



# Political Action Update

2000 Walker St., Suite A • Des Moines, Iowa 50317 • Telephone 515-262-9571

Fax 515-262-9573 • [www.iowaafclcio.org](http://www.iowaafclcio.org) • e-mail: [ifl@iowaafclcio.org](mailto:ifl@iowaafclcio.org)

Vol 13 Issue 7

“We don’t need worker assistance programs—we need jobs” Robert Wages

August September 2013

## SALUTE TO LABOR - LABOR FIGHTS FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL

### By Bruce Clark VP Central Labor Council

Labor Day is upon us again bringing the traditional end to summer leisure and vacations. More importantly of course, Labor Day is a holiday to celebrate those who labor everyday to make society work and create the vast wealth of this country.

They forge the steel, build the buildings, bridges, and highways; they produce the goods and move them around the country and the world; they teach our children; they care for the sick and the elderly; they facilitate communications from the internet to the letter in the mailbox; they harvest and process the food we eat and prepare and serve it to us in restaurants; they change the sheets and clean the rooms and buildings. Everything not put here by the hand of God was produced by the working class. Truly “Labor Creates All Wealth.”

The labor movement arose so that workers could band together to collectively improve their livelihoods and the society as a whole. The labor movement has fought for, and lifted up, all those who labor, and ended child labor, won shorter hours, decent pay, and benefits, and pensions, and gave us the weekend.

There were times when employer encouraged divisions

weakened that goal. There is no denying, that at times in our history, we allowed race and national origin and gender to divide our ranks. But the labor movement of today is truly inclusive of the entire working class. The 50th anniversary of the great March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963 is the perfect occasion to remember that as Dr. King spoke he was flanked by many of the labor leaders of the day who helped build the march. Black, White, Latin, Asian, young and old, men and women, native born and immigrants, gay and straight, we are all workers and share a common struggle.

In recent years there has been an unrelenting attack on the rights of labor, seeking to return us to the days of the 1800’s when workers, including kids, toiled long hours for starvation wages.

We in the labor movement, recommit ourselves to our historic role of fighting for all working people regardless of who they are. The recent uprising of fast food workers underscores the need to spread our fight and the benefits of organizations to every worker in the country.

Join us to advance the cause of the working class. Solidarity Forever !!



**The Lee County Labor Day Parade stretches down the street for blocks, in what may have been their largest Labor Day Parade.**

# Say Yes to H.R. 630—Save the USPS!

The National Federation of the Blind is the oldest, largest, and most influential organization of blind people in the United States. It is nationwide, with more than 700 local chapters in 50 states. It was founded in 1940.

Among others, one of its purposes and functions is to advocate for the civil rights and equality of blind Americans.

Our organization is familiar with the so-called cost cutting antics of the United States Postal Service. We're a large part of the community that united to save the Capitol Square State (in Des Moines), when it was planned for closure.

We support H.R. 630, the Postal Service Protection Act, and strongly oppose HR 2748, the Postal Reform Act of 2013. H.R. 2748 will eliminate locations and services that are vital for people who cannot drive virtually 100% of people who are blind and have low vision.

H.R. 2748 provides the phase-out of door delivery and will be replaced with something called "centralized delivery". This necessarily implies that people who can't drive will need to use public transit, cabs, or privately-paid or volunteer drivers to be able to receive their mail.

Even though the bill provides for "input from postal patrons" regarding change, I already know from my Capitol Square experience that any reference to public input by the USPS is an empty promise.

H.R. 2748 also mentions some kind of "waiver for physical hardship," customers can obtain "upon application." This means people who can't drive to the centralized delivery location, must in essence jump through an extra application hoop in order to receive the mail that everyone else can receive much more easily.

H.R. 2748 proposed eliminating Saturday service, which will result in many customers' waiting longer for mailed items like prescription medications.

The resolution to the problems of the USPS from the customers perspective is H.R. 630 it will protect six-day delivery and prevent the closure of more post offices. In short, this bill tightens up the law so the USPS cannot secretly plot closings behind the public's back.

HR. 2748 may not intentionally discriminate against blind Americans, but its passage will adversely impact us as a class. Its passage will effectively deny us access to a public service, and that is discrimination plain and simple.

**Mary McGee is a lawyer in Des Moines and a member of the National Federation of the Blind.**



## Contact Congress Today— Save America's Postal Service

By Phone: Call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 to reach your senators and representative.

By Mail: Write to your senators: [Name], U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. Write to your representative: [Name], U.S. House of Representative, Washington, D.C. 20515.

# On Labor Day, Too Many Workers Labor in the Shadows

For many Americans, Labor Day barbecues and picnics mark a nostalgic end to summer. It's also a time to celebrate work and the people who do the work (and of course, the people who want to work but can't find jobs.) This year, we especially remember that too many people labor in the shadows of our economy without access to the rights and protections that everyone deserves.

While these 11 million immigrant workers struggle to become part of a country that benefits from their labor but doesn't protect their rights, unscrupulous employers abuse the system by exploiting workers with little to no protections—and pay them less. This vicious cycle, in turn, lowers wages and working conditions for all American workers, and makes it harder for businesses that play by the rules.

No one can deny that our current immigration system is broken, or that it depresses living standards for all workers.

Right here in Iowa, advocates for comprehensive immigration reform have been meeting with members of Congress, attending town hall meetings and rallies, writing letters to the editor and pressuring elected officials to take this opportunity to fix our broken immigration system

The message is loud and clear: if Members of Congress continue to obstruct a vote on immigration reform, they will have to answer to a growing majority of Americans who support a path to citizenship as part of comprehensive immigration reform .

The immigration legislation that passed with a solid, bipartisan majority in the Senate—while far from perfect—lays out a reasonable roadmap to citizenship for aspiring Americans, lifts up workplace standards and

rights for all Americans, and strengthens border protections. This would boost the U.S. economy.

According to the U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO), modernizing our immigration system so that it is safer, more orderly, and more humane, would grow our economy and reduce the deficit by almost a trillion dollars over two decades, and would create 3,298 new jobs in Iowa and increase our economic output by \$279 million in just one year.

Passing comprehensive immigration reform with strong-worker protections, including a path to citizenship, is the economically and morally right thing to do.

Unfortunately, some Republicans, like Iowa Congressman Steve King, have been very vocal about why they don't want a vote on comprehensive immigration reform. According to Rep. King, the millions of young women and men who call the U.S. their home and are American in every way except on paper, are actually drug mules with "calves the size of cantaloupes." Will the Republican majority in Congress really allow bigots who alienate the significant Latino electorate to speak for their party on the pivotal issue of immigration?

Representatives King and Latham were elected to do what's best for our state and our country. That includes taking a stance in favor of fixing our broken immigration system, and ensuring that we no longer have millions of people working in the shadows—and that Labor Day celebrates all people who work.

Our country is watching and the millions who have mobilized will continue to ramp up action until a path to citizenship is fully realized.

**Richard Trumka is President of the AFL-CIO**

**Ken Sagar is President of the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO**



**IOWA FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO**

2000 Walker Street, Suite A  
Des Moines, Iowa 50317-5201

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**P A I D**  
Des Moines, Iowa  
Permit No. 269

**Upcoming ...**

- Sep. 18 —Muscatine & Council Bluffs WIN
- Sep. 19— Dubuque WIN & DAWN Training
- Sep. 24 —Lee County & Des Moines WIN
- Sep. 25—Waterloo WIN
- Sep. 30—Cedar Rapids WIN
- Oct. 2— Iowa City WIN
- Oct. 7—Clinton WIN
- Oct. 8—Davenport WIN
- Oct 14—Burlington WIN
- Oct. 16—Council Bluffs WIN
- Oct. 17—Dubuque WIN
- Oct. 22—Lee County & Des Moines WIN
- Oct 23—Waterloo WIN
- Oct. 28—Cedar Rapids WIN
- Marshalltown and Mason City Pending

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**October and November Elections**

**Special Election—October 22 House District 33**

**Brian Meyer—Labor Endorsed**

**CLC Endorsed City/County Elections—Nov. 5th**

**Des Moines: Skip Moore—Des Moines City Council**

**Kevin Trevillyan— West Des Moines City Council**

**Cedar Rapids: Justin Shields and Chuck Swore for Cedar Rapids City Council**

**Benton County: Shelley Parbs - County Supervisor**

**Ottumwa: Frank Flanders—Mayor  
City Council—Matt Dalby, Skip Stevens,  
Robert LaPoint and Belinda Smith-  
Cicarella.**

