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CWA news

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**ELECTIONS
ARE
ABOUT
CHOICES**

WORKING Together

Election 2012: The Choice is Clear for American Workers

Elections are about choices. Do we want more tax breaks for the wealthy? Do we want to gut the Medicare and Social Security safety net for millions of Americans? Or do

we want an economic recovery in which we participate? And how do we get there?

This issue of the CWA News compares the positions of the presidential candidates, as well as candidates in other key races, on the issues that

matter to working families. No rhetoric, no wild claims, just the facts.

Working Americans, union or not, should realize that politics should be about public policy issues, about our jobs, our health care, our retirement security, and our bargaining and organizing rights. Politics

should not be about personal issues, yet sadly, many in our nation campaign in reverse – their politics are about issues that should be personal and their public policy positions are missing.

Currently, 88 percent of American workers don't have collective bargaining coverage and the 12 percent who do are mostly playing defense. Largely, as a result, we're the only economy in the world where real wages have stagnated for the past 40 years.

President Barack Obama said again in Detroit on Labor Day that we must preserve collective bargaining rights. Sadly, Governor Mitt Romney would wipe out what's left of collective bargaining if he's elected. But even in the Democratic Party, few elected officials understand the effect that the collapse of collective bargaining has had on our economy and our rights as working Americans.

There's not going to be one neat approach to building a movement for economic justice and democracy. Movement building is messy! But we have great examples in our booklet, "Building a Movement for Economic Justice and Democracy," of local unions across CWA doing amazing work. Right now, in Canton, Ohio, our members are going door-

to-door with activists from other organizations, building Stand up for Ohio. Stand-Up won't just mobilize people for the November election but will fight to keep homes from being foreclosed, and support organizing drives and collective bargaining campaigns. In Philadelphia, CWA, the Transport Workers Union, and the NAACP are together registering voters at

**Do we want more tax breaks for the wealthy?
Do we want to gut the Medicare and Social Security safety net for millions of Americans?
Or do we want an economic recovery in which we participate?
And how do we get there?**

subway stops. In Detroit, the UAW is joining residents in sit-ins to prevent housing foreclosures and helping renegotiate loans with area banks. Across the union movement, there is a growing awareness that we must involve ourselves in broader campaigns so we can be part of rebuilding the American dream, building our democracy, and winning the fight for economic justice.



Larry Cohen, CWA President

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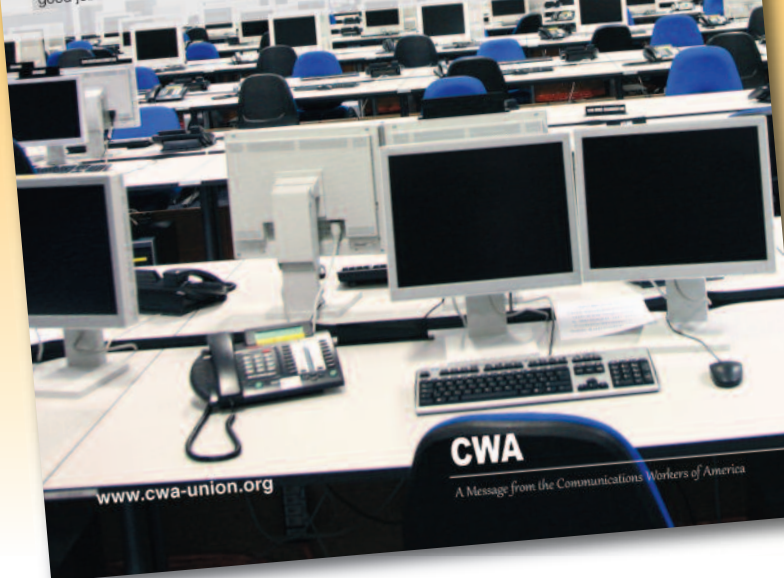
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**WANT ECONOMIC RECOVERY?
BRING JOBS BACK NOW.**

Too many U.S. jobs are going overseas. In June, T-Mobile USA closed seven U.S. call centers leaving thousands of workers jobless. The Department of Labor determined that those workers should get Trade Adjustment Assistance because T-Mobile sends that work overseas.

We salute those elected officials, like Representative Tim Bishop, Senator Bob Casey and all the cosponsors of the U.S. Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act, for fighting to bring back good jobs.



Elections Are About Choices

For working families, there's a clear choice between President Obama and Governor Romney, when it comes to jobs, workers' rights, women's issues, Medicare and Social Security, and so much more.

Without Unions, Middle Class Families Are Worse Off: Here's Proof

We know that bargaining rights and union membership make a difference. But never has the connection between the loss of bargaining rights and the decline of the middle class in the US been so clear.

The Center for American Progress Action Fund in its report, "Unions Make the Middle Class," spells out exactly what has happened in the US as bargaining rights have declined.

Some of the highlights:

- "The percentage of workers in unions steadily declined largely because the legal and political environment prevents private-sector workers from freely exercising their right to join or not to join a union. Membership in private-sector unions stands at less than 7 percent today, from around 30 percent in the late 1960s... Public-sector unionization

is under significant threat from conservative political opposition."

- "Without the counterbalance of workers united together in unions, the middle class withers because the economy and politics tend to be dominated by the rich and powerful, which in turn leads to an even greater flow of money in our economy to the top of income scale. The percentage of unionized workers tracks very closely with the share of the nation's income going to the middle class—those in the three-fifths of income earners."

- "The share of pretax income earned by the richest 1 percent of Americans more than doubled between 1974 and 2007. And for the richest of the rich, the top 0.1 per-

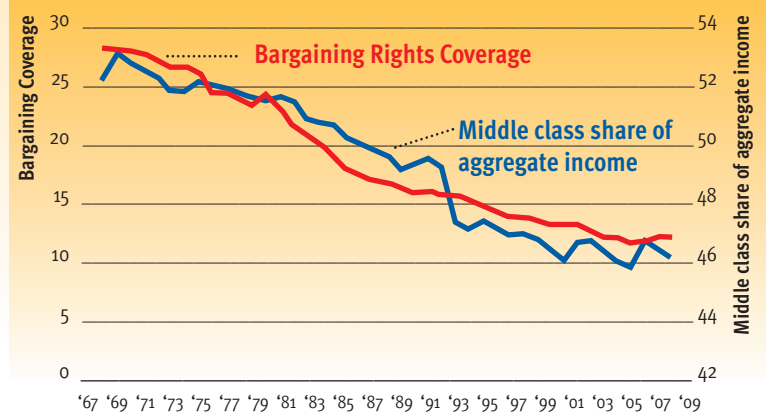
cent, the gains have been even more astronomical, quadrupling over this same period to 12.3 percent of all income. In contrast, incomes for more Americans have been nearly flat and median income after accounting for inflation actually fell for working age households... between 2001 and 2007."

- According to new Census Data, "a 10-percentage-point increase in the unionization rate would boost the average annual income for middle-class households—unionized or not—by \$1,501 a year."

Read the full report at www.americanprogress.org, search "unions make the middle class" for the latest updates.

Bargaining Rights Matter

As bargaining rights decrease, middle class income shrink



Source: This material was created by the Center for American Progress (americanprogress.org)

JOBS

OBAMA

Obama pushed for passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which saved or created more than 4 million private sector jobs.

Obama called for a 20 percent tax credit to companies that scale back foreign operations and bring jobs back to the United States.

In 2009, as part of the President's economic recovery plan, Obama extended federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) to customer service professionals and high-tech and public sector workers who lose their jobs due to offshoring, imports, and other trade practices. These workers had been excluded from receiving TAA benefits. As a result, CWA won TAA benefits for the thousands of T-Mobile USA workers who lost their jobs when the company closed seven call centers this June.

Obama rescued the American auto industry, saving more than 1 million jobs. Today the US auto industry is healthy and profitable.

Obama wants to expand the country's high-tech manufacturing capacity and supply clean energy projects with parts and equipment made in the USA.

Obama says, "I believe our economy is stronger when workers are getting paid good wages and good benefits." He has supported proposals to raise the minimum wage for workers to \$9.50 an hour.

ROMNEY

Romney, while heading Bain Capital, was a pioneer in supporting the offshoring of jobs to China. Bain specialized in closing US plants, laying off workers, eliminating health care and pensions and sending US jobs overseas.

Romney wants to give companies incentives to send jobs and profits offshore.

Romney opposed the auto industry rescue, stating that we should, "Let Detroit go bankrupt."

Romney wants to kill investments in clean energy jobs and opposes an important wind energy production tax credit, putting 37,000 jobs at risk, particularly in Midwestern states.

Romney wants to make jobless workers provide for their own unemployment benefits: "If I were president right now, I would go to Congress with a new system for unemployment, which would have specific accounts from which people could withdraw their own funds. And I would not put in place a continuation of the current plan."

Romney says, "Right now, there's probably not a need to raise the minimum wage."

Source: candidates' websites, news reports and speeches.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

OBAMA

Named worker advocates to the National Labor Relations Board and the National Mediation Board to support the rights of workers to bargain collectively and form unions. Republican Senators vowed to block any appointment to the NLRB to keep the agency from doing its job. Obama made three recess appointments so workers would have some path to workplace justice.

Supports bargaining rights for workers. In his Labor Day 2012 message, Obama said, "I am committed to preserving the collective bargaining rights that helped build the greatest middle class the world has ever known. It is the fundamental right of every American to have a voice on the job, and a chance to negotiate for fair pay, safe working conditions, and a secure retirement. When we uphold these basic principles, our middle class grows and everybody prospers."

ROMNEY

Called the National Labor Relations Board a tool of the "union bosses" that is packed with "union stooges."

Attacks collective bargaining rights and joined in the assault on state workers' rights in Ohio and Wisconsin. Romney blames unions for the country's economic woes and says, "I've taken on union bosses before. I'm happy to take them on again."

Supports a national "right to work" (for less) law that will restrict workers' rights to bargain.

Said majority signup legislation would represent a massive imposition on the freedom of workers to choose whether or not to become part of a union.

Source: candidates' websites, news reports and speeches.

More Wins for Workers

Over the past four years, the Obama administration has moved to protect workers' rights, pay, health and safety on the job in these areas:

- In 2009, the president appointed Mark Pearce, a CWA attorney, and Craig Becker, an SEIU attorney, to the National Labor Relations Board.

- The president named former AFA-CWA President Linda Puchala to head the National Mediation Board, making it finally possible for union elections in the airline and transportation industries to follow democratic election standards.

- Airport screeners who had been denied bargaining rights under the Bush administration finally got the right to organize and bargain under the Obama administration's Transportation Security Administration.

- The president signed into the law a bill to provide medical treatment and compensation to 9/11 responders.

Voter Suppression Threatens To Turn Back The Clock

Our voting rights are under attack. Since 2011, at least 180 bills tightening voter restrictions have been introduced in 41 states, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law. And 17 states have passed laws that could even tilt the outcome of the 2012 election, as they hold 218 electoral votes of the 270 needed to win the White House.

There are a number of ways to suppress the vote — shorter voting hours, purging voter rolls, selectively understaffed precincts — but in this election cycle the most prevalent method will be stricter voter ID requirements. One out of 10 Americans doesn't have the kind of government-issued photo ID cards mandated by the new legislation, and nearly 500,000 Americans could struggle to get a photo ID because of limited access to transportation, the Brennan Center has warned.

Here are the races we'll have our eye on this November:

■ **Pennsylvania:** Citizens and activists are waiting for another court ruling on the controversial voter ID law that puts the voting rights of some 750,000 Pennsylvanians in jeopardy.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court sent the voter ID law back to a lower

court to determine if acquiring the necessary IDs interferes with voting rights and could unfairly disenfranchise voters.

The state's Commonwealth Court has until Oct. 2 to respond.

■ **Florida:** After erroneously purging thousands of "potential non-citizens" from its voter rolls, Florida is now informing them that they are indeed registered to vote. The decision came after civil rights groups filed a lawsuit alleging discrimination against Hispanic and black voters. But, a federal judge has upheld a new law cutting the number of early voting days from 14 to 8.

■ **South Carolina:** A federal court in DC will decide whether South Carolina's stringent new voter ID law violates the Voting Rights Act. The Justice Department objected to the law last year, saying it could potentially disenfranchise minority voters.

■ **Minnesota:** Voters will get the final say on a proposed constitutional amendment that would require a government issued photo ID to vote in person.

■ **Texas:** A US District Court three-judge panel blocked a Texas law that would have required voters to show

a photo ID, ruling that the legislation "imposes strict, unforgiving burdens on the poor" and that "a disproportionately high percentage of African Americans and Hispanics in Texas live in poverty."

■ **Wisconsin:** A state circuit court judge blocked a voter ID law signed by GOP Gov. Scott Walker. The judge ruled that the law addressed a problem that was "very limited, if indeed it exists."

■ **Colorado:** The state has stopped its plan to purge voters just weeks before Election Day.

These undemocratic attacks aren't a coincidence.

The American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, a right-wing policy group backed by big business, has systemically been spreading fear of a nonexistent voter fraud epidemic. Many investigative reports revealed that ALEC drafted and distributed model voter ID legislation among Republican legislatures and governors, who then enacted ALEC's recommendations to disenfranchise scores of voters — especially groups that typically vote Democratic.

Daphne Taylor

CWA Local 13500

In Philadelphia, we have activists spread out over nine busy train and bus stations. We're wearing bright red shirts that say VOTER REGISTRATION with CWA, NAACP and TWU logos. We do stand out, and as a group we've been pulling in about 60 to 65 registrations a day. We've been doing really well.

Voter ID is a big deal. We have a lot of seniors who are having trouble. Lots of people migrated from down south, where they didn't have birth certificates — they had midwives. They're wondering, how do you get an ID without a birth certificate? We're telling them how to get those free IDs and other forms of ID so they can go to the ballot box.

Recently I came across two older women, who are Jehovah's Witnesses, who believe it's all in God's hands. They weren't going to vote. I expressed to them that the president in office has a huge impact on women's rights, seniors' rights — their own rights. I tried to impress on them the importance of voting. It actually worked and I got them registered.

This is the first time I've been really politically active. I'm telling everyone why this election is just so important — particularly for unions. We definitely need to maintain our quality of life and fight for our rights. I joined CWA five years ago, when I started working at Verizon. Especially with the fight over our contract, we need to have a president that stands with workers to protect collective bargaining.



Pennsylvania activists work to register new voters everyday.

5 STATES have reduced early voting
8 STATES have passed photo ID requirements
12 STATES disenfranchise former offenders
41 STATES have introduced restrictive legislation



WILL YOU BE ABLE TO VOTE THIS YEAR?

Source: NAACP

CWA, Allies to Register 2 New Pennsylvania Voters

CWA partnered with the Pennsylvania NAACP, Transport Workers Union and Amalgamated Transit Union to register 25,000 new voters in the Keystone State.

Activists took to the streets of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh with voter registration forms and information about the state's tough new voter identification law, recently passed by the GOP-controlled state legislature, which is designed to squelch voter turnout — particularly among seniors, minorities, students and low-income residents.

"Together, we worked day and night in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to register new voters and educate current voters about what they now need to do to participate in the democratic process," said CWA District 2-13 Vice President Ed Mooney. "Some in the State Legislature may think they can keep eligible voters away from the polls with unnecessary hurdles, but they need to think again."

In early October, the state's Commonwealth Court will determine



CWA activists rally outside a Pennsylvania Supreme Court building.

whether the law disenfranchises voters. Proponents of the law claim it's intended to prevent voter fraud, but since 2000, only 10 cases of in-person voter fraud have been proven nationally.

And reports already show that nearly 750,000 Pennsylvanians do not have an acceptable ID to vote.

But that doesn't seem to bother Republican state Rep. Daryl Metcalfe, who sponsored the law.

What happens if GOP's voter suppression works?

By Harold Meyerson

Suppose Mitt Romney eked out a victory in November by a margin smaller than the number of young and minority voters who couldn't cast ballots because the photo-identification laws enacted by Republican governors and legislators kept them from the polls. What should Democrats do then? What would Republicans do? And how would other nations respond?

As suppositions go, this one isn't actually far-fetched. No one in the Romney camp expects a blowout; if he does prevail, every poll suggests it will be by the skin of his teeth. Numerous states under Republican control have passed strict voter identification laws. Pennsylvania, Texas, Indiana, Kansas, Tennessee and Georgia require specific kinds of ID; the laws in Michigan, Florida, South Dakota, Idaho and Louisiana are only slightly more flexible. Wisconsin's law was struck down by a state court.

Instances of voter fraud are almost nonexistent, but the right-wing media's harping on the issue has given Republican politicians cover to push these laws through statehouse after statehouse. The laws' intent, however, is entirely political: By creating restrictions that disproportionately

impact minorities, they're supposed to bolster Republican prospects. Ticking off Republican achievements in Pennsylvania's House of Representatives, their legislative leader, Mike Turzai, extolled in a talk last month that "voter ID... is gonna allow Governor Romney to win the state of Pennsylvania."

How could Turzai be so sure? The Pennsylvania Department of State acknowledges that as many as 759,000 residents lack the proper ID. That's 9.2 percent of registered voters, but the figure rises to 18 percent in heavily black Philadelphia. The law also requires that the photo IDs have expiration dates, which many student IDs do not.

The pattern is similar in every state that has enacted these restrictions. Attorney General Eric Holder has said that 8 percent of whites in Texas lack the kind of identification required by that state's law; the percentage among blacks is three times that. The Justice Department has filed suit against Southern states whose election procedures are covered by the 1965 Voting Rights Act. It is also investigating Pennsylvania's law, though that state is not subject to some provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

If voter suppression goes forward and Romney narrowly prevails, consider the consequences. An overwhelmingly and increasingly white Republican Party, based in the South, will owe its power to discrimination against black and Latino voters, much like the old segregationist Dixiecrats. It's not that Republicans haven't run voter suppression operations before, but they've been under-the-table dirty tricks, such as calling minority voters with misinformation about polling-place locations and hours. By contrast, this year's suppression would be the intended outcome of laws that Republicans publicly supported, just as the denial of the franchise to Southern blacks before 1965 was the intended result of laws such as poll taxes. More ominous still, by further estranging minority voters, even as minorities constitute a steadily larger share of the electorate, Republicans will be putting themselves in a posi-

tion where they increasingly rely on only white voters and where their only path to victory will be the continued suppression of minority votes. A cycle more vicious is hard to imagine.

It's also not a cycle calculated to endear America to the rest of the world. The United States abolished electoral apartheid in the 1960s for reasons that were largely moral but were also geopolitical. Eliminating segregation and race-specific voting helped our case against the Soviets during the Cold War, particularly among the emerging nations of Asia and Africa. It's not likely that many, anywhere, would favorably view what is essentially a racially based restriction of the franchise. China might well argue that our commitment to democracy is a sham.

And what should Democrats do if Romney comes to power on the strength of racially suppressed votes? Such an outcome and such a

presidency, I'd hope they contend, would be illegitimate — a betrayal of our laws and traditions, of our very essence as a democratic republic. Mass demonstrations would be in order. So would a congressional refusal to confirm any of Romney's appointments. A presidency premised on a racist restriction of the franchise creates a political and constitutional crisis, and responding to it with resigned acceptance or inaction would negate America's hard-won commitment to democracy and equality.

The course on which Republicans have embarked isn't politics as usual. We don't rig elections by race in America, not anymore, and anyone who does should not be rewarded with uncontested power.

Printed with permission. This column by Harold Meyerson appeared in the Washington Post. He also is an editor at The American Prospect. Check out that publication at prospect.org

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the Court hearing on the controversial voter ID law.

“**THE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMUNITY & LABOR MOVEMENT share the same VALUES, FIGHT for the same ISSUES. And we look forward to the LONG TERM, & standing together on EVERY ISSUE. As we're here together tonight fighting this law in Pennsylvania, we look forward to FIGHTING around the country with CWA.**”

Marvin Bing,
NAACP Northeast Regional Director

“As Mitt Romney said, 47% of the people that are living off the public dole, living off their neighbors' hard work, and we have a lot of people out there that are too lazy to get up and get out there and get the ID they need,” he said. “If individuals are too lazy, the state can't fix that.”

Meanwhile, thousands of “lazy” Pennsylvanians have spent hours upon hours navigating crowded DMVs and Social Security offices to get IDs so they can cast a ballot.



Earl Patrick

Earl Patrick's Story

I'm working as a volunteer for Obama, doing phone banking and voter registration. At one point, I was waiting out what the courts would decide on Pennsylvania's voter ID law, but my colleagues on the Obama campaign insisted I go down and get one just in case. It would be bad to be registering people to vote and I couldn't vote myself!

I'm 75 years old, and I've been registered for 50 years or more. But I don't drive. So I was caught in that dilemma where I didn't have what they call a verified voter ID. So I took public transit down to the motor vehicle office. It was wall-to-wall people. I got there at 10:30 am. And it was wall-to-wall people when I left three hours later.

I was active in The Newspaper Guild for 20 years, pretty militant. Before that I was an Air Force commander, stationed in Georgia, Mississippi and Texas in the '50s. The rhetoric from Romney and the Tea Party — these things scare me.

Voter ID, in my mind, is contradictory in terms of citizenship. You can have a driver's license and you don't have to be a citizen. It discriminates against a lot of people. This is what people in the movement in the '50s and '60s fought against. No question about it.

I was out one weekend canvassing a neighborhood in South Philadelphia. I walked into a couple of halfway houses — all men. And some of them didn't have Social Security cards, but were registered. That's a problem. A Social Security card is the No. 1 requirement when you go down to get your ID.

I'm retired. But if I had a job, given the circumstances, I would have had to take a vacation day to go down and register. That's a handicap for some folks. Some people don't even get vacation days.

I'm lucky I'm in good shape, but some elderly folks aren't able to get out and about on public transit. It's not that easy. The mayor just shot down a plan to issue photo ID cards through nursing homes, saying the city doesn't have the resources. A lot of blacks migrated here in the '40s during the Great Migration. With so many birth certificates misplaced, that's another problem.

They want to limit people voting, that's my opinion. So I'm doing what I can.

Voter Harassment, Circa 2012

This is how voter intimidation worked in 1966: White teenagers in Americus, Ga., harassed black citizens in line to vote, and the police refused to intervene. Black plantation workers in Mississippi had to vote in plantation stores, overseen by their bosses. Black voters in Choctaw County, Ala., had to hand their ballots directly to white election officials for inspection.

This is how it works today: In an ostensible hunt for voter fraud, a Tea Party group, True the Vote, descends on a largely minority precinct and combs the registration records for the slightest misspelling or address error. It uses this information to challenge voters at the polls, and though almost every challenge is baseless, the arguments and delays frustrate those in line and reduce turnout.

Protect Collective Bargaining

Unions and allies are on the offensive.

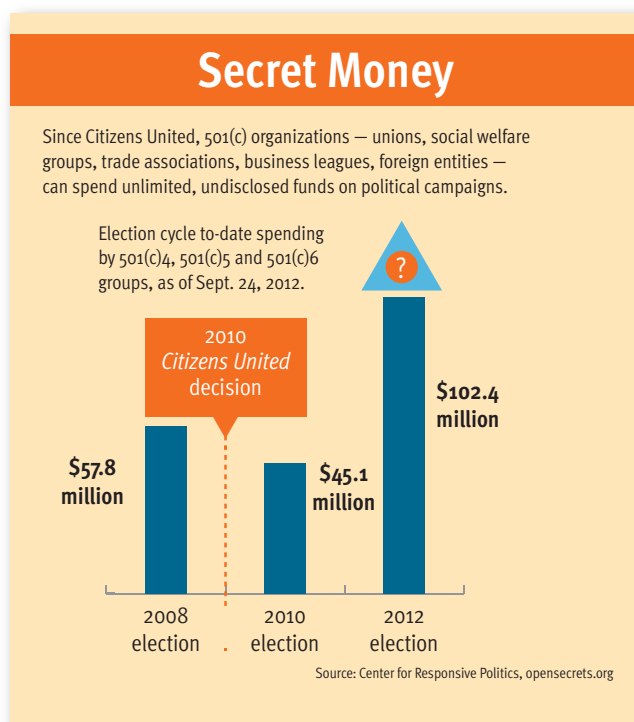
Michigan workers, with support from key allies like the Sierra Club, have launched a bold campaign to enshrine collective bargaining rights in their state's constitution. The measure would shield them against future legislative attacks on bargaining rights.

"The Sierra Club is a strong supporter of workers' rights and we are proud to be standing side-by-side

with the Communications Workers of America to protect working families," said Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director. "In Michigan, CWA and the Sierra Club also are working together to pass Proposals 2 and 3 which will help build a clean energy economy that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs and protect Michigan's working families." Activists from CWA and Sierra are working together, knocking on doors and talking to voters about both issues.

This fight in Michigan is critical to showing the nation's voters that collective bargaining is more than just wages and pensions. Collective bargaining gives nurses a voice to speak out on behalf of patient care, public workers a voice on vital community services and university workers a say on budget cuts that hurt students and communities. Collective bargaining makes communities stronger.

"We can't fight each and every piece of legislation that attacks workers' rights, we don't have the resources," said CWA District 4 staff



representative Mike Schulte. "So we tried to fix it in one strike. We know we need to protect collective bargaining."

Since the 2010 midterm elec-

tions, new Republican majorities have pushed legislation to strip the rights of workers. But workers have claimed victory in Ohio, where voters

overturned the law eliminating public workers' collective bargaining, and Wisconsin, where a judge recently struck down nearly all of the state law that effectively ended collective bargaining rights.

In November, the fight moves to Michigan. It's been a turbulent ride for Michigan's ballot initiative, known as Proposal 2, which was first drafted about a year ago in preparation for the November election. Protect Working Families, a coalition of labor unions, collected nearly 700,000 signatures — more than double the number of petitioners required — to put the proposal on the ballot. The Republican governor and attorney general waged a court battle to prevent citizens from exercising their right to vote on the measure. Launching an all-out assault, powerful corporate interests have spent millions of dollars to mislead voters on this issue.

But Protect Working Families won and the issue is on the ballot. Now it's up to the voters.

"The CALIFORNIA CWA & the SIERRA CLUB are working together to defeat Prop. 32 and to SUPPORT Prop. 39, which would GENERATE an ESTIMATE \$500 million in clean energy investments."

Michael Brune, Executive Director, Sierra Club

Get Money Out of Politics

Big corporate money is working to silence the political voice of working people — again.

"Citizens United," the 2010 US Supreme Court decision that gave corporations the ability to spend unlimited amounts of money in elections, has already unleashed a flood of money into our election process. We've seen a huge increase in spending in 2012 races, the majority by secret donors who don't have to disclose who's behind the mega-contributions.

In November, Californians will be voting on Prop. 32 — the deceptively-named "Stop Special Interest Money Now Act" — a measure that would weaken workers' ability to have a voice in the political process.

"It's not campaign finance. It tricks people into thinking it'll clean up politics and keep corporate money out, when it does absolutely nothing and only exists to silence the middle class," said CWA Local 9416 Legislative Chair Rob England. And if big business succeeds in passing limiting workers' political voice in California, other states are certain to follow.

The measure would make it illegal for workers to voluntarily make political contributions through payroll deduction. It's an obvious attempt to stop workers from having any political voice. Executives don't use payroll deduction, they just write big fat checks.

Prop 32 also exempts secret Super PACs and corporate front groups from any restrictions, so they can continue to spend unlimited dollars to influence elections. These groups already have spent more than \$95 million in California elections since 2004. Only working people — both private and public sector workers — would lose their right to participate in the political process.

A shadowy organization with close ties to the conservative billionaire Koch brothers just dropped \$4 million to pass a ballot measure, and

the initiative's top financial backer is the Lincoln Club of Orange County, a right-wing fundraising powerhouse that boasts it was "instrumental" in pushing the Citizens United.

According to the nonprofit Center

for Responsive Politics, business already outspends labor 15 to 1. As San Francisco State University labor studies professor John Logan warns, Prop. 32 would "turn California elections into Citizens United on steroids."

Why I'm an Activist



Felipe Gutierrez
CWA Local 6201

Why am I involved? I'm union. I'm LGBT. I'm an immigrant. I'm a Mexican American who became a US citizen just four days after September 11, 2001.

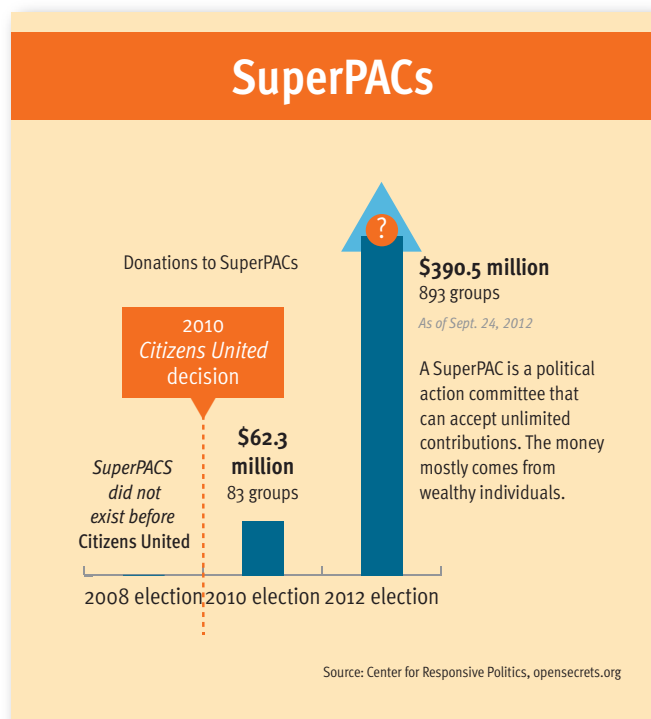
This is my first election cycle as legislative chair of CWA Local 6201. But I've been politically involved for the past 10 years.

Change doesn't occur unless you make it occur. I know it's cliché, but it's a fact. You have to get on your feet, use your hands, do the work yourself. Don't sit back and let others take charge of your wages, health care and job security. You have to get up, get out and vote. You need to be making those calls at the phone bank. Write those letters.

If you don't vote, you have no power.

In North Texas, we're fighting hard for two great supporters of working families: State Sen. Wendy Davis, who is running for reelection, and state Rep. Marc Veasey, the Democratic nominee for North Texas' newest congressional district. And we'll be getting out the vote for all our labor-endorsed candidates.

Every election year, people say this is the most important one of our lifetime. But when it comes down to labor, it really is. People need to understand what's at stake and what we'll be losing if we don't elect our labor-endorsed candidate — Barack Obama. That's why we're working to educate our members on the issues, laying down what's at stake and what they could lose in the long run.



CWAer Running for Office



Karla May
Legislator in the Missouri House of Representatives running for re-election in District 84, Union steward for CWA Local 6300

I started my career in politics at 8 years old, stuffing envelopes and passing out literature, when my mother, a former alderwoman, was

working a campaign for a local politician. She later ran herself and won her seat, and that really stuck with me. I started working on other elections and getting out the vote. My father was a longtime UAW steward, so organizing has been in my blood for a long time.

As an adult, I saw that the community I grew up in was suffering. We just weren't getting services like basic trash pickup, street cleaning and grass cutting. These things are things our tax dollars automatically pay for, but we weren't seeing a dime. I knew that if I left, people wouldn't have a voice to bring them together around certain issues. So I ran for office. I ran for office three times before I won — you have to build up to it!

I went to work at the Capitol in August 2010. That year it was an all-out attack on working men and women. And I realized my work as a union steward had prepared me. I was already familiar with the Capitol. I understood the fight for better wages, health care insurance and protection if you get injured on the job. As a legislator — just as a union steward in the workplace — you stand up for your rights.

CWA is the largest local in this area. We've got to keep electing union members to key positions in local government and state government, so we don't have to keep playing defense. We'll get them into office and keep moving up the food chain. If we don't switch to offense, you'll see a huge effort to get rid of unions all together. We have the votes. We can make it happen.

Why I'm an Activist



Jane Phillips
CWA Local 4900

Educating people has always been my biggest goal. Without legislative action, we're never going to be successful in representation or organizing.

Now it's more important than ever. We're supporting former Indiana House Speaker John Gregg in his run for governor. He's for

working families, while Mike Pence didn't support a single bill that helped working families in the Senate. This year we became a "right to work" state, so it's with great passion that all the locals are working to get Gregg elected.

And if things go our way, there are five congressional seats that could go to Democrats.

I am so proud that at CWA we do look at the candidates. Just because you're a Democrat, if you're not supporting working family issues, we're not going to support you.

We're telling members, "Look at the facts and look at what directly impacts you." Once you take the time for one-on-one conversations, people understand it's not about party and it's really about the issues.

And the Winner Is....

The winner of the iPad contest that was announced in the Summer 2012 CWA News with an end date of September 30, 2012 is Francine Demyan, a member of CWA Local 4340 in Parma, Ohio. Congratulations Francine!

Methodology for random selection of winner: Each entrant was assigned an ID number, winner was selected using the random.org application.

SOCIAL SECURITY & MEDICARE

OBAMA

Obama has pledged to safeguard Social Security. "I'll fight with everything I've got to stop those who would gamble your Social Security on Wall Street. Because you shouldn't be worried that a sudden downturn in the stock market will put all you've worked so hard for—all you've earned—at risk."

Obama wants to make Medicare more affordable, promising that he will not allow the budget "to be an excuse for turning Medicare into a voucher program that leaves seniors at the mercy of the insurance industry." The Affordable Care Act closes the coverage gap in the Medicare prescription drug program known as the doughnut hole.

Obama took Medicare subsidies that were being made to insurance companies and overpayments to some providers and put those dollars back into patient care.

The Affordable Care Act also vastly expands Medicaid, covering about half of the nation's uninsured.

ROMNEY

Romney supports privatizing Social Security, exposing seniors' savings security to the whims of the stock market. "Individual retirement accounts offer an option that would allow today's wage earners to direct a portion of their Social Security tax to a private account rather than go entirely to pay the benefits of current retirees, as is the case today. Owners of these individual accounts would invest in a combination of stocks and bonds."

Romney supports proposals to cut Social Security benefits and raise the retirement age. "I'd also add a year or two to the retirement age under Social Security."

The Romney-Ryan plan will end Medicare as we know it. It would create a privatized voucher program and raise the eligibility age for benefits. It would force seniors to pay thousands of dollars more, while insurance companies rake in billions in profits.

The Romney-Ryan plan would replace the current Medicaid program with block grants, shrinking this medical safety net for the poorest Americans, including low-income elderly Americans. Currently there are 9 million disabled and elderly Americans receiving Medicaid, 1 million of them in nursing homes.

Romney's plan for the uninsured: "if someone has a heart attack, they don't sit in their apartment and — and die. We pick them up in an ambulance, and take them to the hospital, and give them care."

How much more will the Romney-Ryan Medicare plan cost you?

Learn how much you and your family would have to pay

Gov. Mitt Romney and Rep. Paul Ryan want to convert the Medicare program into a voucher system for people who are under 55 years of age.¹ Under their plan seniors would receive vouchers to purchase health insurance from private insurance companies or from traditional Medicare. If premiums for Medicare or the private plan they choose cost more than the voucher amount, seniors will have to pay the difference themselves. The Romney-Ryan plan would also convert Medicaid into a block grant program and repeal the Affordable Care Act. Gov. Romney and Rep. Ryan claim that no one over 55 will be affected by their health care plan. This claim is false. Their plan would harm *all* seniors.

Current age: 65 (born in 1947)	Current age: 54 (born in 1958)	Current age: 48 (born in 1964)	Current age: 39 (born in 1973)	Current age: 29 (born in 1983)
Age when eligible for Medicare: 65 (in 2012)	Age when eligible for Medicare: 65 (in 2023)	Age when eligible for Medicare: 66 (in 2030)	Age when eligible for Medicare: 67 (in 2040)	Age when eligible for Medicare: 67 (in 2050)
Average additional cost during retirement under Romney-Ryan plan: \$11,100	Average additional cost during retirement under Romney-Ryan plan: \$59,500	Average additional cost during retirement under Romney-Ryan plan: \$124,600	Average additional cost during retirement under Romney-Ryan plan: \$216,600	Average additional cost during retirement under Romney-Ryan plan: \$331,200
What that money could go to instead: Two years of groceries for average Medicare senior ²	What that money could go to instead: The average Medicare senior's life savings ³	What that money could go to instead: A child's college tuition and living expenses ⁴	What that money could go to instead: A new home and furnishings ⁵	What that money could go to instead: Raising a child from birth to 18 ⁶

*Cost in 2012 dollars. All costs calculated in Center for American Progress Action Fund, "Increased Costs During Retirement Under the Romney-Ryan Medicare Plan," (2012) available at <http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/healthcare/report/2012/08/24/33915/>.
1 People who turn 55 later this year will also be grandfathered.
2 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, "Medicare At A Glance," (2011) available at <http://www.kff.org/medicare/upload/1066-14.pdf>.
3 Ibid.
4 United States Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics, "Fast Fact: Tuition Costs of Colleges and Universities," available at <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76>.
5 United States Census Bureau, "Median and Average Sales Prices of New Homes Sold in United States," available at <http://www.census.gov/construction/prices/comon.pdf>.
6 United States Department of Agriculture: Center for Nutrition and Policy Promotion, "Expenditures on Children by Families, 2011," available at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/CRC/crc2011.pdf>.

Source: This material was created and published by the Center for American Progress

In Their Own Words...

“There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you name it. My job is not to worry about those people. I’ll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.”

Mitt Romney at a Boca Raton, Fla., fundraiser, May 2012

“We’re not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers.”

Romney pollster Neil Newhouse

“Mitt Romney brought us a new verb in the English language: ‘Bained.’ Workers know they’ve been ‘Bained’ when their jobs go out of the country, when their pay is cut, when they lose their pensions and their health care.”

CWA President Larry Cohen on the Ed Show, September 20, 2012

“No American should ever spend their golden years at the mercy of insurance companies. They should retire with care and the dignity they have earned.”

President Obama to the AARP Convention, September 2012

“If somebody is dumb enough to ask me to go to political convention and say something, they're gonna have to take what they get.”

Clint Eastwood, responding to criticisms of his speech at the Republican convention.

“The single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president.”

Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

WOMEN & FAMILIES

OBAMA

Supports equal pay for equal work. As his first official measure, he signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law.

Pushed for passage of the Affordable Care Act that ends the discrimination that women faced from health care insurers. Now, many insurance plans are required to provide preventive services like mammograms, and to cover birth control as part of women's preventive care.

The Affordable Care Act also means that insurance companies can't discriminate against patients due to pre-existing conditions, and provides coverage for children up to age 26 on the parent's plans.

Supports paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave coverage. More than 145 countries provide some paid sick leave but not the US

ROMNEY

Romney won't say if he would have signed Lilly Ledbetter, and he refuses to specify his stance on the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Romney has promised to repeal Obama's health care law. He would allow employers to deny workers birth control and other health service coverage based on the employer's personal beliefs.

Romney wants to eliminate federal funding for Planned Parenthood, which is a key provider of health services to lower income women.

Source: candidates' websites, news reports and speeches.