



THE FEDERAL MARINER

MSC • NOAA • ARMY COE • MARAD

Volume 9 • ISSUE 1
January - March 2019



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION'S GOVERNMENT SERVICES DIVISION

SIU, MTD Back Furloughed Workers, Including NOAA Crews

Labor Organizations Donate, Demonstrate During Historic United States Government Shutdown

Unions were undeterred during a 35-day federal government shutdown that ended in late January.

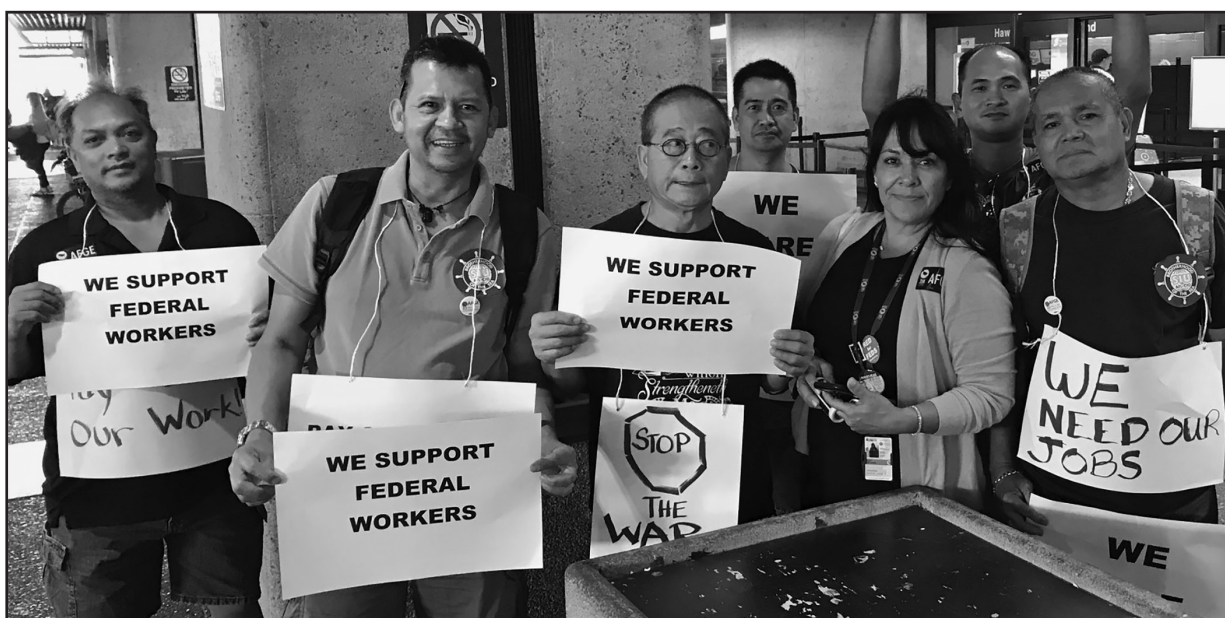
During that unprecedented closure, SIU members and officials as well as representatives from several port councils affiliated with the Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO, energetically supported many of the 800,000 employees who were either temporarily out of work or were told to work even though their paychecks weren't forthcoming. The SIU and MTD teamed up with donations to fellow union members, Coast Guard personnel and other government workers. They also participated in demonstrations in the nation's capital; in Honolulu, Hawaii; and elsewhere.

The SIU utilized its Disaster Aid Fund to assist members of the union's Government Services Division who sail with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Many members relayed their thanks via emails to SIU Government Services Division Vice President Kate Hunt.

One member wrote, "Thank you! Can't tell you how much this helps. It also helps remind folks that the rougher things are, the more they need the union."

Another NOAA mariner said, "Thank you for supporting the members in this time of need!"

Honolulu was an especially active area for the SIU during the shutdown. The SIU hosted multiple food drives in addition to welcoming members of Congress for informal discussions. Those members included U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono (D), U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz (D), U.S. Rep. Ed Case (D) and U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D), who



Union members demonstrate at Daniel K. Inouye Airport in Honolulu, Hawaii.

were on hand at the hiring hall Jan. 18 to listen to workers and discuss their concerns.

Many other labor organizations were involved in the effort in Hawaii, including the State AFL-CIO, AFGE, Teamsters Local 996, IBEW 1260, HGEA, MM&P, MEBA, MFOW, and the Hawaii Ports Maritime Council.

Seafarers in Oakland, California, put together a food drive for Coast Guard personnel, while the Greater South Florida Maritime Trades Council, SIU, Port Everglades Association and Port Everglades Pilots donated gift cards and other items to Coast Guard members in that area.

The AFL-CIO and many pundits credited rank-and-file workers and their unions for ending the longest federal stoppage

MTD President Sacco Cites Labor Movement's Recent Resurgence

When he opened the winter meeting of the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) executive board, Michael Sacco emphasized two ongoing struggles of paramount importance to working families.

Sacco is president of both the SIU and the MTD – the latter a constitutional department of the AFL-CIO. The MTD is composed of 21 international unions and 21 port maritime councils in the United States and Canada representing nearly 5 million working men and women. The board met Feb. 21-22 in Orlando, Florida.

"One of the most positive stories for the MTD and the entire labor movement, I believe, is how we've responded to last summer's Supreme Court ruling in *Janus vs. AFSCME*," Sacco said to the board members and guests. "This was supposed to be the beginning of the end for unions. But as one national columnist recently put it: 'So much for the labor movement's funeral.'"

He pointed out that large unions including the American Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees have gained members since the ruling, which allows for free riders.

"The *Janus* ruling is still a farce, and nobody is pretending it's good news for labor," Sacco continued. "But you know what? I think it shook us out of



SIU President Michael Sacco, who also serves as president of the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) addresses attendees at the Feb. 21-22 MTD executive board meeting in Orlando, Florida, some of whom are pictured below.

the doldrums in a lot of ways. It made us re-educate people about why unions are so important. It made us ramp up our engagement, and the results have been very positive.... I think we're headed in the right direction."

He then focused on a relatively new, well-funded campaign aimed at repealing the Jones Act – a law that's vital to U.S. national, economic and homeland security. The misguided attacks are "nothing new, even though they will be on a larger scale. We're fighting this battle every day," he said.

Sacco wrapped up his opening remarks with a quick reflection on the recent government shutdown. "During that time, our affiliates and port councils really stepped up to support the people who were out of work and those who were forced to work without a paycheck," he recalled. "We collected gift cards and food donations coast to coast and in Hawaii. We rallied in the streets and we marched at airports and elsewhere to stand up for the rank-and-file worker, no matter if they were union members or not."

"There is no doubt that our collective actions and those of the affected workers themselves ended the shutdown," he continued. "We showed our strength, but we also showed solidarity and compassion for our fellow man. That's what the labor movement is all about. That's what the MTD is all about. And that's why I know we'll always have a bright future as long as we're willing to stand together and work for it."



President's Column

Supporting Our Troops and Veterans

Federal mariners know as well as anyone that the men and women who wear the uniforms of the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, including national guardsmen and reservists, do the United States proud every day. They are our sons and daughters, our sisters and brothers, our nieces and nephews.



Michael Sacco

Many of these individuals also are our own union sisters and brothers. They are Seafarers, Maritime Officers, Longshoremen, Ironworkers, Bakers, Plumbers, Painters, Communications Workers, Machinists and members of the other AFL-CIO affiliates – proud, card-carrying

members of the Labor Movement.

Just as they have been trained to do at home, these servicemen and women perform their jobs to the best of their abilities. While doing so, they don't seek headlines or glory. They volunteer to serve in harm's way for the country they love.

Despite all that they sacrifice for the country, when they return home, they enter an environment often teeming with barriers that seemingly are just as challenging as those they left behind on battlefields and areas of conflict around the globe.

According to MilitarySpot.com, an online presence which offers resources, news, and information for active duty and retired military members, the top five challenges facing veterans today are:

- Unemployment - Many disabled veterans are unable to find solid work once they return home. Plus, veterans who joined the armed forces right after high school often don't have the education that their peers received, which puts them at a hiring disadvantage.

- Homelessness - Approximately one-third of all homeless Americans are veterans. Veterans with untreated PTSD can develop alcohol and drug addictions, which are high-risk behaviors that can lead to deteriorating mental health and homelessness. In other situations, disabled and/or unemployed veterans don't make enough money to pay a mortgage.

- Poor Mental Health - Unfortunately, suicide and depression rates remain high among members of the armed forces. This is in part because of the social stigmas attached to seeking mental health treatment, which leads to high rates of untreated PTSD in returning veterans.

- Physical Injuries - Many veterans experience debilitating physical injuries that leave them unable to work. These veterans often make claims to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), but the VA is so backed up that it often can't address an individual's applications for several months, or even years.

- Lack of Education - As previously mentioned, many veterans joined the armed forces right out of high school, which means they haven't had the opportunity to receive a college education. Issues like drug or alcohol addiction, untreated PTSD, poor mental health and devastating physical injuries often keep veterans from pursuing higher education. Disabled veterans also may worry that they don't have the money to afford a college education.

Besides these impediments, a host of other circumstances also makes veteran lives difficult when they return from years of faithful service to the country. The bottom line is that it should not be that way, and we – the country as a whole – should do everything in our power to positively change their fate.

The SIU has a rich tradition of supporting our men and women in uniform (both active duty and retired) and their families. That tradition remains very much alive and applicable today, including our efforts that helped lead to the recent signing of an executive order aimed at making it easier for veterans to enter the maritime industry.

We will continue working with other unions and organizations to boost those who have given their all to protect and defend the freedoms many Americans often take for granted. Providing for these veterans by ensuring that they have access to meaningful employment, fair and decent housing, unimpeded access to top quality medical care and educational opportunities is not only good for business; it's good for every aspect of the country. It is the right thing to do.

SIU Directory

Michael Sacco, President

Augustin Tellez, Executive Vice President

David Heindel, Secretary-Treasurer

George Tricker, Vice President Contracts

Kate Hunt,
Vice President Government Services

Joe Vincenzo,
Asst. Vice President Government Services



SIU VP Gov't Services Kate Hunt (right) and Asst. VP Joe Vincenzo (left) are pictured with U.S. Maritime Administrator Mark Buzy at the MTD meeting in Florida.

'Vital to our National And Economic Security'

The head of the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) thoroughly understands the challenges facing America's maritime industry, but remains optimistic about its future.

Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby delivered that message Feb. 21 as the first guest speaker to address the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) executive board this year.

The setting was nothing new for the retired U.S. Navy rear admiral, who formerly served as commanding officer of the U.S. Military Sealift Command. As Buzby appreciatively pointed out, he has been attending MTD meetings for a decade.

"I'm very sincere when I say how much I've enjoyed working with and getting to know the leadership of the MTD over the years," he said. "We have a level of trust that allows for some very frank discussions, and I think that's for the benefit of all of us. Your executive committee provides an incalculable service to the maritime industry ashore and to the merchant marine afloat, promoting not only a comprehensive legislative agenda but, perhaps more importantly, educating the congress, the administration, the international community and the American public about a vitally important industry."

He reiterated the unwavering support of his boss, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao, another longtime friend of the SIU.

Buzby detailed many of the obstacles the industry is dealing with, including a manpower shortage and an urgent need to recapitalize the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) vessels and other sealift ships. Nevertheless, he stated, "I really am optimistic. We're making some real headway in getting our merchant marine strengthened. All of my energy and focus and that of my staff is to ensure that the U.S. Merchant Marine continues to move forward – that our story is told forcefully and truthfully. I can also promise that we'll continue to work shoulder to shoulder with all of you for the benefit of our mariners, because it's our mariners who often are taken for granted and are the key to our nation's sealift."

He pointed out that the industry "did pretty well" in the recent appropriations bill, which included full funding for the Maritime Security Program and a boost for the RRF, among other positive outcomes.

"I attribute our success this year to the great working relationships we have with labor and with all the facets of the maritime industry, and certainly key members of Congress who understand the importance of a strong maritime sector," Buzby said, adding that the industry enjoys bipartisan backing.

Specifically discussing the ages of various U.S.-flag military support ships, Buzby described the

RRF as "a key part of TRANSCOM's ability to execute its wartime mission of deploying and sustaining our nation's combat forces. The Navy's plan to recapitalize that force of 46 ships plus 15 sealift ships that MSC runs is gaining some headway. Congress gets it; they're pushing hard. They want it to happen faster. We've had several members of Congress down on the ships to talk to our mariners and hear firsthand the challenges they have with maintaining these 44-and-a-half-year-old average-age ships. These are the ships we are going to depend on to move our armed forces overseas in a crisis or national emergency, and we have to be able to depend on them."

He also said RRF ships, most with SIU crews, in the last three years have been activated and used more than during any other peacetime stretch.

Buzby has spent lots of time visiting vessels in the past year. Reflecting on those trips and interactions, he said. "A real bright spot in all this work that's being done to maintain these ships is our mariners. They are doing a tremendous job. They totally understand the role they play in national security. They know that when they go out there and tear a pump apart or chip rust on deck to make sure that ship is ready to go, they are actually making a vital contribution to our nation's security, should the call come – and it will come at some point.... They work their butts off. Their spirit is good, and there are smiles on their faces, and they understand the importance of what it is they do, and are happy to be doing it. I don't think that's something that's unique to the RRF crews. Talk to our MSP mariners, talk to our Jones Act mariners, they get it, too. They understand how it's all part of the web that is our maritime industry that is so vital both to our national and economic security."

The maritime administrator also said that the industry must continue defending the Jones Act, which faces a "recent heightened level of organized attacks.... We're fighting at MARAD, and Secretary Chao has been tenacious in defending the Jones Act. There is no wavering in her at all.... The Jones Act is a bedrock, foundational piece of legislation for our industry."

He added, "I think Congress, by and large, is behind us. Everyone that I've spoken with is for it and understands it. There are a few voices out there that are crying in the wilderness, but we really can't take that for granted. Clearly, we have to continue to drive home the criticality of the Jones Act, because the Jones Act is jobs. The Jones Act and national security go hand in hand."

Executive Order Aims to Boost Maritime Industry

An executive order signed by President Trump on March 4 will make it easier for military personnel to transition into the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education was represented at the signing ceremony in the Oval Office. Apprentice **Corey Daniel Reseburg** was one of 18 individuals standing behind President Trump as he signed the order. Attendees also included Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby, Deputy Mari-

time Administrator Richard Balzano, and other mariners.

The *Supporting the Transition of Active Duty Service Members and Military Veterans into the Merchant Marine* order states: “It’s the policy of the United States to support practices and programs that ensure that members of the United States Armed Forces receive appropriate credit for the military training and experience towards credentialing requirements as a Merchant Mariner. And it’s further the policy of the United States to establish and maintain an effective Merchant Marine program by providing sufficient support and resources to active-duty and separating service members who pursue or possess Merchant Mariner credentials.”

According to Peter Navarro, who is assistant to the president for manufacturing and trade policy as well as director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, the order “makes it easier for sea service veterans to get high-paying, high-skilled jobs as mariners by waiving government-issued licensing fees and by crediting military training in the National Maritime Center credentialing system.”

In addition, Navarro wrote in an opinion piece for Fox News that the order “helps enable veterans apply their education and experience on military ships to-

ward the mariner credentialing curriculum, thereby removing other costly barriers.”

He added during a press call, “In these ways, it incentivizes our nation’s most experienced seamen to enter the U.S. Merchant Marine, which is sometimes called the nation’s Fourth Arm of Defense. Currently, we face a shortfall of Merchant Mariners that may have serious national security implications.”

Veterans Administration Secretary Robert Wilkie noted, “By fast-tracking the transition into the Merchant Marine of trained and credentialed service members, President Trump is meeting an important national security need while providing meaningful, well-paying jobs to our nation’s heroes.” (Wilkie stated his grandfather had been a mariner.)

The SIU has been working for years with the Defense Department and the military services to transition the skills and credentials earned while serving in the armed forces directly to civilian merchant mariner documents and licenses. The regularly has participated in the American Maritime Partnership’s “Military2Maritime” program that affords veterans the opportunity to maximize their professional strengths by meeting with representatives from maritime companies, training schools, unions and others to learn about careers in maritime industry.

Inquiring Mariner

This quarter’s question was answered by SIU Government Services Division members on the West Coast

Question: Why did you enter this industry and why have you stayed with it?



Albert Taylor
There is nothing like sailing around the world and learning – seeing and talking to people of different nationalities. Seeing how they live is priceless. My reason for staying is MSC has given me an opportunity to act as a goodwill ambassador for the U.S. Also, the pay and the benefits are not bad.



Anne Mary Heggenberger
I chose this job to see the world. I’ve stayed because it’s a great job. It offers security and the pay is fantastic.



Jim Domingto
My reason for choosing the industry was the chance for travel. I’ve stayed because I have made a lot of friends. I also like the pay and benefits.

How to Become an SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy and an important step in protecting your workplace rights. 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:

<https://www.seafarers.org/news/labor-maritime-news/civmar-news/>

Forms are also available under “SIU Forms” in the ABOUT tab.

Contact Information

Vice President Government Services Kate Hunt:
Phone: (201) 434-6000
Email: khunt@seafarers.org

Asst. Vice President Government Services Joe Vincenzo:
Phone: (253) 272-7774
Email: jvincenzo@seafarers.org

Government Services Fleet Representative Sam Spain:
Phone: (757) 622-1892
Email: sspain@seafarers.org

Government Services Fleet Representative Jesse Ruth:
Phone: (619) 581-6008
Email: jruth@seafarers.org



Free College

The Union Plus Free College Benefit offers working families an accessible, debt-free and convenient higher education opportunity. You, your spouse, children, financial dependents and grandchildren, can all benefit from this exciting program.

Find out more about this and other great Union Plus programs by visiting unionplus.org.



Learn more at unionplus.org

An Important Message From the Seafarers International Union (SIU) to All Unlicensed Crew Members

As you know, the Seafarers International Union represents all non-officer CIV-MARS in the MSC Fleet. There are some exciting new changes within the SIU Government Services Division! First, VP Kermet Mangram and Assistant VP Chester Wheeler have retired. Current SIU Representatives are as follows:

Kate Hunt, Vice President
(201) 434-6000 ext. 223
khunt@seafarers.org

Joseph Vincenzo, Asst. VP
(253) 272-7774
jvincenzo@seafarers.org

Sam Spain,
East Coast Representative
Norfolk Hall (757) 622-1892
sspain@seafarers.org

Jesse Ruth
West Coast Representative
(619) 581-6008
jruth@seafarers.org

The Government Services Division of the SIU has one mission: to assertively and continuously look after the best interests of MSC CIVMARS. There is much to be done and the SIU will be there working with senior MSC management to address all the tough issues and bring the voice of CIVMARS to the forefront.

The support of the membership is crucial. Contact us at any time. To learn more, go to:

www.seafarers.org
Email: siufedmariner@seafarers.org

NOTE: Those excluded from SIU membership include: Pursers; MSO's; Supply Officers (West Coast); JSO's; (West Coast); SCO's; SCO/IAMs; RET Chiefs; RET1; RET2; and Damage Control Officers.

U.S. Union Membership Remains Fairly Steady During 2018 *Annual Bureau of Labor Statistics Report Shows Union Members Get Better Pay*

The yearly report on union membership from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) showed very little change in 2018.

According to the agency's report, issued Jan. 18, membership declined slightly from 2017 to 2018, to a total number of 14.744 million. That's a decrease of 73,000; union density in 2018 was 10.5 percent.

The report again reinforced that union members usually earn more money than their unrepresented counterparts. Data from the BLS report shows that in 2018, the median union worker earned \$1,051 per week, compared to \$860 for the median non-unionist. (The median is the point where half of workers are above and half below.)

Meanwhile, the AFL-CIO issued a press statement in advance of the report that read in part: "Here's what the numbers alone won't tell you: 2018 was one of the most substantial years for collective action in American history. The following are some significant ways workers are standing together to improve our workplaces and communities, not included in today's report:

Tens of thousands of teachers going on strike for better pay and stronger schools in red and blue states, including more than 30,000 currently striking in Los Angeles (the teachers subsequently won numerous gains and voted to return to work).

Google workers worldwide walking out for an end to workplace sexual harassment and a voice on the job.

UNITE HERE hotel workers taking on Marriott, the most profitable hotel chain in the world, and winning

higher wages, a safe work environment and a say on how technology is deployed.

And, working people electing pro-worker candidates from coast to coast, including more than 950 union members.

Private-sector union membership is up, despite the fact that Taft-Hartley, a labor law rigged to embolden anti-worker employers, has been on the books for more than 70 years. Workers from Boeing to JetBlue to Harvard University won union recognition in 2018. And 60 million workers – the population of New York and California combined – would vote to join a union today if given the chance.

Public sector union membership essentially held steady, despite the Supreme Court's ruling in Janus v. AFSCME, the case pundits predicted would be the labor movement's death knell. In fact, some public sector unions saw membership growth in 2018. Shortly after Janus was decided, the people of Missouri overturned "right to work" by 2-1, the first-ever state to repeal this anti-worker law by popular vote.

In the face of unprecedented attacks, the labor movement continues to show tremendous resilience. Public approval of unions is soaring. And new organizing campaigns in non-union workplaces are gaining steam. Give working people a level playing field to join and form unions and there will be a dramatic spike in membership by the time the 2019 BLS numbers are released."

Additionally, Mark Gruenberg of Press Associates pointed out, "The agency reported that a slight majority of union members were in the private sector, 7.577 million, compared to 7.167 million in the public sector. The public sector was more heavily unionized, with one of every three workers – state and local government workers, teachers, fire fighters, and federal workers – unionized, compared to one of every 16 (6.4 percent) in the private sector. Teachers and protective services, each with even higher percentages, led the way."

As usual, union members were concentrated in the Northeast, the Great Lakes and the Pacific Coast states. The most union-dense states last year were Hawaii (23.1 percent), New York (22.3 percent), Washington (19.8 percent), Alaska (18.5 percent) and Rhode Island (17.5 percent).

The biggest union numbers BLS calculated were in California (2.405 million, down 87,000 and with 14.7 percent density), New York (1.872 million, down 145,000, 22.3 percent), Illinois (786,000, down 86,000, 13.8 percent), Pennsylvania (701,000, up 36,000, 12.6 percent), Michigan (625,000, down 33,000, 14.5 percent), Ohio (639,000, up 4,000, 12.6 percent) and Washington (649,000, up 61,000, 19.8 percent).

According to Gruenberg, "Washington was the biggest numerical gainer, but BLS calculated many of the other gains were in the least-unionized area, the South. Florida (plus 38,000), Georgia and Alabama (plus 28,000 each), Louisiana (plus 11,000) and South Carolina (plus 3,000) all added union members."

Federation: Strengthen Law to Give Workers Real Bargaining Power

Labor leaders from across the country, including SIU President Michael Sacco, recently met in New Orleans to map out the path ahead for the American labor movement. From trade and public education to equal pay, and paid leave to back pay for federal contract workers and bargaining power for all, the AFL-CIO Executive Council tackled the issues that will define working people's fight for economic justice in 2019 and beyond.

Sacco is the longest-serving vice president of the council.

One of the statements approved by the council addressed labor laws and the need to update them.

That statement began, "Something is happening in America. In workplaces and on picket lines, at the bargaining table and the ballot box, working people are taking collective action to improve our jobs, our schools, our communities and our democracy. Fed up with decades of rigged economic rules that have held down wages and skyrocketed inequality, workers are turning to each other. The latest annual survey from Gallup puts public approval of unions at 62 percent, a 15-year high. And research from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology shows half of non-union members would vote to organize today if given the chance. That's more than 60 million people."

The council members continued, "Yet this wave of worker activism is coming



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka is a longtime ally of the SIU.

up against the cruel reality that our outdated labor laws no longer serve as an effective mechanism to accurately capture the aspirations of working people. Labor law changes were last made in 1947 – and those were designed to make it harder to organize. Current law does far too little to prevent employers from bullying and harassing workers when we try to form a union, and there is no binding process for reaching a first contract when a majority of workers make the decision to bargain collectively. The right of workers to make our voices heard through strikes, pickets

and other activities continues to be fundamentally undermined by employers, politicians and the courts. Simply put, the system is broken and the time for comprehensive labor law reform is right now."

The statement then noted that in 2017, delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention unanimously passed a resolution calling on candidates for public office to support and fight for changes to the National Labor Relations Act and other state and local laws to guarantee the freedom to bargain collectively to every single worker, free from fear and intimidation.

That same year, comprehensive labor law reform bills were introduced as part of congressional Democrats' "Better Deal."

As noted by the council, the Workers' Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2018 (H.R. 6080) would expand coverage of the National Labor Relations Act; bolster penalties against employers who break the law; provide a process for workers and employers to reach a first agreement; and protect the right to strike and eliminate so-called "right to work" nationally. The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2018 (H.R. 6238) would ensure that all public-sector workers at the state and local levels have collective bargaining rights, and the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (H.R. 4846) would extend basic collective bargaining rights to all first responders.

"The same energy that working people took to the streets to win economic and social justice in 2018 brought a wave of pro-worker legislators to Congress, and now we have a chance to make real progress on these landmark bills," the resolution continued. "We must begin by educating new members of Congress and staff about the importance of unions and collective action to our communities, our economy and our democracy. To accomplish this, the AFL-CIO is partnering with the Economic Policy Institute to conduct 'Labor 101' briefings on Capitol Hill over the next several months."