



THE FEDERAL MARINER

Volume 15 • ISSUE 3
July - September 2024

MSC • NOAA • ARMY COE • MARAD



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

Groundbreaking Treasury Report Underscores How Unions Tangibly Benefit National Economy

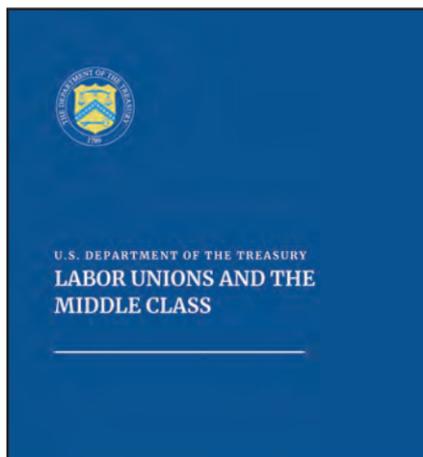
The U.S. Treasury Department in early September released its most comprehensive ever look at the role that labor unions play in the American economy with a new report by the Department's Office of Economic Policy. The report represents one of the more than 70 actions implemented by the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, chaired by Vice President Kamala Harris.

"The report finds that unions play an important role in addressing longstanding challenges faced by the middle class – including stagnant wages, high housing costs, and reduced inter-generational mobility," the Treasury Department said in a news release. "In doing so, unions contribute to a more robust and resilient economy."

"President Biden, Vice President Harris, (Treasury) Secretary (Janet) Yellen and the Administration have consistently championed the rights of workers and the role of strong labor unions in contributing to a thriving middle-class and economy – including through good-paying jobs, safe working conditions, and equitable treatment for workers," the department continued.

The report's key findings include:

- Middle-class workers reap substantial benefits from unionization. Unions raise the wages of their members by 10 to 15 percent compared to unrepresented workers. Unions also improve fringe benefits and workplace procedures such as retirement plans, workplace grievance policies, and predictable scheduling. These workplace improvements contribute substantially to middle-class financial stability and worker wellbeing. For exam-



The new report (cover is pictured above) is linked on the SIU website.

ple, one study has estimated that the average worker values their ability to avoid short-notice schedule changes at up to 20 percent of their wages.

- Unionization also has spillover effects that extend well beyond union workers. Competition means workers at nonunionized firms see increased wages, too. Heightened workplace safety norms can lift up whole industries.

- Union members improve their communities through heightened civic engagement; they are more likely to vote, donate to charity, and participate in a neighborhood project. And, the higher pay and job security of both union and nonunion middle-class workers can further spill over to their families and communities through more stable housing, more investment in education, and other channels.

- Unions help create a fairer economy by benefiting all demographic groups. By encouraging democratic wage practices, unions serve to reduce race and gender wage gaps. And modern unions have broad representation across race and gender. In 2021, Black men had a particularly high union representation rate at 13 percent, as compared to the population average of 10 percent. The diverse demographics of modern union membership mean that the benefits of any policy that strengthens today's unions would be felt across the population.

- Unions can boost businesses' productivity by improving working environments and by giving experienced workers more of an input into decisions that design better and more cost-effective workplace procedures.

The news release added, "The Biden-Harris Administration recognizes the benefits of unions to the middle class and the broader economy and continues to take steps to strengthen their role. Promisingly, there have been recent signs of a reinvigorated labor movement, as union election petitions in 2022 bounced back from the pandemic to their highest level since 2015, and public opinion of labor unions is at its highest level in over 50 years. Actions taken and planned by the Biden-Harris Administration to advance this progress include:

- Prioritizing the passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Public Sector Freedom to Negotiate Act.

- Appointing a General Counsel and Board Members to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) committed to protecting the right of workers to organize in the workplace.

- Increasing the funding of the NLRB to enable them to expand enforcement activities.

- Creating the White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment, which, under the leadership of Vice President Harris, works with agencies on ways to use their existing statutory authority to support worker organizing and bargaining.

- Signing Executive Order 14063, which requires the use of project labor agreements on federal construction projects of \$35 million or more.

- Signing Executive Order 14003 to promote the rights of federal employees to collectively bargain.

- Launching the Good Jobs Initiative to ensure the provision of critical information to workers, employers, and government – including about the union advantage – as they work to improve job quality and create access to good jobs free from discrimination and harassment for all working people.

- Promoting "know your rights" initiatives to provide workers with better information about their organizing and bargaining rights.

- Announcing a new rule to raise wage standards of construction workers by updating prevailing wage regulations issued under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts, which require payment of locally prevailing wages and fringe benefits to more than one million construction workers.

- Requiring employers to pay prevailing wages and abide by apprenticeship requirements to claim the full value of many clean energy tax incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act, as part of the Treasury Department's implementation of the law."

Gallup Poll: 7 in 10 Americans Support Unions

A near-record seven out of every 10 Americans support unions, according to the latest annual Gallup Poll on the popularity of the labor movement. Additionally, in another indication of the backing unions enjoy, the gap between labor support and opposition is the widest in at least half a century.

The poll, done yearly around Labor Day, shows 70%-23% support/opposition regarding unions. The rest are undecided. The "favorable" percentage is down one percentage point from the most recent record high, set two years ago, and up four percentage points from last year.

But the 47-point gap between favorable support and unfavorable opposition this year exceeds the prior modern record, 45 points, two years ago.

Before that, the favorable-unfavorable ratios hovered around two-to-one, Gallup records show, except in 2009. That was the only year when less than half

the poll respondents (48%) favored unions, just edging those who viewed organized labor unfavorably (45%).

The support for unions is in sharp contrast to the lack of it for the corporate class, at least on divisive social issues, according to another Gallup survey three months ago. In essence, overwhelming majorities of people want corporations to remain silent about abortion, religion and political endorsements.

The Gallup data joins other evidence of union popularity. That data includes record numbers of union election filings with the National Labor Relations Board and overwhelming support for the Auto Workers in their strike against the Detroit auto firms last year, and for performers and screenwriters in SAG-AFTRA's and the Writers Guild of America's strikes against the movie studios, TV producers and video streaming moguls.

"Americans want the freedom to organize," said AF-SCME President Lee Saunders, who chairs the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education. "From cultural institutions to health care and child care, working people across the country are showing the power they have in a union to negotiate better pay, to strengthen benefits and job security, to improve worker safety, and to invest in a strong retirement. Americans know that unions give working people the freedom to get ahead."

"We have an opportunity in 2024 to elect pro-worker leaders to the White House, Congress, governorships, state legislatures and beyond who believe unions are essential to growing the middle class and will pass legislation to guarantee workers a seat at the table," he continued. "With public support for unions near an all-time high, we know a better future for all working families is within reach. And we're ready to organize and mobilize to realize that future."

President's Column

Life Is Better in a Union

A couple of recent news items brought well-deserved positive attention to the labor movement. As reported elsewhere in this edition, a new report from the Treasury Department clearly explains some of the ways that unions benefit not just their own respective members, but the overall national economy. And, a new Gallup poll shows widespread support for our movement.



David Heindel

Standing together with co-workers in a union makes a tangible difference in our lives that we feel every day. Workers in labor unions make 18% more in wages than their unrepresented counterparts. We are more likely to have health care benefits. We work in safer workplaces. We have more job security – even and especially in moments of economic crisis. Countries where most workers are in a union are among the happiest and healthiest on Earth. As the AFL-CIO slogan says, life is better in a union.

Being in a union also means building a better future for ourselves and our families, generations down the line. Young people know this – that's why 88% of young workers under the age of 30 approve of unions. It means access to a good, sustainable job in the industries of the future. It means earning wages that help us afford a home and keep up with rising rents, and it means knowing that your retirement is secure. Our future – and the future of our families – is better in a union.

Union representation also amplifies the voices of America's working families. After decades of anti-union propaganda, misinformation and corporate attacks, workers are on the rise. People all over the country are realizing unions are the single best tool we have to stand up to the historic inequity and corporate greed we are up against. Every day, more workers are seeing past the lies and the well-funded anti-union campaigns from corporate America and deciding to come together.

Unions are more popular with the public now than at any time since the mid-1960s, and unions are winning. Let's keep the momentum going so we help ensure that a rising tide does indeed lift all boats.

After Election Day

By the time this edition goes to print (and gets posted online), there will be around a month remaining before Election Day. No matter which candidates you support, I'll bet we can all agree on the relief we'll feel when the campaign ads go away.

But on a more serious note, I encourage all of our members to vote – and to engage in civil discussions if you indeed choose to talk about politics. One thing that stood out to me from the September presidential debate is the point that we all have a lot more in common than what separates us. In this age of social media and constant connectivity, it's regrettably easy to end up in an echo chamber – and to fall victim to believing the worst about an individual or an organization just because they're not perfectly aligned with our views.

We're in this together and we'll need to keep working after Election Day, at every level of government, to promote workplace fairness and workers' rights. Politics affects our livelihoods in numerous ways, and that's why we always stand with pro-maritime, pro-worker candidates, regardless of political party.

Let's focus on our goals and remember that we're really one crew.

SIU Directory

David Heindel, *President*

Augustin Tellez, *Executive Vice President*

Tom Orzechowski, *Secretary-Treasurer*

George Tricker, *Vice President Contracts*

Joe Vincenzo,

Vice President Government Services

Sam Spain,

Asst. Vice President Government Services

WWW.SEAFAREERS.ORG



USNS Point Loma Christened



The U.S. Navy in August christened the *USNS Point Loma* (above), the second of the Spearhead-class Expeditionary Fast Transport (EPF) Flight II configurations, in Mobile, Alabama. SIU CIVMARS will sail aboard the vessel when it enters service. (Photo courtesy Thigpen Photography, Inc./Austal USA)

Union Plus Benefits

How do you want to save money today?



Mortgage Program



Wireless Discounts



Affordable Degrees



Cash Back Shopping

See more at
unionplus.org

UNIONPLUS



SIU-MT-9-12-24

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

Joe Vincenzo:

Phone: (253) 272-7774

Email: jvincenzo@seafarers.org

Asst. Vice President Government Services

Sam Spain:

Phone: (757) 622-1892

Email: sspain@seafarers.org

Government Services Fleet

Representative Jesse Ruth:

Phone: (619) 581-6008

Email: jruth@seafarers.org



USNS Supply Receives Navy Unit Commendation

SIU CIVMARS from the fast combat support vessel *USNS Supply* received the Navy Unit Commendation Award during a Sept. 4 ceremony on the flight deck in Norfolk, Virginia. They were recognized for their efforts while deployed as part of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group from October 2023 to May 2024.

According to the Military Sealift Command (MSC), “During their deployment, *Supply* played a critical role supporting sustained operations as part of Operation Prosperity Guardian and carrier strike group self-defense attacks against the Houthis in the Red Sea. The crew steamed more than 50,000 miles over 247 days in U.S. 5th and 6th Fleets’ areas of operation, performing 143 underway replenishments with U.S. Navy and coalition ships from Great Britain, France, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands and Canada and transferring more than 87 million gallons of fuel and 14,928 pallets of critical cargo and supplies.”

“Our officers and crew of *Supply* are being recognized for their superior performance in the Red Sea,” said *USNS Supply* Ship’s Master, Capt. Pete Lenardson. “I’d like to think those eight long months should put to rest any doubts of our commitment to the Navy, the carrier strike group and MSC’s ability to carry out sustained underway replenishment in what can only be described as a difficult and hostile environment. From the bridge team, to the engine room, each crew member was challenged by this deployment like never before. Those challenges were met and surpassed.”

MSC Commander Rear Adm. Philip Sobeck praised the crew for their sacrifice and performance.

“If you think back, the last time our ships have been in this kind of environment was probably World War II,” he said. “From the bridge all the way to the



SIU CIVMARS and others gather aboard the *USNS Supply* in Norfolk, Virginia, for an awards ceremony that took place Sept. 4. (U.S. Navy photo by Ryan Carter)

keel, every one of you who are a part of *Supply* made a difference each and every day. I truly believe that MSC sails in the united way. And the reason why our vision, ‘United We Sail’ is so important to me is because we get to recognize you today as a team. Your individual performance magnified our ability to do what those Navy ships out there did every single day. They could not do it without you.”

The agency also noted that “in addition to providing sustained logistic

capability during the eight-month span, *Supply*’s CIVMARS also served as goodwill ambassadors during 28 friendship building visits in Greece, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and United Emirates.”

In a message to the crew, MSC Atlantic Commander, Capt. James Murdock noted, “The entire *Supply* crew performed world-class seamanship with dynamic precision and esprit de corps. Your stellar performance is the reason why MSC’s Combat Logistic Fleet has maintained its 75-year

reputation as the supply line for sustained operations at sea, and the CIVMARS who man and equip CLF ships are a key piece to the Navy’s ability to operate forward.”

Also receiving the Navy Unit Commendation Award for this mission were SIU CIVMARS from the MSC ships *USNS Alan Shepard*, *USNS Kanawha*, *USNS Amelia Earhart* and *USS Lewis B. Puller*.

Additionally, Sobeck presented awards to 15 crew members for their individual achievements.

Executive Order Promotes Good Jobs Through ‘Investing in America’ Agenda

Editor’s note: The following news item is adapted from a White House fact sheet.

President Biden in early September signed a landmark executive order on “Investing in America and Investing in American Workers” (known in brief as the Good Jobs EO), which will help ensure that the Biden-Harris Investing in America agenda continues to promote good, high-quality jobs with paths to the middle class.

The Good Jobs EO promotes strong labor standards such as family-sustaining wages, workplace safety, and the free and fair opportunity to join a union, and encourages agencies to implement these standards through their Investing in America programs. President Biden signed the Good Jobs EO during a visit to UA Local 190’s Job Training Center, where he met with union workers and apprentices who have benefitted from the President’s agenda. The event is part of a broader tour to profile the workers and communities across America who are reaping the rewards of the Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in America agenda.

The Biden-Harris Administration is the most pro-union administration in American history. The President and Vice President’s Investing in America agenda – including the American Rescue Plan, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act – have already created hundreds of thousands of jobs, and the President and Vice President have been clear that their Administration will use every tool at their disposal to ensure these jobs are good-paying jobs with the free and fair chance to join a union.

The President’s Good Jobs EO calls on agencies to adopt a series of high-road labor standards that have long been recognized to lead to both better jobs and on-time, high-quality delivery of federally funded projects. With this Executive Order, the Biden-Harris Administration is the first in history to specify a clear list of labor standards that all Federal agencies should look to prioritize.

By mobilizing once-in-a-generation public- and private-sector investments, the Biden-Harris Investing in America agenda is transforming our economy

– onshoring manufacturing, modernizing our nation’s infrastructure, and building a clean energy economy. The United States has created nearly 16 million jobs since President Biden and Vice President Harris took office, with the lowest average unemployment rate of any administration in 50 years. Already, their Investing in America agenda has catalyzed over \$900 billion in private-sector investment in clean energy and manufacturing. Last year, clean energy jobs grew at double the rate of job growth in the rest of the economy and clean energy unionization rates reached the highest level in history. The Good Jobs EO builds on that momentum and will ensure that these investments continue to improve opportunities for millions of Americans.

The Good Jobs EO calls on agencies to adopt the following labor standards:

–Promoting worker voice, through Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), Community Benefits Agreements, voluntary union recognition, and neutrality with respect to union organizing. These instruments, which agencies are encouraged to prioritize where appropriate and consistent with law, mark the strongest package of priorities that any Administration has taken to help promote the free and fair choice to join a union through federally funded and federally supported projects.

Providing tools to promote high-wage jobs, through prevailing wage standards and other equitable compensation practices, such as prioritizing equal pay and pay transparency. This Administration is taking groundbreaking steps to raise wages by directing agencies to consider incentivizing specific high-wage standards for manufacturing grants—going beyond long-standing Davis-Bacon requirements that only apply to construction jobs.

–Promoting worker economic security, by directing agencies to consider prioritizing projects that supply the benefits that workers need—including child and dependent care to health insurance, paid leave, and retirement benefits.

–Supporting workforce development through registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships,

labor-management partnerships, and partnerships with training organizations including community colleges, public workforce boards, and the American Climate Corps.

–Leveling the playing field, by encouraging grantees to develop equitable workforce plans and offering project supports that promote fair hiring and management practices as the projects develop.

–Supporting workplace safety by encouraging agencies to prioritize reporting structures that help ensure compliance with all workplace health and safety laws.

–To oversee agencies in their implementation of these labor standards, the Good Jobs EO creates a new Investing in Good Jobs Task Force (Task Force) in the Executive Office of the President. The Task Force will coordinate policy development that drives the creation of high-quality jobs and ensures project delivery. The Task Force will be co-chaired by the Secretary of Labor and the Director of the National Economic Council and include Seniors Advisors to the President and members of the President’s Cabinet.

In addition, the Good Jobs EO outlines strategies for agencies to enact these standards across their grant programs, consistent with applicable law:

–Incentivize these strong labor standards to the greatest extent possible by including application evaluation criteria related to strong labor standards. This includes, consistent with relevant statutes, prioritizing applicants who employ Project Labor Agreements and Community Benefit Agreements in funding opportunities.

–Issue guidance or best practices to promote and implement these priorities.

–Collect data on job quality to further encourage best practices and increase accountability. This includes embedding checkboxes on high-road labor standards into grant applications—a proven strategy that has yielded 22 PLA commitments and 34 new registered apprenticeship programs during a pilot study at the Department of Transportation.

–Conduct pre-award negotiations for key programs and projects as appropriate, and include ensuing commitments in grant agreements.

Seafarer Snapshots from the Fleet



Clockwise, beginning with photo directly above: SIU Asst. VP Sam Spain (third from left) and SIU Government Services Division Representative Jesse Ruth (third from right) meet with CIVMARS on the *USS John L. Canley*. SIU VP Government Services Joe Vincenzo (right) and colleagues are pictured at an Army Corps of Engineers conference (where topics included workplace safety, wages, recruiting and retention, and U.S. Coast Guard credentialing). Spain and Ruth meet with CIVMARS in San Diego (both photos at the bottom of the page). Vincenzo (right) discusses contract proposals with crew members on the NOAA ship *Ferdinand R. Hassler*. CIVMAR Donald Vorhees is a veteran of both the Air Force and the Navy – and he has earned a long list of accolades, including a Vietnam Service Award, National Defense Service Award, good-conduct commendations in both branches, and many others.

