.

"SIUNA's donation will certainly go a long way towards helping our needy and suffering countrymen in Central Philippines," Oca said, speaking not only of the Henson effort but also that involving the SDRF. "The kindness and concern you have shown are very reassuring for our people and speaks well of the convictions and principles you stand for."

The SIU and the U.S. Merchant Marine have a long history of responding to such disasters. From stateside emergencies like Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Katrina, to international disasters like the Japanese tsunami and the current devastation of Typhoon Haiyan, SIU crews have helped with recovery all over the world.

NOAA Raises Pay

For the first time in several years, SIU members working for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are seeing a larger dollar amount on their paychecks.

Set for implementation in Fiscal Year 2014, the pay increase means all mariners in the Class II pay scale will receive higher wages for the first time since 2010. The pay increase approved by NOAA affects third mate and above, third assistant engineer and above, chief bosun, bosun group leader/lead fisherman, chief survey tech, chief steward and chief cook.

"We're really happy for the members," said SIU Government Fleet Representative Kate Hunt. "In these tough economic and budgetary times, it's good to see their work recognized. It's an acknowledgement of their efforts."

In announcing the pay increase, NOAA Director of Marine Operations Eric Berkowitz described raising mariner wages as a "top priority" of NOAA and its leadership.

This news comes following a difficult period of time for federal workers throughout the country. Since 2010, workers have been under a government-wide pay freeze that kept their wages stagnant, while budget cuts and other reductions have led to workers being forced to take unpaid furlough days.

A modest increase in federal wages was proposed by President Barack Obama in August. A provision that ensured the increase would happen was attached to the October bill that reopened the federal government after it was shut down for two weeks during a budget impasse between Congress and the administration.

Federal Workers Get Tips for Navigating Country's Uncertain Financial Climate

These are confusing and uncertain financial times for federal workers. Fresh off a 16-day government shutdown during which millions didn't know when their next paycheck would arrive, federal workers have also had to deal with forced unpaid furlough days and a pay freeze for the majority of the workforce that is approaching its fourth year.

As Congress and the administration continue to spar over budget issues, it is likely this uncertainty will remain. That means there's also a good chance that federal workers could face another

round of furlough-inducing budget cuts and the possibility of yet another government shutdown if Washington continues to be mired in partisan gridlock.

But just because there's uncertainty, it doesn't mean there's nothing workers can do to plan and prepare.

In a piece published by *Government Executive*, Tammy Flanagan, senior benefits director for the National Institute of Transition Planning, wrote about how workers can navigate the current financial waters. Her organization,

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President's Column

Answering the Call Again

Not long after Typhoon Haiyan devastated much of the Philippines, Seafarers did what we always do in such situations. We jumped into action, lending assistance both on the job and as volunteers.

As of this writing in mid-November, at least a half-dozen SIU-crewed ships had mobilized for the relief mission, both from the private sector and from our Government Services Division. We have activated our Seafarers Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) and are working with our international maritime labor partners to make sure the donations specifically go to mariners and their families from the Philippines. I also know of at least one SIU-crewed ship that immediately took up its own collection for the relief effort even before we announced the SDRF activation.



Michael Sacco

I definitely want to thank all of our federal mariners who are pitching in for what promises to be a very long, difficult and complex mission. Our members and our contracted operators will do whatever we can for as long as it takes to get the job done.

But the main reason I'm writing about it is the timing. I find it very ironic that Seafarers once again are answering the nation's call at a time when people in Congress and the administration act as if our industry doesn't matter. The attacks on our industry and the key government programs that sustain it are as aggressive as ever.

At times, I wonder if anyone in the nation's capital has put two and two together, and realized that if the U.S. Merchant Marine or our government-owned and operated vessels goes away, there won't be enough resources for America to respond to a natural disaster like the one in the Philippines. If we go away, our men and women in uniform will be at the mercy of foreign-flag vessels when it comes to delivering their life-sustaining cargo. If we go away, our economy will take a massive hit at a time when America simply can't afford that kind of loss. And if we go away, we can't be brought back later by simply placing some help-wanted ads and waiting for people to show up. This isn't a news flash for people in our industry, but for those less familiar with it, you can't just pluck someone off the street and call that person a mariner. That may have worked a century ago. In this day and age, it takes sophisticated training and (heaven knows) a stack of credentials just to be able to climb a gangway.

The bottom line is that we are vital to U.S. national and economic security. And despite my frustration, we of course have many supporters on Capitol Hill and elsewhere who appreciate our value. That support isn't taken for granted, and it also didn't just fall from the sky. We have to constantly spread the word about our work. We continue to cultivate and support our industry relationships and advocate support for our federal mariners and seafarers to ensure a strong and vital maritime industry.

As we head toward the winter holidays, my heart goes out to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan. It's tough to even comprehend such a tragedy, and it's a reminder that we can never take tomorrow for granted.

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'You're the Backbone of Our Success'

USTRANSCOM, MSC Commanders Stress Partnerships

The top officers at the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) and U.S. Military Sealift Command (MSC) delivered powerful remarks at the SIU-affiliated Maritime Trades Department (MTD) convention, stressing the enormous value of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Headed by SIU President Michael Sacco, the MTD is a constitutionally mandated department of the AFL-CIO with 21 port maritime councils and 21 affiliated unions representing more than 5 million mariners. It serves as yet another example of how SIU federal mariners are able to harness strength far beyond their numbers.

Gen. William Fraser, commander of USTRANSCOM, and Rear Adm. Thomas "T.K." Shannon, commander of MSC, also emphasized that they are going to bat for the maritime industry during these times of severe budget cuts.

Fraser addressed the convention in Los Angeles on Sept. 6, while Shannon delivered his remarks one day earlier. Both men received standing ovations as they candidly expressed appreciation for civilian mariners, their unions and American-flag vessel operators. Both also called for an effective national maritime strategy.

Describing MTD officials and the members of MTD-affiliated unions as "tremendous patriots," Fraser added, "TRANSCOM is greatly appreciative of what you do, and we couldn't do our job without you."

He said rank-and-file mariners and dockworkers "really make us successful. They make us who we are and allow us to do the things that have been talked about, whether responding to a crisis, responding to humanitarian assistance or disaster relief. Even if it's here in the States, like Hurricane Sandy, or Haiti, or other opportunities that we've had to decrease human suffering and save lives, you've always responded in an outstanding manner and I can't thank you enough for that.... Nothing moves without you and those that you represent."

Fraser pointed out that more than 90 percent of the goods moved "into theater" go by sea.

"In the maritime industry, you're the backbone of our ability to project our power," he continued. "It has been amazing to me as I've gotten out there and visited a lot of places, because there are a lot of ships at sea. On any average day, we've got about 35 of them that are loading, unloading or at sea sailing someplace with our stuff on it. And that's very, very important to us in order to accomplish our job."

Turning to the agency's civilian workforce, he said the fact that those personnel haven't had a wage increase or any bonuses in three years "is unconscionable, and then they wound up being furloughed. That's breaking faith with people, and that's why I'm reaching out to other areas to make sure that others hear our story."

Fraser said that because the partnership between the military and the commercial maritime industry has been so successful, it is taken for granted by some who don't understand the operations. For example, he cited the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan: "If not for our commercial partners being able to turn to in a timely manner to get the job done, we would not have been successful.... Our commercial partners are the key to our success. They really are. You're the backbone of our success."

He concluded, "The Department of Defense couldn't do our job without the superb relationship we have (with the industry). That's why I enjoy getting



Above, USTRANSCOM Commander, Gen. William Fraser addresses the SIU-affiliated MTD Convention. Below, MSC Commander Rear Adm. Thomas "T.K." Shannon addresses the same convention.



down to the docks. That's why I enjoy getting on the ships. My staff looks at me as I get out there and I'm talking to these young folks that are on the docks and on the ships, and it just excites me, because they're proud of what they're doing. And I couldn't be prouder of them, because of the professionals they are but also the patriots that they are, the sacrifices that they and their families are making on a day-to-day basis to meet the mission – the mission to continue to have a vibrant maritime industry."

Shannon similarly said the maritime industry "is in a bit of crisis. I, for one, am not going to sit on a shelf and do nothing about it. I look forward to partnering with every element of the maritime industry to help leave it in a better place after I've been in this job for two or three years."

He said he appreciated the fact that many of the labor officials attending the convention came up through the ranks, just as he has done. He also comes

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Dealing With a Climate of Furloughs and Shutdowns

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which conducts federal retirement planning workshops and seminars, recently hosted a series of webinars on how federal workers can deal with the times.

Flanagan pointed specifically to a webinar conducted by certified financial planner and Schaeffer Financial managing member and co-founder Karen Schaeffer on financial planning for furloughed and financially strapped federal employees. That webinar, Flanagan said, offered the following financial planning tips:

■ **Remain Calm.** Flanagan pointed out that this was the sixteenth government shutdown in the past 37 years. It happens. And while it's unsettling, individuals are better off using the adrenaline to take a closer look at their respective finances.

■ **Pinpoint Cash Flow.** A key part of this step is using a simple spreadsheet. Another is differentiating between wants and needs.

■ **Take Initiative With Creditors.** "There are ways to consolidate and get help with consumer credit," Flanagan wrote. "Loans are available if you need them."

■ **Hang Onto Your Retirement Money.** According to Flanagan, taking out loans usually is a more prudent move than draining one's retirement savings.

■ **Reduce Contributions.** "As much as a financial adviser hates to recommend cutting back on retirement saving, you might be able to free up some money for a brief shortfall by reducing your TSP contributions – temporarily," Flanagan wrote. "But try to maintain your agency-matching contributions."

Congressmen Tout Benefits of Unions, Fight Back Against Critics

Tired of seeing the labor movement unfairly attacked and demonized, a pair of U.S. Congressmen used parts of their addresses to the SIU-affiliated Maritime Trades Department (MTD) to discuss what workers and their unions can do to fight back.

In speeches at the MTD's convention in Los Angeles, Reps. Cedric Richmond (D-La.) and Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) said unions and the labor movement are essential to the nation in many ways. Not only do unions help workers obtain good jobs with fair wages and benefits, they also serve as the economic foundation from which the middle class and shared economic prosperity grow.

Despite the obvious benefits that come with union membership for both workers and the economy, Richmond and Thompson said anti-worker forces have seen some success in their relentless, well-funded attacks on unions and the labor movement. Those efforts – funded largely by corporations hoping to keep workers from organizing and obtaining good wages and benefits – have erroneously painted unions as enemies of the middle class and the economy. That, of course, couldn't be further from the truth.

The irony certainly wasn't lost on the two congressmen as they addressed the MTD convention.

"Our problem is that there are people in the country now who are saying, 'Labor is bad,'" Richmond said. "Now people are starting to think labor's bad, including people in labor."

He said the false perception exists in large part because of the steady drumbeat of misinformation shoveled by enemies of working families.



U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.)

Negative reactions to unions are especially baffling when the real and tangible benefits of union membership are taken into consideration. Study after study show that unions and increased union membership not only benefit workers, but the economy as a whole.

Year after year, government data finds union members earn significantly more and receive much better benefits than their non-union counterparts. According to a 2012 report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median weekly earnings for union workers is 27 percent higher than for non-union workers. That same study found 85 percent of union workers had access to health insurance (compared to 54 percent for non-union workers), 77 percent of union workers had guaranteed pension plans (compared to 17 percent for unrepresented workers) and 84 percent had paid sick leave time (compared to 62 percent of non-union workers.)

The positive aspects of union jobs also benefit the nation's entire economy, as workers have more money to spend and invest, resulting in an increase in overall employment and a rise in tax revenue for the government.

Richmond said workers and the labor movement need to make sure the public knows about those benefits so they can realize just how misleading and destructive the attacks on unions and the labor movement really are.

"We have to make sure that we don't let the conversation divert into areas where it just doesn't make logical sense," Richmond said. "And the more we do that, the more I think the labor movement will remind America of its obligation that the right to prosperity is one of those rights we take great pride in."

Over the past few decades, however, anti-worker interests have waged well-funded attacks against unions and the labor movement. As they've attempted to convince workers that better wages and benefits are against their interests, union membership has decreased and economic inequality has skyrocketed.

In short, the decrease in union membership has led to a greater number of workers producing more and earning less.

Again according to government reports, from 1980 to 2008, productivity increased by 75 percent while income only increased by 22.6 percent. CEO pay, however, increased dramatically during that same period. Thirty years ago, the average CEO earned 42 times the average worker's pay. Today, CEOs earn approximately 380 times the average worker's pay.

It wasn't always this way. During the postwar period of the 1940s through the 1970s, union membership expanded greatly and the median household income increased by nearly 100 percent. If union membership increased from 1980 to present day like it did during the post-war years, workers would be earning 43 percent more than they are today. Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case, as the anti-worker attacks painted unions, work-



U.S. Rep. Cedric Richmond (D-La.)

ers and the progressive movement in general as harmful. Thompson called on the movement to aggressively reject those slurs and step up the fight for unions and middle class fairness.

"Don't let anybody try to convince you that as a member of organized labor you don't love this country," Thompson said. "It's the greatest country in the world. We're going to have to work as hard as we can to protect and preserve it."

Another problem with anti-union attacks is the way in which opponents of labor try to turn worker against worker.

Many such attacks accuse union workers of earning more in wages and benefits than they "deserve," leading some unrepresented employees to resent the fact that their wages are stagnant and their benefits are diminishing. This is by design, as those funding anti-union campaigns are often the corporations and entities that are largely responsible for non-union workers' stagnant wages and poor benefits in the first place. By convincing unrepresented workers that union members "make too much," these corporations distract workers and keep them from realizing the truth: Union workers don't earn too much, non-union workers just aren't earning enough.

Addressing those motivations, Thompson had a simple explanation for anti-union sentiments among some workers.

"Don't let them put you down. They're a little jealous," Thompson said. "You know why? Because at the end of the day, you've done a good job, you've been paid a decent wage, and at the end of your working career you've got something called benefits."

How to Become An SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy. The union's website – www.seafarers.org – includes printable PDF versions of forms that mariners may use to request and authorize payroll deductions for labor organization dues. The forms are posted at:

www.seafarers.org/memberbenefits/civmar.asp

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Fraser, Shannon Discuss Protecting Maritime Funding

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from a union family – his mother and two brothers all belonged to unions.

"It's my privilege to be here and look at maritime partners," he stated. "In my opinion, we defend America together. Now, because I wear a uniform I get the credit. We drive the aircraft carriers. We fly the jets. We take submarines down to the depths of the ocean. We've got the Tomahawk shooters out there in the eastern Mediterranean right now poised for action if called on. That's the stuff that Anderson Cooper and Wolf Blitzer cover, and so the uniform folks get it."

"But it is not lost on me that somebody's moving strategic fuel stocks around the world," he continued. "Somebody's moving all kinds of defense cargo and ammunition around the planet. Somebody's sitting on a prepositioning ship right now with war reserve materiel ready to weigh anchor and take it wherever the president needs it. And that's you and the members you represent, and for that I offer you my utmost respect. The whole thing comes to a grinding halt without the United States Merchant Marine supporting what the uniform folks like me do."

He shared a story from 1980, when he sailed as a cadet on the SIU-crewed *Sea-Land Seattle*. Shannon said he never forgot the practical advice given to him by a seasoned AB who, in addition to teaching valuable lessons in seamanship, encouraged him (in colorful terms) to take advantage of promising career opportunities.

"Here we are 33 years later, and it's my honor to serve as Commander of Military Sealift Command, the largest employer of mariners in the United States of America," he said.

Evaluating today's industry, the admiral said in some ways it's both the best and worst of times.

"In the worst category, sequestration (automatic federal spending cuts) is putting immense downward pressure on our budgets," he said. "And it's not only the loss of funding, but it's the speed and velocity with which it is happening. It's not like we could plan for this over a five- or 10-year period, and so it is forcing us to make some very hard choices in a very short amount of time. With the gridlock in our Congress, I don't see that it's going to change for the foreseeable future."

On the positive side, he said that after assuming command of MSC earlier this year, "I know why the Defense Department and many other federal agencies look to us to provide a service, and it's not just internal MSC staff. It's our partners like you who I think are the best in the world. Mariners, other maritime trades, you're the reason why I get up and enjoy going to work in the morning."

He explained why he believes the Navy will be more important than ever in the years ahead, and also pointed to new-build programs involving the joint high-speed vessels and mobile landing platforms as reasons for optimism. He also cited overwhelmingly positive performances and feedback involving military-civilian hybrid crews on three Seafarers-manned vessels.

Shannon added, "Nothing that Defense does, happens without you. This is a partnership we value.... When the president rings the bell and says it's time to go, you're the ones that respond. And I believe our country owes you a debt of gratitude for that."

He reinforced MSC's support for the Jones Act "and any other legislative effort to strengthen maritime shipping and shipbuilding.... It's my honor to serve with you."

Delivering Since 1938

SIU Commemorates 75 Years Of Service to Members, Nation

Although we started observing our 75th anniversary a little early – beginning with last year’s Seafarers International Union of North America convention – Oct. 14 was in fact the actual date on which, in 1938, the old American Federation of Labor presented our charter.

In some ways, it seems fitting that the true anniversary happens at a time when our union and many allies throughout maritime labor are fighting to preserve and revitalize the U.S. Merchant Marine. It is not hyperbole to say the industry is under severe and perhaps even unprecedented attack.

But, nothing about American maritime labor’s history has been easy. As SIU President Michael Sacco has said more than once, “No one is going to give us anything.” It has always been that way for mariners, including long before the SIU got started.

We haven’t shied from that challenge and are continuing to employ every possible resource to stand up not just for our union but also for an often overlooked industry that is so vital to national and economic security.

The headline to this piece is our anniversary theme, and it sums up the service of Seafarers past and present. Not to be overlooked in those 75 years is the service of

our members who sailed in harm’s way to support our troops – especially the 1,235 Seafarers who lost their lives in World War II.

SIU members also stepped up as part of the nation’s fourth arm of defense in every conflict since then, reliably answering the call and delivering the goods from Korea to Vietnam to the first Persian Gulf War, through Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. They have also mobilized with equal dependability and professionalism during numerous humanitarian missions around the world.

From helping the recovery efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, to aiding in the aftermath of devastating storms in places like Japan and the Philippines, SIU members continue to play a role in events around the world.

An eight-minute video celebrating the union’s anniversary is now available for free on the SIU website at: www.seafarers.org/gallery/SIU75thAnniversary.asp

For an online timeline of SIU history, check out the November 2013 Seafarers Log at www.seafarers.org



Andrew Furuseth’s relentless efforts led to the Seamen’s Act of 1915, a milestone for American maritime labor. He famously said, “You can put me in jail. But you cannot give me narrower quarters than as a seaman I have always had. You cannot give me coarser food than I have always eaten. You cannot make me lonelier than I have always been.”

Union Participates in March on Washington

SIU trainees were among the tens of thousands of people who converged on the National Mall near the Lincoln Memorial Aug. 24 to support a rally in observance of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

Clad in blue SIU T-shirts and khaki shorts, the trainees from the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education departed the school in Piney Point, Md. via bus near first light. They arrived at the RFK Stadium parking lot, where buses were staged shortly after 8 a.m. From there, they marched about one mile to the National Armory Metro entrance where they boarded the train for the Smithsonian stop.

After arriving at their destination, they disembarked and marched another two miles to the grounds of the mall. During their trek, they patiently weaved in and out of islands of fellow rally goers, all the while representing themselves, the SIU and its affiliated unions in a fashion that would make their future union brothers and sisters proud.

Once on site, they joined in with the masses and answered the call of support for the rally.

Organized by the Rev. Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III, the event attracted throngs of leaders and members of organizations and groups representing civil rights, organized labor, housing, media, education and politics. Sharpton is president and Founder of National Action Network (NAN), and King is the eldest son of the late Coretta and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He is also president of Realizing the Dream, a non-profit created to carry on the civil rights work of the King family.

In addition to Sharpton and King, who were keynote speakers, several other dignitaries addressed the masses that converged on the mall. Included were: U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the Rev. Joseph Lowery and Julian Bond. The Rev. Bernice King, the second daughter and youngest child of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and Myrlie Evers-Williams, the widow of slain civil rights leader Medgar- Evers. The families of Emmett Till and Trayvon Martin also addressed those in attendance. Representing labor at the podium were American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten; American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees President Lee Saunders; LaRAZA President Janet Murguia; Service Employees International Union International President Mary Kay Henry; and National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel, among others.

Collectively, the speakers urged the nation’s lawmakers to create more jobs, protect voting rights and address the litany of recent attacks on immigration and workers’



Trainees with the SIU participate in an event Aug. 24 commemorating the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington.

rights. Speakers also discussed criminal justice issues; Stand Your Ground laws and gun violence; environmental justice; and topics affecting contemporary youth such as higher education and college loans.

The rally was one of many affairs held from Aug 17-28 to commemorate and celebrate the historic March on Washington which occurred 50 years ago on Aug. 28, 1963. The final event, the “March for Jobs and Justice,” took place Aug. 28. It concluded with the National Mall March at the Lincoln Memorial where President Barack Obama spoke from the very spot where Dr. King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech 50 years ago.

Former Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter also spoke at this commemorative event as did other dignitaries and celebrities. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka was not able to attend this event. In his absence, he released the following statement:

“Fifty years ago, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., AFL-CIO Vice President A. Phillip Randolph, labor and

civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, UAW President Walter Reuther and countless Americans marched for equality, jobs and freedom. That march became a pinnacle of the civil rights movement, symbolizing hope and the power of united action.

“Today, on the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, the fight for equality and justice for all continues. The Supreme Court weakened the Voting Rights Act. Extremists in the U.S. House of Representatives are stalling reform of our broken immigration system. Women make 77 cents to a man’s dollar. And workers’ rights are in jeopardy across the nation. But today, the unforgettable sounds and images from 1963 also remind us that change is possible.

“Today we rededicate ourselves to the dream of economic equality that so many marched for a half century ago. We will work with those who strive for prosperity for all in this great country – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or place of birth.”