



Welcome state's gift to Obama

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

It's Paul Ryan of Janesville! Mitt Romney's choice Aug. 11 of US Rep. Ryan as his running mate may give him a bounce on cable news and certainly huzzahs and nonstop tributes at the Republican convention. But in the long haul to Nov. 6 the pick will be a pick-apart. It will focus the election on the true weaknesses of the GOP economic policies, of which Ryan is the mastermind, as well as laser-beaming the Democratic attack on the GOP ticket.

The Democrats couldn't wait to get organized against this choice -- they started releasing fact sheets, holding press conferences and launching video ads the day of the announcement.

Amusingly, it is Republicans against Ryan who have mapped the road intended to galvanize the right-wing base. Analyzing his effort to turn Medicare into a choice to buy health care on the private market via coupons, Rep. Rep. David McKinley of West Virginia joined several GOP colleagues in voting against it this spring for "trying to balance the budget on the backs of seniors." Veteran and respected Bush speechwriter David Frum said this Ryan-fostered economic approach meant spending "the next months explaining how and why shrinking Medicare after 2023 will create prosperity in 2013 . . . Wow, the job (of getting elected) just got harder."

The harshest attacks may yet come from the Tea Party intended to be excited, once diehards recall how in the Bush years Ryan represented the worst parts of the status quo he now criticizes - convincing stubborn conservative colleagues to vote for Bush's bank bailout

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From left: Baldwin, Moore, Racine retiring Rep. Bob Turner were among the dignitaries alongside Barrett at the crowded "Welcome Back to the Bush Era Economics" mock rally for GOP's Paul Ryan.



Happy supporters crush Nikiya Harris with congratulations at the Aug. 14 Roots Cellar victory party.

Progressives sweep 9 races

Milwaukee television and establishment print missed the boat August 14. Fixated on a feeble GOP turnout race over who would face Tammy Baldwin for the US Senate, it fawned as the best known name, 70-year-old former Gov. Tommy Thompson, held back by three percentage points the high-spending blitz of hedge fund invader Eric Hovde - apparently not noticing that the two together pulled in a mere 373,403 statewide votes.

The real election story was a reinvigorated state legislature, a clean sweep in Milwaukee for progressives. The media responded by pooh-poohing that the broom whacked moderates (by which they could only mean inept weaklings) and how now



TV returns at the Art Bar party revealed Pasch's big win. there were a smaller number of black representatives. They even pulled in Racine's Bob Turner, who is retiring, to make the example work. But they missed how energized harder working agents of change were the proven butt kickers against complacency -- across the board and despite

skin color.

It was a true march together for social justice principles of the sort Dr. King once envisioned.

The margin of success startled even liberal observers while striking fear into GOP party hack expectations. In fact, the biggest loser in this campaign was a Republican dominated national conduit for voucher school money, the mendaciously named American Federation for Children. Every place it put its support, every candidate it lavished with an estimated \$200,000 in Milwaukee expenditures, every lie it helped promulgate, the AFC failed -- and failed big. "Imagine what the community could have done with that money," sighed one visitor to the election night

Sweep continued Page 7

Under the jobs-jobs-jobs cry

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

Every news promotion on every network and cable outlet informs us ominously that the election will be "all about jobs" - and by golly only their anchors will be on top of the coverage. (Even though what is really happening underneath just isn't reported.)

The Romney talking heads dismiss the pressure to reveal how much of the maybe \$25 million he rakes in annually is paid in taxes as a "distraction" from the need for jobs, jobs, jobs. They sniff that Obama can no longer blame the absolutely horrible mess they concede he inherited for the downturn. Ignore the past and be afraid of the present facts, they say. Your vote is all about "where are the jobs?"

Curiously, union agitators agree with them but point to the gridlock of a do-nothing Congress.

Yet respected jobs statistics reveal that in the last two years the US is approaching five million jobs created through Obama stimulus and salvage action to offset the eight million jobs evaporated under the Bush policies that Romney-Ryan want to continue. But on the political stump someone keeps saying that this move toward recovery is not fast

enough and we've got to do more. Oh, yes, that's Obama. The other side says he's done nothing.

The GOP House, rejecting every jobs-creating and infrastructure bill Obama puts forward, and harking on the trillions he was forced to add to a deficit, two-thirds of which they created, says jobs are not the government's job - that Obama needs to give the private sector more freedom to maneuver. Why? Because things were so great when their foxes were guarding the national henhouse? So the cure is to free more foxes to pen up the hens?

And then there's the young people - they persevere and let the elders play their partisan games. Not their game yet. They are downloading music onto their I-Phones, going to the beach, enjoying sports, letting their fingers joy the video screen environment. They debate organics and dating issues, not politics. They get an education and they take jobs where they can find them, and try to enjoy life while they wait for the market to heat up.

The danger, of course, is some don't yet realize who is elected will make a big difference to their future. But the optimistic thing is how they persist in

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Jobs

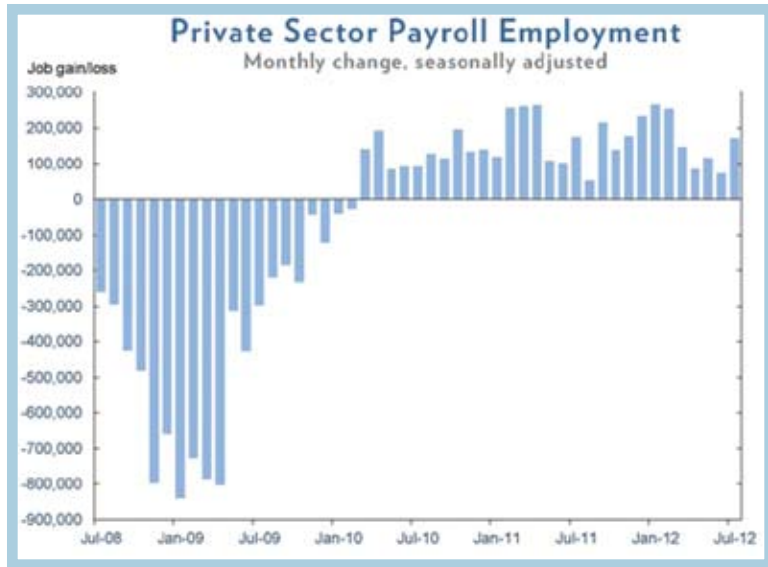
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pursuit of happiness and looking positively down the road.

In contrast, Paul Ryan demeans the cost of "entitlements" (those are things you as citizens in a free country are entitled to expect such as Medicare and Social Security) and vacillates between praising our cornfields and describing America as a failed land on a new Bataan death march.

No wonder the nation is confused. Yet hopeful. Denied instant gratification. Yet eager to look for the future. Fearful when they watch the news but turning to life whenever they can.

What is real? Well, not what you hear on cable. No jobs? Sure it's tough and yes, sure it's getting better. But mainly our measurement stick has changed



Jobs graph spells out the difference for voters in moving back in policy or moving forward. Forward is slow but upward. Back to Bush was darn ugly.

so radically we have become slaves to monthly blips while ignoring the long arc.

A lot is happening and the media hasn't caught up.

In the old days - just last

century -- before global trade and modernized technology put down big weight, the newspapers and communities only reported employment growth as the diligent thousands working on

assembly lines - and screamed when those thousands were lost through societal and production changes and bad trade deals.

Much slower are reports of innovations and enterprise kicking in. There are even myths about that - business leaders, economists, even entire networks harrumphing about what sort of new jobs are needed and what sort of training will get them. We've been slow to grasp we also need local shops, service and interchange - and should pay fairly for all those building blocks.

Maybe we've been too focused on the gridlock and not what's bubbling up. But let's try a little.

In Milwaukee and Wisconsin, the larger statistics say the Walker echo of the Bush echo and the would-be Romney echo have actually cost us jobs. Down lower, look past the politics and start counting jobs in 10 here, 20 there, a hundred there, small business innovations, entrepreneurs who don't care about the political labels, low-income communities and ethnic groups fighting back, labor and business working together with education specialists to rebuild.

You're not being told about this quiet different picture.

See a lucid economic analysis on Page 6.

See our reports from the field on Pages 3, 12, 15 and 17.



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When educators and companies weld, so do jobs

Thanks to education, union and business partnerships, Milwaukee jobs are growing quietly in handfuls - and those are handfuls to party over. In the modest MATC/HIRE Center meeting room in an old National Avenue building, officials, business leaders, training specialists, union reps and kin gathered happily August 10 to salute the graduates from eight weeks of welding classes.

These 11 middle aged students with beaming families and children watching were made to feel special, because they are - working folk who buckled down to do what they must to keep their families going, forget what they knew before to develop new skills and return to the workforce.

The ceremony was also typical of the unnoticed collaboration of the HIRE Center, manufacturing groups, workforce investment agencies, the MATC and others to restore dislocated workers to gainful employment.

The class being celebrated, men and women, knew how to tackle a daily productive workload -- which is the HIRE's edge if businesses only would take more notice of the value of dislocated workers.

Once they get over the shock of losing jobs through no fault of their own - and HIRE helps them fight that off - they discover they know how to learn new trades and have the mental flexibility to show up again and again in the marketplace.

In this case, they had their good jobs in various industries yanked out from under them in

the economic downturn and technological upheavals, especially when all sorts of companies moved to other lands to prefer workers who could do similar work for far less pay and benefits. So much less that sometimes two of them would replace one American.

The price differential is beginning to change but not in time for the already displaced.

All the students came from work backgrounds (manufacturing, shop, service, etc.) but none had been trained as welders.

Compo Steel Products was looking for welders, both entry level trained to the company's system and specialized, requiring a pool of welders to rise into a new computer world. So Compo production experts sat down with HIRE specialists and MATC to develop a training program. They not only had openings but promised interviews to those who completed the weeks of learning and assured that some would be hired if they proved themselves. Eleven did.

That is what the Aug. 10 graduation celebrated. HIRE center leader Alba Baltodano welcomed and praised the grads, Lois O'Keefe presented each personal card of salute from her boss, US Rep. Gwen Moore. Linda Stewart of the Milwaukee Area Workforce Development Board - the MAWIB that technically oversees the process - talked about why they should be proud of struggling back into good jobs, something society thinks is easy and isn't.

AFL-CIO manufacturing



A roomful of dislocated workers received their welding certificates.

expert from LETC Bruce Larson detailed the training process and introduced the grads and MATC educator Alfredo Luna presented the certificates of completion with genuine delight.

Managers from Compo Steel, without stopping to sample the lavish meal arranged at the HIRE Center, then took the graduates into a private room one by one for job interviews. And this was only one of many ongoing partnerships at the HIRE.

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RIGHT: The ticket prices have gone up slightly but so has the reward. Harley-Davidson has donated to the Laborfest raffle the top-of-the-line Ultra-Glide TRIKE, negotiated through the United Steelworkers (USW) local at the plant.

BELOW: In meeting rooms near the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, squads of volunteers and union leaders have been meeting all summer to thrash out the complicated details for both the parade and aftermath party. Not to mention the Sunday set-up and the Monday tear-down at the end.



Laborfest:

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Editor, Labor Press

Laborfest celebrates tradition this year with a poster remembering the marching individuals and units of the recent past and slogans that echo the solidarity and "justice for all" themes of the sponsoring Milwaukee Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO. There are pragmatic as well as philosophical reasons for stirring past memories while evoking new energy among the union groups and affiliates joining the Labor Day parade through downtown Milwaukee Monday, September 3.

Bloodied but unbowed by political strife, weakened in membership by Act 10, working hard to keep all its allies focused on the principles of solidarity, social justice and economic improvement, bolstered by the violent, openly anti-union rhetoric of the GOP presidential ticket now including locally known quantity Paul Ryan, the holiday set aside for workers and the huge free party for all Milwaukee working families has special reasons to give itself a needed pat on the back.

Organizers have been encouraged to make sure the camaraderie and beer flow as

usual but revitalize unity.

It starts with mingling at Zeidler Union Square Park among the marchers and volunteers - grouping into a downtown parade that kicks off at 11 a.m. followed by family entertainment and vendors at Henry W. Maier Festival Park, commonly known as Summerfest.

The creation of a GOP ticket so aggressively hostile to union goals, along with the choice of Ryan, whose US House Congressional District 1 has grown in Milwaukee County territory and is also a huge target in the November 6 election, has galvanized political attention and inquiries around this event.

Labor council rules require public officials to walk as invited guests as part of an established marching unit. The only exception in recent memory was Sen. Herb Kohl, now retiring, who defiantly and briskly walked the entire parade route on his own. Another exception, unlikely to be repeated, was Sheriff David Clarke's insistence on appearing behind a fancy law-and-order car. His request to lead a horse patrol in the middle of the parade was turned down, because no one wanted to clean up behind him.

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"The subversive thing about labor is not the strike but the idea of solidarity."
— Thomas Geoghegan



Photo by: Joseph J. Smith

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Ride, walk or roll – but get there!

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In past years some distinguished visitors have also graced Laborfest - Bill Clinton when he was president and Barack Obama both on his way to the White House and as president. The current political season is so volatile that, while not one is being sought out, there is no way to anticipate who might show up.

But it is working people in their pride and party mode that are really the center attraction. It is a parade more notable for the volume and enthusiasm of its participants, though every year it seems to draw more spectators.

Volunteers have been meeting all summer to work out the details.

Many of the participating units in the parade and extended gathering afterward are familiar attractions, but there are new wrinkles. And there were special concerns given the confusion over whether infrastructure would be ready on time. Now all signs are go.

Parade participants have several free lots near Summerfest - along Harbor Dr. across from the southern Marcus Amphitheater entrance - to park their cars and then take special busses driven by the professional ATU drivers to get ready for the parade. The lots are numbered M, G and H. After the parking hordes shuttle, march and party, it is a short walk back to their personal transportation.

The busses mainly take riders one way to the parade central, ending at 10:15 a.m. that Monday - and then the last bus itself is part of the parade.

Marchers gather all morning at Zeidler Union Square Park, south of Michigan St. between 3rd and 4th, looking for the signage of where their locals gather to organize. The huge machinery and trucks of labor clog in orchestrated pattern the neighboring streets but under the watchful detailed instruction of parade marshals, who have been holding special preparatory meetings. The vintage cars and Harley motorcycles that lead off are carefully gathered in designated areas.

The parade kicks off at 11 a.m. and the route is traditional thanks to the timely reopening of the Wisconsin Ave. Bridge. Marchers wend up 4th St. to Wisconsin Ave., then east to Milwaukee St., then south to Chicago Ave., where they make the turn directly into festival grounds and the vendors and dance music.

Parade organizers are focusing hard this year on tightening the gaps between units to help speed arrival for the noon to 5 p.m. celebration on the grounds. Food and drink will be available from traditional vendors (some locals have purchased food and drink tickets in advance and

casual Laborfest-goers can also use credit cards).

A children's area supervised by Milwaukee Public Schools members will feature clowns, jugglers and magic; local professional wrestlers will conduct matches; the Union Industry tent will feature displays and giveaways -- and Bingo will be back.

But unquestionably the biggest annual draw roars quite mighty this year -- the raffle of a motorcycle along with cash prizes that closes Laborfest (late afternoon on the Miller Stage). This year's raffle displays the most expensive Harley model ever in the festival's major fund-raiser.

The Harley-Davidson company, with the cooperation of the steelworkers at the plant, donated a 2013 monster Ultra-Glide TRIKE that retails around \$31,000 and is in short supply at local outlets. Reflecting the higher value, prices have also gone up slightly for the raffle tickets, though they are still the runaway bargain that would even make Mitt Romney salivate and worry how to hide in his tax returns -- \$8 for one, \$15 for two.

Tickets started selling at the Wisconsin state fair, will be sold at Harley gatherings around Milwaukee and will continue to be sold on the grounds before the 4 or 4:30 p.m. announcement. There are other raffles on the grounds - free ones for children and adults, with the winners expected to be there to collect. But you don't have to be in attendance to win the TRIKE.

A number of sponsors are helping Laborfest out. In honor of such union support, some locals will lead the parade -- units including the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.)

The colorful puppet people and costumed dancers of the Milwaukee Public Theater and the Milwaukee Mime Theater, whose artisans and dancers are working feverishly to create a summer of parade surprises, will be back in both the parade and around the grounds.

Look also for the quick sketch artistry of Reynaldo and his talented family and followers. As an artist, Reynaldo is well known to Milwaukee since his colorful murals, indoor and outdoor, grace many neighborhoods and buildings. Laborfest is a free opportunity for slapdash sketches exposing your inner self.

Two notable bands will alternate sets all afternoon at Miller Stage, both dance-fever favorites of festivalgoers:

Spider George & The Web and **Nightlife**, members of the union musicians association.

The children's area will again feature **Mom The Clown**, **Glen Gerard the Magician**, **the Heads Up Juggling Revue**, **the Pocket Lady** (One Mohr Productions) and a chance for kids to jump around in the Bounce House provided by Fun Services.

Also easy to spot in the parade and around the grounds, if you look up, will be **Debra Davis**, stiltwalker extraordinaire.

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We dodged big crash - now can't clone FDR's way out

By Mark Gruenberg, Press Associate, Inc.

Welcome to 1929, almost. That's how close we came to a second Great Depression in 2008, 79 years after the first, says top AFL-CIO economist Damon Silvers.

And if it hadn't been for pro-jobs policies pushed by the Democratic Obama administration with strong support of organized labor, we would have slid right into a second such catastrophe, he adds.

"The world faced an economic crisis set off by income inequality" around the globe, he told a recent conference of progressives in D.C. "The US was the only major country to restructure the debts of its families" in response to the Great Depression. "The banks didn't like it and said 'Tough on you,' but we got people back to work."

The parallels between today and the run-up to the Great Crash - under pro-corporate presidents Harding, Coolidge and Hoover - and the crash itself under Hoover are eerie, Silvers added.

The only reason the US didn't completely crash a second time after the policies of George W. Bush, was that President Obama stepped in to stop the disaster, much as FDR did in 1933, noted Silvers, but with some differences.

First, 1933 was years into the Depression and no one doubted that FDR had to finally get the US to react to the disaster. In Obama's case, the full impact of the economic disasters of the Bush years did not hit until the first year of the new administration, allowing the GOP to claim in this election cycle that it is Obama's policies that are at fault, not what they did when they held the reins.

There was another big difference, Silvers noted. In the 1930s, the US was a self-contained economy, "able to produce virtually any goods it needed to recover." It took

AFGE pickes new leader, then pickets Ryan in Las Vegas

The American Federation of Government Employees elected Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox, a veterans administration hospital worker from North Carolina, as new president at the union's convention in Las Vegas on August 15. And then more than 1,000 delegates descended on a GOP fundraiser nearby to protest the policies in Congress of its headliner, new GOP vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan.

Cox succeeds John Gage, who served three 3-year terms and then retired. Cox promised to work on strengthening AFGE "by embracing the union's diverse membership and building consensus among members."

AFGE, the largest federal workers' union, is one of the few unions whose membership is plurality Republican. That makes doubly significant its protest at the closed-door fundraiser featuring Ryan and Las Vegas multi-billionaire casino owner and political money



Noted economist Damon Silvers confirms how close we came, how Obama stopped it but how the old recovery mechanisms won't work in a global world.

time, but it did it alone. Now, he said, the US is so interdependent on other nations for certain goods, and on their trade to produce revenues and jobs, that what happens in China, India or Europe can help determine what occurs in the US economy and jobs market.

Silvers noted how parts of Europe are pursuing the same cut-the-budget, fire the workers, belt-tightening undertaken in the 1930s, which didn't work then and isn't working now. The difference is that now Europe's failure affects us, too. Meanwhile, Asian growth is slowing, he noted, and "US economic growth is still weak." He believes Europe's contraction and a potential growth slowdown in Asia could cost our nation jobs. Further, "the financial system is still fragile, and that could cause another systemic crisis" - and another crash - before controls are fully in place. Meanwhile the finan-

machine Sheldon Adelson.

Gage led the picketing outside the Venetian Hotel-Casino, site of the Ryan-Adelson exclusive. The AFGE members and their allies from the Nevada AFL-CIO chanted "Romney Hood, Ryan Hood, not in our neighborhood." Unionists held signs reading "Paul Ryan: Hustling for the 1%" and "Romney/Ryan Road to Ruin."

"Romney's selection of Ryan as his running mate indicates just how much contempt this ticket will have for the federal workforce and the vital programs we deliver to the American public each and every day," Gage said. Ryan's budget plan also sharply cuts the federal workforce and increases federal worker pension contributions.

Cox said he was "honored and humbled that AFGE's members chose me to lead this fight." Eugene Hudson Jr. was elected secretary-treasurer, succeeding Cox, and Augusta Thomas was re-elected national vice president.

cial institutions are lobbying hard to block all controls and water down regulations.

The banks "are working in the interests of the 1%" and not in the interests of the economy as a whole, or of workers, the noted economist warned - a push supported by Romney and his new VP choice.

The solution to such crashes is not austerity, but to put money and power in the pockets of workers, Silvers says.

"We tried for three decades to have a low-wage, high-consumption economy," he told the progressive group. "We're living with the results." He recited them: High debt, stagnant or falling wages, declining home values and high unemployment.

Even if the economy is now pulling out of the "second crash" however slowly, he sees further losses in the mass firings of public workers, legislative paralysis and "the politics of hate" as shown by anti-immigrant laws in Arizona and the probable gridlock over the nation's economic course in the November campaigns.

"Instead of this vicious cycle, we need a virtuous cycle," he said, putting people back to work through "public investment" and forcing banks to reduce the principal on "underwater" mortgages - thus lessening the burden on workers while letting them stay in their homes and freeing up money for other uses.

Perhaps the memories of the Big Crash will keep today's voters in touch with the choices.

Quotes to Contemplate

A country run in the interests of the wealthiest 1% systematically underinvests in public goods; systematically silences, disempowers, and underinvests in its workers; and in the end is less competitive and creates fewer jobs than a country that focuses on the interests of the 99%.

-- Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO president, dissent from President's Job Council report, Jan. 17, 2012

In a capitalist system, there come times when too few people have too much money and too much power and too many people have few of either. It is one of the functions of government to redress that imbalance.

-- Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Feb. 1, 2012.

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-- Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, 2010 dissent from Citizens United, which opened floodgates for corporate cash in politics

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SWEEP

From Page 1

parties.

Beating down endorsements from establishment figures and the lure of a well-known political last name, Milwaukee County Supervisor Nikiya Harris surprised even her backers with the size of her victory over Elizabeth Coggs, a current member of the Assembly funded by the AFC who had treated the Senate District 6 seat as a royal inheritance from her cousin, Spencer Coggs, who had moved on to become city treasurer.

Instead she was crushed by Harris, 49% to 32% (with three other candidates making up the difference). The senate race covering three districts still produced a higher turnout than many anticipated -- Harris 6,373 votes to Coggs 4,445. "Wow!" texted one observer who like most of the community hadn't expected this outcome, given the parade of notable names who (sometimes to their own surprise) were featured in Coggs literature. Indeed the Coggs family credentials were trotted out at every turn - and that may have eventually disgusted the constituents.

Harris admittedly was not the most experienced or polished candidate in the large field, but her warmth, honesty and willingness to work the doors - plus an excellent ground game from helpers - more than carried the day.

But if Harris was the icing, the progressive cake was pretty rich in Milwaukee Aug. 14. Despite Coggs and particularly state Sen. Lena Taylor playing racial politics, despite lagging behind in early counting until the weight of her Shorewood support cane crashing through - 96% of that community's vote, though opponent Millie Coby actually lives in the suburb - Pasch won with 63% of total turnout (3,531) more than doubling Coby's numbers. Her victory moment at Art Bar in Riverwest brought a flood of high-five-ing fist pumpers, including a notable community activist couple, MPS board member Larry Miller and 9to5 founder Ellen Bravo.

What turned the tide for Pasch in both city and village was her reputation as a progressive fighter and her refusal to get dirty even as some enemies actively insulted her.

In truth, Coby would not have done even that well except for the spending of AFC and particularly the blatant blunt appeal to race from Sen. Taylor, who used the Internet for her harshest remarks and then smiled more pleasantly in printed community op-ed pieces.

Looking at this and other races, such skin-color politics died deservedly. District 18, where Tamara Grigsby had long served, has been regarded an African American domain, yet it was a white candidate in the eight-person field, longtime resident and lawyer Evan Goyke, who won going away, not just because of a more convincing determined manner and beliefs but more experience on how to campaign, when to talk and when to be quiet and listen. It didn't hurt that his policy ideas closely allied with Grigsby's.

What the Pasch race did demonstrate was how something other than race is still an issue - a lingering city-suburban resentment despite the obvious necessity for the communities to act in concert. It was the GOP that included Shorewood in a traditional city district. Some voters resented that, and took it out on the suburban candidate even if she was a Democrat and an avowed champion of minority rights. The Taylor-Coby-Coggs racial ploy added to the resentment.

But natural change also helped Pasch succeed - there is more diversity and comity of views along Capitol Drive and in Riverwest as well as Shorewood. This is all now a vocal part of Taylor's Senate District 4 (she has only token opposition this time around). So she will have lots of fences to mend in the next four years. The racial politics game and the



Mandela Barnes was busy on campaign trail.

voting strength of the people who dislike such bullying could well smack her in the electoral face.

As satisfying as the Pasch win may have been in burying the divisive games, as surprising as the Harris margin of victory was to some, these were not actually the biggest news for the rebellious side of the Democrats.

Most notable was how sizable was community organizer Mandela Barnes' victory in District 11 over a polished but placid veteran incumbent endorsed by Mayor Tom Barrett, Common Council President Willie Hines and other Democratic Party notables. Jason Fields had also voted to expand the voucher program. He had failed to curb payday loans. He wallowed in AFC money and he didn't work the doors, while Barnes and his talented team sure did.

Moreover, Barnes had a strong case and a positive platform of ideas of how the legislature could reach down into the community and bring rehabilitated felons back into public life. When the smoke cleared, it was a remarkable 69% to 31% victory, celebrated by happy imbibers long after Barnes left the victory party at the Sheraton Points North. (It is also notable that despite similar funding sources, Fields' brother Jarrett came in a weak second to Goyke in District 18).

On the southwest side there was another surprisingly large victory for the forces of change -- 68% to bounce a 29-year incumbent from District 7. Peggy Krusick was done in not only by her erratic votes and by a redistricting that reshaped most of her territory. Principally, she was defeated by the energy, platform, winning personality and orchestrated campaign of law student Daniel Riemer, whose support of public education also won back factions once behind Krusick.

Another startling margin of victory came in District 17, where Barbara Toles had left office. AFSCME child care leader La Tonya Johnson dominated the race, doubling the totals of UAW supported Fred Royal and also of AFC supported Tracey Dent, a former aide to Elizabeth Coggs whom AFC had attempted to make seem a progressive pick, much

to the immediate outrage of Toles.

See story on Page 13.

This was hardly a good day for entrenched political connections. Nor, as an aside, for the establishment media, which didn't seem to grasp what was happening and resorted to speedy inaccurate shortcuts. Strange was its skin color count citing less blacks in the state legislature but carefully neglecting the ideological makeup of the newly elected - there may be fewer blacks, but there is clearly strengthened support for their community needs.

Also, the vote count database used online and on TV didn't know how to handle two members of the Assembly redistricted out of their original seats, so it labeled Republican Don Pridemore as "incumbent" in District 22, which he never was. He had actually served in another district. And Pasch, before District 22 was bowdlerized and moved west to become a Republican conclave, was the incumbent there, yet the database listed her as (inc.) District 10, which she had never claimed.

Elsewhere, proven actual incumbents (and in some cases notable progressive leaders) also won easily in races they were expected to take. The lack of election tightness may have affected things, but the Latino districts, while electing the right people, lagged sorely behind turnout elsewhere to return to Madison District 8's JoCasta Zamarrilla, still the only Latina in the Assembly, and District 9's Josh Zepnick. Also sailing easily back was veteran champion of liberal causes Fred Kessler in District 12.



Goyke at candidate forum.

In every race where Democrats ran against Democrats and face no major opponent in November (thus in effect already elected barring some write-in campaign), it was the progressive and even in-your-face side of the party that took over. In many cases that was in opposition to the publicized wishes and endorsements of the established leadership. So -

who is really leading now?

Should the Democrats take back the Assembly in November - well, that would be a stretch. But it is indeed a larger possibility since the fever for change and more dynamic leadership visible in Milwaukee had echoes around the state Aug. 14. Bottom line - whoever dominates, the Republicans are going to face a quite different breed and nimbleness from the opposition than they had before. The old games of divide and conquer have been exposed.

Oh yes, compromise and conciliation are still possible. But not by weaklings.

-- Analysis and photos by Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Milwaukee Labor Press



Law student Daniel Riemer (left) will soon join Jon Richards and another victor, Sandy Pasch, in Assembly.

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Ryan
 From Page 1

despite fierce opposition from their most stalwart economic naysayers.

Yes indeed, setting aside the inevitable Wisconsin pride when any native gets national political attention, this was the choice that allowed voters to hone in on the real reasons to oppose the Republican ticket. Ryan's record is almost a litany of what Romney doesn't understand or talk about in terms of American tradition.

The party's idea of a "visionary" turned on deeper scrutiny into the economic naïf saddling the GOP with faded creaky faded leather at a time when Europe is proving his austerity approach a disaster. Much of his platform echoes the Bush budget years, with Ryan arguing he would do it better, but be candid -- only if Romney had chosen Bush's former economic director, Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, could he have picked someone more closely allied to the worst of the GOP past.

MSNBC anchor Chris Matthews instantly described Ryan as still coming across as the college guy "who just read an Ayn Rand novel and believes everything in it." Other pundits, even conservative ones, are calling Romney's attempt to tilt far right "Manna from heaven for Obama."

Ryan may have elevated in national scrutiny but his selection instantly elevates his forthright Democratic opponent and turns Congressional District 1 into a horse race Ryan could well lose. Rob Zerban could hardly get ink time given the curiosity if Ryan was the pick, but now the reality is the VP choice will have to run around the country trying to explain Mitt, while pretending that he really cares about local issues - and Zerban is rising in attention.

Campaigning for his House seat while pretending he has a chance at the big house makes him look like a hypocrite or someone convinced he will lose both. It wasn't much of swing district until the GOP stepped in to redistrict, thinking Ryan would not be distracted -- but what a boo-boo now, swinging more territory to Milwaukee County and other areas dominated by senior citizens and blue collar workers. And boy, do these voters understand and dislike Ryan's ideas on Medicare and Social Security.

That opens the door for the media to examine his violent support for outsourcing and his Obama-like ad in 2008 (to fend off a Democratic tide) criticizing Romney's style of outsourcing. He may have to explain to a critical Janesville how he didn't fight to keep the GM plant but was running around pushing a scheme to gamble Social Security funds on the stock market and to gut Medicare and Medicaid.

Those are big clay feet when the GOP was in control and he could have helped reduce the deficit or at least keep the surplus that Clinton left the GOP.

Even the expected reams of outside political ads can't fully neutralize the parade of nonpartisan fiscal experts who confirm that Ryan's economic plan would reduce revenue by almost \$4 trillion over the next decade, putting the burden on 95% of the residents while giving tax breaks to the top 5%. It the sort of economic plan that makes everything that Obama did look intelligent, the exact reverse of the GOP intentions.

"The facts don't work in Ryan's favor," a leader of AARP told me, "but worse he is relying on the selfishness of older citizens. Since he can't touch the Social Security of people in their 60s, he's counting on our feeling that if we have ours, we don't mind sticking coupons rather than Social Security to those under 55. I think he underestimates our Americanism." (Beyond that, factually, a lot of seniors and their families benefit from Medicaid, which Ryan also intends to reduce.)

Clearly, the choice was a subtle embrace of the right-wing popularity of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, with whom Ryan shares a media image as boyish brave scouts tackling traditional compromise approaches, laying down the hammer rather than negotiating.

Except that Walker's approach even to his followers is largely unproven and quite disappointing.

Republican-dominated school districts crowded at first, but are now coping with higher property taxes, swollen class sizes, loss of variety, loss of good teachers and hand-cuffs by Walker regulations that prevent their schools and communities from improving - and it's getting worse. The kindest pronouncement is that the jury is still out, but that's hardly enough to replace a president, particularly while Obama's jury is coming in at restoring nearly five million jobs in two years compared to the eight million that the Bush years and Romney-Ryan concept took away in eight.



Media now elevates Zerban's attack - and chances.

Wisconsin is also lagging its neighbors in job growth and economic reputation. Those twin failures mean far more to voters than boyish gee-whiz media image. Some sincere people are not the sharpest knives in the kitchen.

"He's given us a megaphone," said Zerban campaign organizers, suddenly inundated with requests for appearances, media interviews and forums. That's somewhat ironic because Zerban, a small business owner himself as well as an elected local official, had been busy for months but largely ignored despite some memorable attacks on Ryan. Well, they're noticing such statements now:

"Ryan is a root cause of many of the financial issues our country faces today," says Zerban. "From supporting two unfunded wars, to dumping millions of senior citizens into the Medicare Part D 'donut hole' while tying the hands of the government to negotiate prescription drug prices, and from fighting for subsidies for Big Oil that his family personally benefits from, to supporting the unfunded Bush tax cuts for his wealthiest campaign contributors, Paul Ryan's hypocrisy is astounding."

The vulnerabilities are enormous. Nation columnist John Nichols wondered aloud before the choice why Romney would even look at him, noting "Vice presidential nominees are supposed to help tickets, not hurt them . . . Ryan would be a burden not a booster."

The other side to the argument is the choice of Ryan is atypical of cautious Romney and thus admirable. Though why such a departure unless he is worried about shoring up his right-wing base? It is not quite as desperate an attempt to change the game as McCain's choice of Sarah Palin, but it comes close given Ryan's central role in a flawed fiscal approach that will be a tough sell to independent thinkers.

The only explanation is the belief that there is so much dislike of Obama that painting everything as a negative is what the GOP thinks the country wants, as opposed to the bipartisan personalities that once both Romney and Ryan made their bones on. The Republican convention will likely splash around in such extremism.

Ryan is personable but combatively ideological, so he has been caught frequently in outright lies. Media fact checkers labeled as wildly false his claims that Obama's first two years raised discretionary spending 84%. To support his friend Walker's attack on collective bargaining he earned "Pants on Fire" and Pinocchio ratings from the media by saying the protests in Madison were "riots -- it's like Cairo has moved to Madison these days."

Given Romney's propensity for foot in mouth, you would have thought his handlers would have looked for someone less prone to extremist statements. They are relying on Ryan's experience at local retail politics. But this is a national stage that exposes more closely his behavior - and he is hardly a textbook of rhetorical nimbleness.

The field of attack is so deep for his opposition that they almost don't need 1.) Emily's List to detail the five ways Ryan would hurt women, such as defunding Planned Parenthood and cutting food stamps 18% for families, or 2.) Pundits pointing out that the GOP is now controlled at the top by "children of privilege" who badly lack foreign policy experience.

Former Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle, who has worked cordially with Ryan though they deeply disagree on politics, shrewdly noted that the pick "confirms that any hope of an Etch-a-Sketch switch of Romney back to the center will not take place." Instead he has "embraced the Ryan approach and the top-down trickle-down policy of making middle class taxpayers pay for the rich to get richer."

And mostly it reflects the central GOP campaign theme -- the hatred of anything Obama, modified only by conversational style. Ryan always pauses before he says scary things about America falling off a cliff in order to refer to the president as "a nice man but misguided." Unintended self-description.

Paul Ryan and me, our parallel adolescence

By James Zogby

Special to Labor Press

As I've been reading about Paul Ryan, I was struck by several aspects of his life story which resonated with my own.

We were both just sophomores in high school when our fathers died. We both saved our Social Security survivor benefits to help fund our college educations. We were both beneficiaries of federal and state government support for higher education. We made hamburgers at McDonald's. We were both altar boys and we remain practicing Catholics. And Paul Ryan and I both read Ayn Rand as teenagers and were captivated by her radical individualism.

That, however, is where the similarities end.

Rand's philosophy holds a particular appeal and is especially attractive to the developing adolescent mind. It is self-centered and certain -- traits appreciated by adolescents. And Rand's heroic individualists could be angry and dismissive of others, seeing them as burdensome obstacles to be overcome on the way to self-fulfillment -- again attitudes quite compatible with adolescent behavior.

While it appears that Ryan never got over his fascination with Ayn Rand, referring to her work in recent years as defining "what my value systems are and what my beliefs are," I did get over her -- or better put, my mother knocked some sense into me.

At one point in my late teens, after listening to me spouting off about government controlling this or that and infringing on the rights of individuals, my mother sat me down, wagged



The writer, president of the Arab American Institute, gave Labor Press permission to reprint this Huffington Post piece that appeared 2 days after Ryan was added to the GOP ticket.

a finger in my face and reminded me that if it were not for Social Security benefits and the New York State Regent's Scholarships, I wouldn't be able to afford to go to college. "Don't deny to others, what you have benefited from," she said.

My mother, who passed away in 1998, was a devout Catholic and the daughter of Lebanese immigrants who came to the US at the turn of the last century. Her family came to America, like most immigrants, seeking freedom and opportunity. And they found it -- but not without difficulty. They worked tirelessly, overcame hardships, started businesses, and educated their children.

They survived two World Wars and a Great Depression and, as my mother would note, "When the country was suffering and people were in need, Roosevelt knew that it was the role of the government to lend a hand to lift people up and give them a boost."

My mother taught me the immigrant Catholic values of family, community, and service

to those less fortunate. She had no patience for "self-indulgence." It is no wonder then, that she reacted so negatively to my short-term embrace of Ayn Rand's "individualism" and Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*. And she would not tolerate narcissism. Life, she taught, was not about me, it is about us. In the end, she would say, "Your life's value would be measured not by what you earned, but by what you did for others." When a person understood that, she believed, they moved from adolescence to adulthood.

So when I hear conservatives talk about "my money" and speaking about government as some evil, alien force, I think about my mother and her generation rescued from the Depression by federal programs that put people back to work and provided a safety net for those most affected by economic dislocation.

I think of the millions of families who were able to survive and progress because of

Opinion

Social Security, the GI Bill, Medicare, and more. I also think how much safer and more secure we are because of federal legislation that has cleaned up our air and water, inspects our food and medicine, and regulates our banking system. And I think more recently of the hundreds of thousands of teachers, police and firefighters, and auto and construction workers whose jobs were saved by the action taken by the federal government. And I think of the millions of

Americans with "pre-existing conditions" who because of the Affordable Care Act need no longer fear being denied health coverage.

All of this may not be appreciated by conservatives eager to protect "my money." But despite their vain attempts to elevate selfishness and narcissism to a lofty-sounding political philosophy, it remains what it is -- infantile selfishness. My mother would have wagged her finger in their faces and told them "Get over yourself. This is not about you, it is about us."

And she would be right.

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Forget Wisconsin! Who do you know to get moving on crucial senate races in other states?

The Senate now has 51 Democrats, 47 Republicans and two Democratic-leaning independents, and they are the key to whether workers will retain a legislative voice in Congress next year - even if Congress does very little.

The Republican-run 112th Congress was distinguished by its reluctance - more precisely outright refusal -- to pass legislation to put Americans back to work, especially if any such action could be interpreted as benefiting President Obama.

So workers cannot afford to let that Senate voice be lost. But it is endangered. Democrats are defending 21 seats, the Republicans 10, and both independent-held seats are up before voters, too. Sheer mathematics give the GOP a good shot at a majority as does the flood of corporate campaign funneled by Republican forces into these races.

But things change in the race to Nov. 6.

MISSOURI. The Republicans staged a bloody three-way primary fight for the right to run against Sen. Claire McCaskill (D). But she's not home free, even though they showed ignorance in a minimum wage debate (none knew what it was and why it should be raised). McCaskill can't count on constant opponent ineptitude (see facing page) and faces plenty of out-of-state money against her. As in 2006, she'll carry St. Louis and Kansas City and strong union backing in those cities.

McCaskill won then by reducing the normally lopsided GOP margin in the Show Me State's rural areas, including the southwestern Bible Belt. Can she repeat? Maybe. Obama barely lost Missouri in 2008, but he's abandoned the state. The GOP will tie her to the president, whose health care law was unpopular in a 2010 referendum.

THE INDEPENDENTS. One Democratic-leaning independent, Connecticut's Joseph Lieberman, is retiring. Rep. Christopher Murphy (D) would normally be favored, but the GOP challenger is former World Wrestling magnate Linda McMahon throwing mega-millions of her fortune into the race. Vermont Independent Bernie Sanders will coast to re-election, and independent Angus King of Maine - expected to caucus with the Democrats - will take the seat now held by retiring Republican Olympia Snowe.

OHIO. This will be another test of whether the horde of GOP campaign cash and anti vote-freedom tactics can overwhelm a strong pro-worker incumbent, Democrat Sherrod Brown. GOP State Treasurer Josh

Mandel, a young conservative in a hurry, has proven adept at raising money. He'll get loads of help from the SuperPACs. Sherrod Brown, one of the strongest pro-worker senators, and a leader on fair trade, also has raised sufficient funds, and Ohio's unions will go all-out for him. He hasn't moderated his pro-worker stands on the campaign trail, either.

MASSACHUSETTS. One of the top races pits Elizabeth Warren (D) against 2-year incumbent Scott Brown (R). Both have plenty of money - and both have told the outside groups to stay out of Massachusetts. In the heavily Democratic state, this should have been a Warren walkaway, but Brown's cash and some key votes helped him cultivate the normally contrarian powers of Wall Street clout and an "independent" image, buttressed by the contrast between his pickup truck and her



Elizabeth Warren

Harvard professorship.

NORTH DAKOTA. Former state official Heidi Heitkamp (D) and one-term US Rep. Rick Berg (R) are jousting for the last Democratic-held statewide office - that of retiring US Sen. Kent Conrad's seat. North Dakota is so Republican that Obama didn't even bother with it. That gives Heitkamp an opening to declare herself an independent voice, and she's made the most of it, differing with Obama on several key issues. And in a state with only 680,000 people, her personality and retail campaigning can help overcome the corporate cash from pro-GOP SuperPACs. The result: A statistical tie and toss-up.

NEVADA. Appointed Sen. Dean Heller (R) vs. Rep. Shelley Berkley (D). This election will be a turnout test: The combination of Unite Here's largest local in Las Vegas, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's organization for Berkley, vs. GOP strength in the "Cow Counties" outside Las Vegas and among Mormons for Heller.

There are three big wild cards: How big will the Latino vote be - numbers are burgeoning in Nevada - an unfinished House ethics investigation of Berkley, and Las Vegas billionaire Sheldon Adelson's corporate cash for Heller.

VIRGINIA. Ex-governor and Democratic National Chairman Tim Kaine against ex-governor and Sen. George Allen (R), trying to take the seat he unexpectedly lost six years ago. This race has been a toss-up from the start, with both candidates raising plenty of money, with Obama campaigning hard in what is now one of the nation's pre-eminent swing "purple" states, and with outside interests throwing in loads of campaign cash for ads. Even before Labor Day, outside groups had spent millions - on both sides - in the D.C., Richmond and Tidewater cities' media markets.



Tim Kaine

The key is whether those three areas, especially Northern Virginia, will produce enough Democratic votes for Kaine to overcome the rural areas' GOP tilt for Allen. Kaine is tying Allen to the failed economic policies of the GOP Bush government, while touting his own budget-balancing record as governor - and noting he had to overcome Allen-bequeathed deficits. Allen, citing Kaine's DNC post, is tying Kaine to Obama.

INDIANA. A Tea Party triumph in the GOP primary gave Democrats an unexpected opening in the US Senate race, as State Treasurer Richard Mourdock defeated incumbent Sen. Richard Lugar. Mourdock's idea of "compromise," in his victory speech, is the other side must yield everything. His rigidity gives Rep. Joe Donnelly (D), a chance since he is a popular and proudly Indiana conservative voice in the big tent party.

But Donnelly trails Mourdock in money, Obama isn't contesting the state - which, in an upset, he barely won in 2008 - and Indiana's GOP just shoved through a right-to-work law. That, however, may energize workers and their allies in retaliation.

Most other Senate seats seem safe for one party or the other, including those held by pro-worker Democrats Ben Cardin (Md.), Maria Cantwell (Wash.), Bob Casey (Pa.), Dianne Feinstein (Calif.) Amy Klobuchar (Minn.), and Debbie Stabenow (Mich.).

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More Senate anecdotes



GOTCHA BACKFIRES – Seeing this photo of famous Ohio journalist Connie Schultz cuddling with a Democratic senator, an angry conservative blogger said the photo confirmed blatant liberal media bias by posing so intimately with the outspoken Sherrod Brown. An amused Schultz emailed back on Facebook that she was surprised the conservative hadn't found a photo of her kissing the senator "so hard he would be robbed of oxygen - he's really cute." The Pulitzer Prize winning Schultz has been married to Brown for years and writes books with him rather than covering him for the media.



GOP INEPTITUDE helped Sen. Claire McCaskill again Aug. 19 when her GOP opponent, six-term conservative Rep. Todd Akin, was asked in an interview if he would support abortion for women who had been raped. "That's really rare," he said. "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut the whole thing down." His remarks were immediately condemned by Romney and other GOP leaders. Obama said it confirmed why "we shouldn't have a bunch of politicians, a majority of whom are men, making health care decisions for women." The GOP withdrew funding and called for Akins to quit the race. McCaskill pointed out how, despite his later apology, it exposed "how his mind really works."

Don't give up on House

Virtually all forecasts expect the leaning-right Republicans to continue to run the House next year, though with a far smaller majority. House Democrats have not given up and every day new calculations flow in that do indeed narrow the GOP margin and raise some common-sense hopes for a reversal.

Democratic campaign committee chair Steve Israel (N.Y.) and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (Calif.) both declare their party can gain the 27 seats it needs to retake control and reinstall Pelosi as Speaker.

Pelosi says retaking the House is important for workers, and for women, who will be a majority of voters again this fall - and there is new ferocity behind the fervor for women's rights and to protect Medicare and Social Security given the Romney-Ryan ticket at the top of the GOP.

"Education of our children, the health of our families, retirement security for our seniors and jobs for our workers should all be non-partisan.," said Pelosi. "Is anything partisan and political about all of this? It shouldn't be."

But it is. GOP recalcitrant attitudes about women and safety nets have now added to the GOP unease about control, since they have deepened the chances of Rob Zerban to take Ryan's Congressional District 1 seat in Wisconsin.

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CDFI: How US awards gleefully seed local job growth

It was not only federal officials but community developers, bankers and entrepreneurs gathered Aug. 6 for thankful celebration at the Antigua Latin Restaurant on Burnham St. in West Allis. Flying in from D.C. and across southeastern Wisconsin were the reapers of seed money partnerships producing hundreds of Wisconsin jobs in low-income and ethnic communities through a program known as CDFI -- the US Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

Never heard of it? You should. Under that mouthful are people, ethnic enclaves, working communities who need loans, training, starting funds, banks and advisers - and while the media says there is gridlock in Congress, the treasury department and CDFI teams move ahead under the cable news radar, block by block, network by network.

In August, CDFI and its Native American spin-off partners announced national awards totaling \$186.8 million, with Wisconsin getting \$6.5 million. Banks and local partner associations were recipients, but the

real targets were community businesses such as the Antigua restaurant where the announcement took place and the awards are key to the restaurant creating 19 jobs. Other award recipients represent community development teams spread throughout the state - and all described the awards as the pin to stir jobs and productivity in their communities.

This was, despite groans of gridlock, the largest round of grants in CDFI history. In Milwaukee to enjoy the moment were CDFI Director Donna J. Gambrell, the US treasury assistant deputy secretary in charge of monitoring the program, Dan Graves, and US Rep. Gwen Moore, who actually started her climb to prominence helping neighborhoods develop businesses and block grants with local ownership - which is why she openly calls the national CDFI one of her special babies. Few know that in the House Moore has emerged as one of the economic development authorities.

"She is an encyclopedia of this program," said Graves in an interview. "She knows where every dollar goes in the nation. She tells me where to look for



Treasury's Dan Graves salutes recipients of \$6.5 million in CDFI awards at the Antigua Latin Restaurant as (from left) US Rep. Gwen Moore and program director Donna Gambrell listen.

good people." "Our job is not to create jobs but the opportunity to create jobs," he said, so it is essential to help the treasury department uncover and validate the recipients, and then provide grants to speed the funds and loans to both reassure and revitalize the business community. He refers to Moore as a master (should that be mistress?) of the technique.

Frankly what Moore does used to be cheerfully called

"bringing home the bacon" --- though these days you dare not describe it in any terms associated with pork. Sneaky members of Congress caused that avoidance because they hid the money set aside for their constituents anonymously in legislation. The practice became known as "earmarks" - and because of anger over such waste as Alaska's "Bridge to Nowhere," "earmark" is now a legal no-no. Congress can still work to get funds for good pro-

grams in their districts, and there are wrinkles, but the idea is to be honest and open.

But none of this affected Moore except from political opponents trying to manufacture a complaint. She had never hid her "earmarks" or whatever you call helping communities use federal money or loan rates to stimulate development. In fact, she still shouts from the rooftops that her job in Congress is to help bring jobs and federal projects to her community.

Under her, as the CDFI demonstrates, Wisconsin has been restored as much as she can in receiving its fair share of federal program funding. Local businesses that qualify for grants and awards know where their champion is. At Antigua, you would have been amazed at how many Republicans knew her name.

She is an economic powerhouse for the community as leaders in both parties openly acknowledge, and the CDFI program is just one of the examples of how under the surface she is developing jobs and commerce through community development.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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Departing legislators slapped in face by AFC election politics

There is a normal civility among public officials even when they totally disagree on policy. Wisconsin saw it among the Democrats who have worked with US Rep. Paul Ryan. They honor him as a family man and colleague - as fellow Rep. Tammy Baldwin put it, they are friends who could disagree without being disagreeable. That didn't blunt partisan delight that his choice as vice presidential lamb gave them considerable ammunition to expose the GOP's economic misdirection.

Similarly, in seeking to retain the cordiality that the media claims is lost in politics, officials approached their departure with dignity they hoped to pass on to everyone in a competitive field.

In Milwaukee there were some who for reasons of health (Tamara Grigsby) or the desire for new direction (Barbara Toles) decided not to run again for Assembly seats they otherwise would be shoo-ins to win. To pass along that sense of decorum in discourse, they either participated in forums (Grigsby) or kept their counsel (Toles) trusting the voters and urging stronger neighborhood participation Aug. 14.

In these city districts, success is usually more shoe leather than fancy expensive lit drops. It used to be who would demon-

strate they could work hardest and most simpatico with the constituents, getting out in the hot or wet summer to do the doors. It reflected a trust in grassroots sweat and voters listening amid a sea of hopefuls.

Such expectations vanished in the last weeks of the campaign. Nastiness emerged too late for the voters to really grasp the mechanics while the media isn't staffed that deep to uncover the trickery. In the Milwaukee smaller races, if nothing else, voters learned that a Democrats-only run-off can be laced with deception.

For Toles in particular, anger replaced cordiality August 12 when a perplexed 70 year old constituent showed her campaign literature where the picture had been PhotoShopped, as the trade calls it, removing all the other people from the photo and leaving Toles pictured alone with Tracey Dent, the one candidate in the District 17 race who supports voucher schools. And sure enough the literature and last-minute Dent billboards were paid for by the national voucher school network, the American Federation for Children.

The AFC has a remarkably consistent ugly campaign reputation in Milwaukee for pretending to support "Democratic values" while being funded by the likes of the Koch brothers. A common



Voters rose above the dirt to elect such new faces as AFSCME's La Tonya Johnson.

trick is to spend under the radar at the last minute, too late for the figures to be fully reflected in campaign expenditure reports. Another is this photo trick - it is not the first time that noted public figures have seen their photos in brochures for candidates they had never endorsed. The standard is to seek permission, not claim some sort of "fair use" - and any such explanation vanished when you crop everyone else out. Usually these photo deceptions land too late for the offended to respond or the voters to understand.

Toles hit the ceiling, releasing a press release late Sunday before the election calling the literature "a slimy campaign tactic designed to trick the people of the 17th Assembly District into voting for the candidate that is supported by the AFC."

Over in District 18, though he had quietly participated in the

forum Grigsby and 9to5 hosted without discussing his views on voucher schools, Jarrett Fields has also flooded the doors with flyers funded by AFC. For the record, Grigsby has also opposed the AFC goals and tactics.

AFC dropped hundreds of thousands of dollars not just to support Dent and Jarrett Fields, but Jarrett's brother Jason in District 11 (the incumbent vanquished Aug. 14 by Mandela Barnes). Voucher network money was behind much literature supporting Elizabeth Coggs in Senate District 6 despite her regular pretense of advocating public education, Millie Coggs in Assembly District 10 and challengers in other races, though the media won't really know the actual numbers for a month or so.

AFC also wasted money behind endorsements by public officials for Beth Coggs, some apparently fabricated if you ask around, though politicians whose names were loosely used tended not to complain in case they had to work again with the Coggs family.

Fortunately, the voters weren't fooled. None of the AFC supported candidates won Aug. 14 despite the big spending.

La Tonya Johnson came through big in District 17 and Evan Goyke, an avid supporter of the departing Grigsby, won in District 18.

The reality of politics is that people are so impressed by the millions of dollars now spent on big contests they don't realize the impact in smaller races of money only AFC and other conduits can bundle to produce mass drops and flyers stuck in windshields as citizens leave Sunday church.

That untraceable late blitz will revive again Nov. 6. This time the motives were subtler in Democratic districts where no Republican was on the ballot. Should Democrats make gains anyway, better for AFC to encourage those deceptive "Ds" willing to adjust their ethics to accept big corporate money.

It is one thing to say that such candidates believe so strongly in the voucher principle in the ideological abstract that they are willing to risk widespread voter distaste by quietly taking money from the AFC. It is more likely that support from a rich secretive Republican group not only commits them to a state system that steals taxpayer money from public education but opens them up to voting as the AFC would like in the future.

At least dirty tricks confirm not all Democrats are alike and there is good reason to choose principles first. The price of taking money is always obedience.

-- Dominique Paul North



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Walker data adds confusion over lag in jobs

The public can't be blamed for confusion about job figures. Usually a high tide raises all boats but Wisconsin apparently has a considerable anchor in leadership policies. While job numbers are climbing up regularly and favorably around the nation, not in our state.

On August 16 in preliminary data the state is required to release without manipulation, Wisconsin lost an estimated 6,000 private-sector jobs in July and the unemployment rate climbed to 7.3% from 7% in June and 6.8% in May.

The confusion comes because Gov. Walker, building on an ad blitz before the June 5 recall he survived, kept piling on numbers unquestioned by media that supported him for office.

So that same Aug. 16, the media gave bigger headlines to state Department of Workforce Development statistics suggesting that Wisconsin added 37,464 private-sector jobs from March 2011 through March 2012 -- in other words, manufactured news from awhile back to deflect the current unhappy news. Balanced against the loss of public jobs, the actual gain number shrunk more than 9,000.

For Wisconsin's true dire job situation, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics provided the real state-by-state comparisons for 2011 in quarterly census numbers. Under these numbers, Wisconsin has lost jobs every quarter since the Republican budget passed.

In mid-May faced with recall, Walker took the unusual step of releasing - and then touting - a partial version of the numbers. Missing were the state comparisons. Now the updated statistics confirm that Wisconsin once again was among the leaders in job loss. Other states' rankings put Wisconsin third-worst in job creation in the last half of 2011.

Commented Assembly Democratic leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha), "That means that even under the rosiest possible scenario put forward by Republicans, Wisconsin unfortunately has the worst jobs record in the Midwest." -- D.P.N.

Treatment of Colombia GM subsidiary workers angers AFL-CIO leaders

The AFL-CIO and affiliates demanded immediate US action Aug. 10 involving Colombia's "mistreatment of the members of ASOTRECOL," an association of ex-workers and injured workers at Colmotores, a General Motors (GM) subsidiary.

President Richard Trumka cited gathering evidence that "ASOTRECOL workers been fired illegally and their medical records handled illegally."

"GM Colmotores management and the Colombian Ministry of Labor have also denied them workers' compensation and access to early retirement or other benefits after being injured in the workplace." When GM Colmotores would not agree

for over a year to engage with Labor Ministry mediation, the workers began a hunger strike in

front of the US embassy in Bogotá. Pointing to conditions of trade agreements, the AFL-

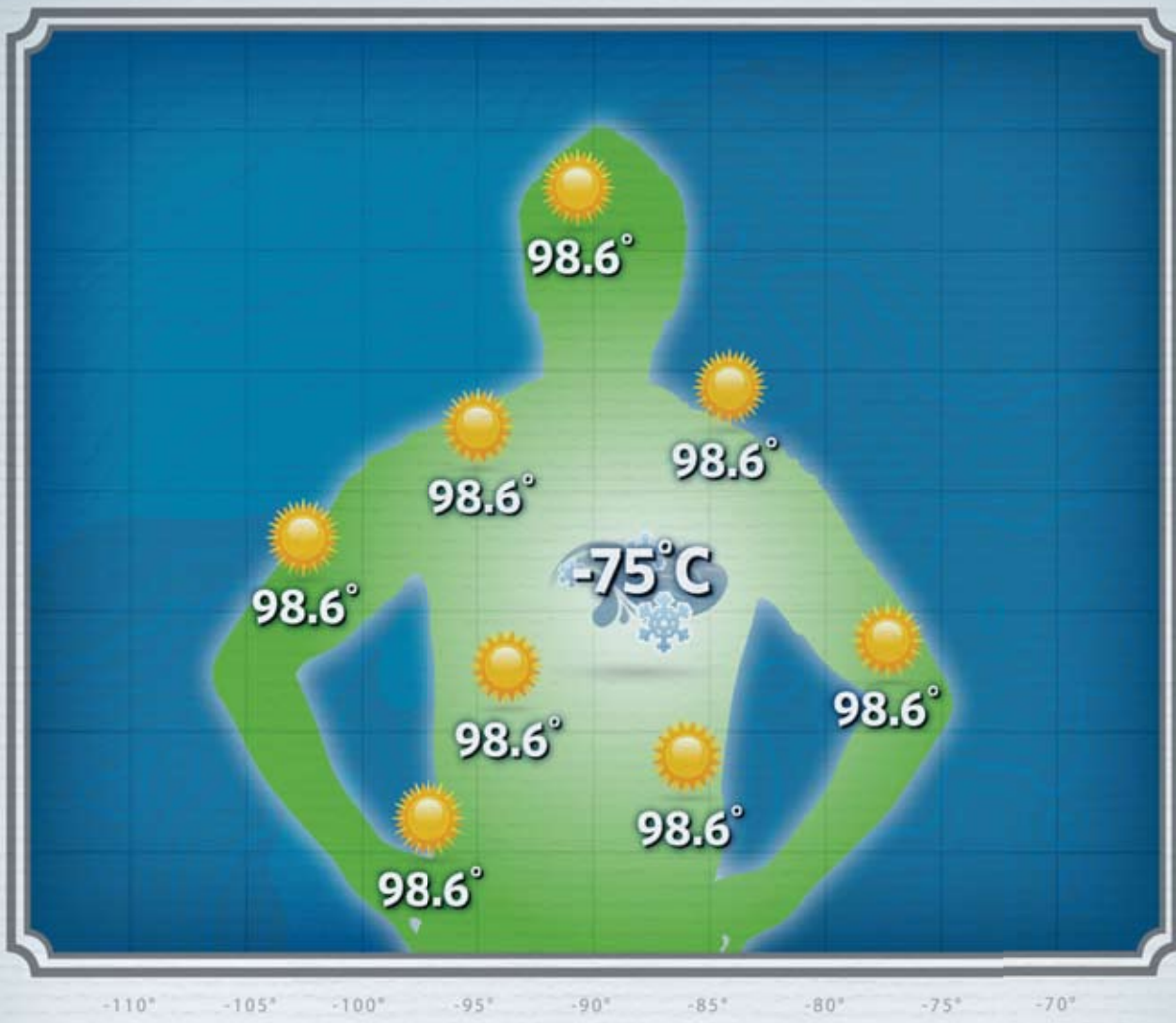
CIO said both governments are required to help settle the conflict in a fair manner.

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Janitors win but keep fighting

Downtown custodians unanimously ratified a major new contract August 4 and then turned right around to protest a hovering threat to the union solidarity in cleaning office buildings downtown. They are conducting marches and protest to keep Clean Power and other non-union hired hands from undermining their hard-won gains.

The new contract helps. It was negotiated with a team representing the vast majority of Milwaukee's large-scale commercial office buildings and maintains wages for about 500 workers while preserving a modest health insurance package.

But it was achieved at a critical time for Milwaukee's unionized janitors, represented by Service Employees International Union Local 1. They are in heated battle against Stewart Wangard of Wangard Partners who has brought lower wages and no benefits by eliminating a union contract and refusing to encourage its new contractor to rehire those workers for its office building. Local 1 is fighting back not only with publicized marches but in protesting Wangard's investment role in other major projects.

The issue now puts SEIU in some conflict with other unions. Local 1 actually supports an all-union Wangard construction project in Park East, but wants Milwaukee County and other unions to put some teeth into what Wangard will do about hiring people to operate and care for the building once completed. "Without that promise of future good behavior, what value is there in current construction hiring?" asked one SEIU spokesman at a recent gathering.

Local 1 raised that issue - supporting the project in principle but angry at the investing group's behavior - before the County Board, before RACM and in ongoing protests, hoping other unions understand the important distinction it is making.

More immediately important to 500 workers was the new three year contract that protects jobs at other office buildings, said union leader Maria Sada. "Protecting the health insurance was the most important thing for us, and we're satisfied that we were able to do that in this agreement," she said.

The agreement preserves janitors' employer-paid health care for the next 16 months and maintains current wages but includes a contract re-opener in November 2013 to discuss health insurance

The climb up the hill to family supporting jobs has been a struggle for custodians and they are hardly ready to fall back by letting non-union companies invade downtown and undercut them by reducing wages to lure selfish employers.

Janitors under the union contract make \$11 an hour, which - with health benefits included - has raised their standard of living to about half the average household income in the US.

It was union organizing the brought the increase, since



The grim reaper joined Local 1's protest of non-union cleaning this summer, but even as this Wangard protest continues, janitors won a big contract covering most commercial office buildings Downtown.

non-union janitors downtown are paid \$2 less an hour without benefits. It's worse for other non-union janitors, according to labor statistics and rights investigators -- \$8.50 an hour in some Milwaukee office building and even minimum wage \$7.25 with no health insurance coverage.

Sikh tragedy brought insight into hate watchdog group

The unspeakable invasion of the Sikh temple in Oak Creek, which left seven people dead including the lone gunman Aug. 5, provided much needed attention to a religious community that proudly wears its turbans, lives by a code of service to others and has long supported other religions in its community and public service.

Yet Sikhs have been excluded from hate crime legislation though it was a Sikh pumping gas in Arizona, mistaken because of appearance for a Muslim, who was first killed after 9/11. Since then its representative groups have recorded thousands of incidents of slurs, vandalism, beatings, fire-bombs and killings aimed at the Sikh community.

But the Oak Creek horror also brought fresh attention to a veteran civil rights watchdog investigating hate crimes and hate crime patterns over decades -- the Southern Poverty Law Center. It first revealed the white supremacist background of the killer, providing details back to 2000.

The center is a nonprofit civil rights organization fighting hate and bigotry, providing justice advice for the vulnerable members of society. It was founded by civil rights lawyers Morris Dees and Joseph Levin Jr. in 1971. It also runs an innovative free Teaching Tolerance program that produces and distributes documentary films, books and lesson plans.

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Wall St. Journal and labor analyze economic data and (shocker!) agree

Of all places it was the bible of right-wing economic thinking that revealed the truth about how a decline in government spending, not the harping on increased government spending that dominates the right-wing political airwaves, is playing a significant role in the failure of the economy to recover fast enough.

In the current Obama recovery, which began in 2009, total public outlays have decreased at an annualized rate of 1.5%, according to a Dow Jones/Wall Street Journal analysis of newly revised government data. This decrease, much due to GOP opposition to Obama efforts, contrasts remarkably with the expansions that occurred in the Bush, Clinton and Reagan eras when government spending joined other economic drivers in growing the economy, the paper reported July 31.

In the previous five expansions, dating back to 1975, government spending grew a yearly average of 1.9% compared to the current decrease. The pullback is most pronounced at the state and local level, with Wisconsin and other states dominated by extremist austerity thinking leading the way backward. That helps explain why on an annualized basis, the gross domestic product has grown by just 2.2% since the recovery began.

By that measure, the current rebound is the weakest of the post World War II era. Given the political atmosphere of obstinacy and gridlock, it is actually quite remarkable the economy is growing at all, even picking up its pace over two years.

Slower federal spending has also become a drag on growth, an analysis of Commerce Department data found. By comparison, federal spending grew at an annualized 3.5% rate during the longer of two Regan-era recoveries and grew at a 3.8% pace during the George W. Bush recovery and expansion from 2001 through 2007. Both periods benefited from increased defense spending as the Cold War reached its climax under Reagan and the US fought wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a military factor rapidly disappearing.

Decreased government spending may not be the only factor holding back growth, but the failure of responsible government spending underlies the argument that all facets of America are in this together, that government spending drives consumer confidence and paves the way for private sector economic development. It may strike some as ironic that the evidence comes from the Wall Street Journal, but common sense has a way of breaking through.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

Ready, set, county gets to work

The pace of government approvals creates slow-down hurdles. But only a year after being authored, on July 26 the Milwaukee County Board provided overwhelming support to a 2011 initiative introduced by Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb and then Supervisor Eyon Biddle -- the Biddle-Lipscomb Ready to Work advance, connecting residents who are ready to work with job opportunities by ensuring they have the needed qualifications and skills.

R2W as it is known focuses on county residents who have demonstrated prior success such as attaining a high school diploma or GED and maintaining a valid driver's license, yet are still unable to secure family supporting jobs. The board approved a contract with BIG STEP and the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP) to provide outreach, screening, training and on-the-job work experience.

The 2012 budget designates \$1 million of land sales revenue to establish the R2W Initiative. While that followed a Park East corridor land sale, another \$1 million for the effort will be leveraged from other land sales. R2W is projected to place more than 500



Eyon Biddle



Theo Lipscomb

residents in jobs and help hundreds more to get on a path to employment.

"In a city with 55% black male joblessness, I'm pleased this initiative will provide opportunity, access and hope to those who are Ready to Work," former supervisor Biddle commented, thanking Lipscomb and his successor, David Bowen, "for pushing the needle to get this to the finish line in my absence."

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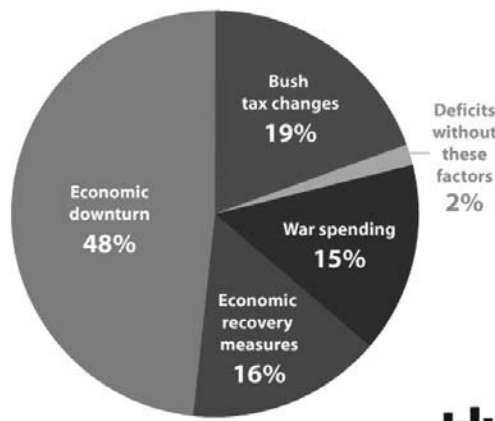
By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

A four-volume two-year investigation by the US Congress drawing from internal company emails and mountains of statistics revealed conclusively and convincingly July 29 that the federal government has fallen down on protecting citizens from misleading pitches and poor quality programs, exorbitant markups and staggering debt loads - failing to adequately safeguard the \$32 billion in taxpayer dollars that flow to the industry.

Are we talking about defense contractors? Stimulus money? Bank oversight? Not at all. This is the price of not minding the knowledge store.

The villain is the profit-minded higher education

Recent factors contributing to the projected FY2012 deficit



Source: Author's analysis of CBO data.

The Economic Policy Institute decided to graph the projected national deficit in terms of cause and effect, not mere dollars - and the reality jumps out at you. Look at how much stems from lost revenue resulting from staggering economic downturn before the current president took office. Look at how much came from Bush era tax cuts and wars and how smaller were Obama's efforts to stimulate the recovery.



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money factories, the sort that overload your TV sets with ads promising special degrees and unique training for well-paying careers. There are even news outlets that sign their praises - some own the companies.

Those heady careers and specialized training seem to evaporate when you're halfway through the expensive meal, leaving the public suckers holding a very expensive empty sack of no potatoes. Not to say some individuals don't benefit - particularly CEOs of these companies, who average annual salaries of \$7.3 million.

Sen. Tom Harkin and other colleagues commissioned the two-year study. The GOP object and claim that Harkin and staff were ideologically motivated, which is true if the ideal is giving the public a bang for its \$32 billion.

The investigation found that large numbers of students at for-profits fail to earn credentials, citing a 64% dropout rate in associate degree programs, as one example. The report links those high dropout rates to the relatively small amount of money spent on instruction compared to advertising, recruiting and marketing.

That, if you want to get sarcastic, is a clear definition of the American way. If you want to talk goals in education, however, online service with part-time instructors and special degree programs where the need evaporates before you flunk out - well, that is definitely not the American way.

While even progressive Democrats don't say government creates jobs, they do say that government creates the atmosphere, opportunity and pathways. So special programs that build investments in community colleges and bring manufacturers and businesses together to help set the public agenda are quite successful. Funding those community colleges are now a tough slog politically while the for-profit higher education industry has no such problems with the GOP. It is one of the most successful lobbying groups and political funding streams in the nation.

For-profits "devote tremendous amounts of resources to non-education related spending", the report says, with the sector spending more revenue on "marketing" and profit-sharing than on instruction.

"American taxpayers are the single biggest investor in for-profit colleges, yet the government that holds their trust has little ability to ensure that they get the return on investment they deserve," the report said. "Congress must put in place a much more rigorous regulatory structure."

The report delves into familiar criticisms leveled against the industry in recent years: poor graduation rates, high rates of student loan default and aggressive recruiting tactics targeting low-income students who are eligible for the maximum in federal student aid. But the report fleshes out these problems with comprehensive new statistics, internal correspondence and company presentations that shed light on the motivations of those in charge. And it names names - many the most familiar.

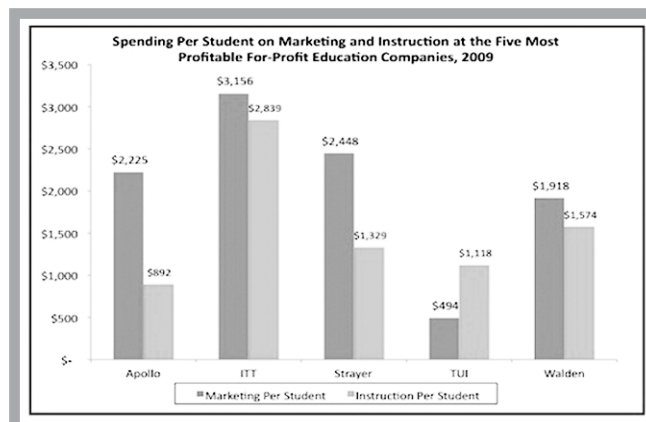
Harkin's staff found that 30 large companies that own for-profit colleges employed more than 35,000 recruiters, yet had only about 3,500 employees working in career services and 12,400 working in "student support" (administration mainly handling financial issues). Instruction staff was often part-time and online.

The report contains hundreds of examples of e-mails and recruiting tools detailing the pressure on employees to enroll as many students as possible.

The Apollo Group instructed recruiters in a memo to push back against students who were concerned that the cost of tuition was much higher than other schools. Apollo Group, owner of University of Phoenix, one of the most omnipresent advertisers for its online programs, says that blatant training manual is no longer in use, but its procedures are under investigation by attorneys general in three states and the US Department of Education.

Also featured in the report is a for-profit making waves in Milwaukee with its Everest College, which brought a major protest by community groups. The teachers at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, AFT Local 212, criticized how its tuition costs misled students in handing them high loan debts and failure to teach the advertised specialized skills. What was MATC's reward for blowing the whistle early on the failure of a for-profit competitor for students? The Walker administration slashed funding for the successful and far cheaper public technical colleges by a third.

The AFT complaints are echoed in the report involving Everest's parent, Corinthian, which was cited for some of the highest tuition among all the companies examined. Another example is a major online player that replaced a



Using a myriad of graphs and analysis, the staff of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee underscored how much money goes to marketing compared to actual instruction, with many of the instructors part-time hires.

noted religious institution -- Bridgepoint Education, now a publicly traded company operating Ashford University and University of the Rockies.

Even the for-profit institutions that claim they are working to improve are under deep investigation for their practices including DeVry and Kaplan, owned by the Washington Post. Kaplan is under investigation by attorneys general in four states -- 68% of its college students drop out before graduating. Three Minnesota-based for-profit colleges were included in the report: Capella University, Rasmussen College and Walden University.

Harkin described "the bottom line" in the report as the taxpayers "squandering" \$32 billion each year to the for-profit industry, though he doubted in the current Congress anything could be immediately done.

The federal government badly lacks proper methods to simply determine how students are faring at for-profit schools, while it has a lot of information about public higher education. To analyze graduation rates across higher education, the US Department of Education considers students who are attending college for the first time. But that standard captures only a fraction of the non-traditional students who often attend for-profit schools -- one area where critics want to see a change but the industry resists.

The senate staff had similar complaints - part-time teachers, horrible ratios of actual teachers to students with the money put into advertising and recruiting. It actually requested data on all students enrolling at 30 for-profit education companies from July 2008 to July 2009 and found that about 54% of students who enrolled in those colleges had withdrawn by the middle of 2010.

MATC in contrast has a remarkable high rate of completion and actual employment in the community for its graduates.

For-profit spokesmen had several criticisms of the report and are led by another noted Wisconsin GOP figure, Steve Gunderson, a former member of Congress now serving as president of the group's mouthpiece, the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities. He and others argue that the high rate of debt reflected a special clientele -- adults and single-parent families -- and that the special degrees they offered could eventually pay off in higher salaries, though they couldn't provide statistics.

"We also serve a nontraditional student population in technical colleges," noted Michael Rosen, president of the AFT local, "but the quality of our education is high, our teachers are degreed with private sector experience, we provide hands-on training on campus and in clinicals, and our costs are low and systems are transparent."

"The for-profit schools deceive students because they cannot match our quality or costs."

Commented David Halperin, fellow at the Republic Report: "What adds insult to injury is that, because many for-profits get 85-90% or more of their revenues from tax dollars, we are actually paying them not only to injure students but also to block reforms. In short, we've created a monster."

The revelations and hard data may not bring instant change and even Harkin concedes that the concept is not going away - the industry is too big and the political pressure too deep. But the report is a clarion call for the players to reform or shut down, and the raw facts make it hard for the industry's ideologues to defend such horrible practices.

Teamsters' criticism of Frontier has legs

Right now it's the Frontier Airlines Center downtown, with renaming rights granted with the purchase of Midwest Airlines, but soon - according to media reports - to evaporate again in a naming rights game to find a more responsible corporate partner, or combination of partners, to represent Milwaukee. In fact, the Wisconsin District Center has put the likelihood of keeping the brand as nil when current naming rights run out.

Underneath, Frontier is really Republic Airways Holdings, which has cut Frontier's presence in Milwaukee, separated its corporate ties and is clearly looking for a buyer for Frontier Airlines, with American Airlines much courted. Milwaukee would no longer be even a co-hub for service.

Frontier was a core part of CEO Bryan Bedford's far-fetched dream to make Republic a major international player in the airline business, a plan that fooled Milwaukee's business community into lavishing money and praise on his enterprise only to have egg on their faces when Frontier retrenched and started to pull back and out, leaving dan-

gling in the wind its promises to add hundreds of jobs, which also brought government and civic largesse to the self-publicist. Labor Press' report on this debacle is online at www.milwaukeeelabor.org/in_the_news/article.cfm?n_id=00212

Now, it is Bedford and his parent company under national attack by investment groups on issues ranging from competence to labor negotiations.

Outside analysts recommended that institutional investors support the Teamsters' call for independent leadership at Republic Airways because of Bedford's ongoing questionable financial decisions.

The two independent analysts for proxy voters, ISS and Glass-Lewis, said institutional investors should vote to split the jobs of chairman and CEO, as the Teamsters propose.

That action failed at an August stockholder meeting, but the issue is still alive. It has laid down a gauntlet that Republic will have to deal with in the foreseeable future even as it seeks to sell off Frontier.

"Republic's current chairman and CEO (Bedford) has proven

incapable of crafting a coherent strategy for the once-successful regional carrier," said Teamsters Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall. "Republic's clubby board and conflicted lead director exacerbate the problem. Shareholders must send the board a clear message and demand independent leadership."

Republic's board is no help, the union said in a special report to investors. Too many key members have ties to the airline management, operations, or both.

The campaign by the Teamsters, who represent nearly half of the airline's workers and also hold a block of Republic stock, highlights a series of multimillion-dollar blunders by Bedford. The blunders cost stockholders money and imperil the airline's finances, the union report states.

One Bedford blunder antagonized Republic's pilots, whom the Teamsters represent - so much so that on July 2 the union asked the National Mediation Board, which governs airline labor-management relations, to release both sides from legal restrictions.

That would let the Republic pilots vote to strike, if necessary.

Low pay for pilots and lack of raises for five years only worsens "a looming crisis" of pilot retirements at Republic, the union said. That's because, as at other air carriers, the "baby boom" generation is aging and its pilots, often trained in the military in prior years, are reaching mandatory retirement age.

"Republic's response has been typically shortsighted," the Teamsters report adds. "Already at a competitive disadvantage to the higher-paying legacy carriers, Republic's own regional airlines like Chautauqua and Shuttle America will need to find new ways to recruit and retain pilots as it becomes more expensive and time-consuming to become a pilot in the first place.

"So far, Republic's solution to the pilot shortage has been to antagonize its pilots, business clients but also the business of its mainline customers" - the larger carriers its regional planes feed. "Pilots at Republic's regional operations have been in contract negotiations since 2007, without any

pay raises in five years," the Teamsters reported.

"Rather than negotiate an agreement with the pilots, Republic tried to pay off pilots directly by offering increases outside the contract, a tactic prohibited by federal law. Faced with a potential job action, the company backtracked and tried instead to illegally offer signing bonuses.

"There is absolutely no rationale for management to waste time attempting to circumvent the collective bargaining process required by law. These costly delay tactics serve only to postpone an agreement with the pilots and destroy relations with the very professionals the airline desperately needs to operate."


Ousting Bedford from one of his top two jobs at Republic may not be enough, the Teamsters warn. But it would be a strong signal that the airline must get serious to survive by "providing independent oversight of management."

All this is too late for Milwaukee, of course.

Walker recall funds unprecedented

Campaign figures have accumulated on Scott Walker's recall survival. Walker through quirks in the law allowing unlimited contributions (since the typical contribution limits were lifted) had these results, according to media investigation:

- An unprecedented reliance on out-of-state contributors -- 74% of the amount of money raised from individuals came from out-of-state.
- 80% of the individual donations to the campaign came from outside Wisconsin.
- Over \$2.3 million was raised from 1,937 donors giving big money contributions in excess of \$500.



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AFL-CIO steps into Palermo pizza dispute and boycott

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Editor, Labor Press

Calling on its 12 million affiliated members and millions more who sympathize with human, worker and civil rights to provide people a voice in their economic future, the national AFL-CIO has announced a nationwide boycott of Palermo frozen pizza.

The D.C. headquartered federation said it was responding to complaints that the company has "blatantly disregarded" the effort of workers to organize into a union to improve working conditions, hiring practices, treatment and wages at the facility on Canal St. in Menomonee Valley in Milwaukee.

Its president, Richard Trumka, also announced Aug. 21 that in response to a request from the company he would meet Aug. 25 with Palermo CEO Giacomo Falluca to "discuss the workers' concerns."

Let's take the issues step by step: The boycott covers Palermo's brand pizza, "Classics" brand pizza and private label brand frozen pizza produced by Palermo including Costco's Kirkland brand.

This call for boycott is part of the national federation's continued support for the efforts of the "Palermo Workers Union" (now revealed as aided by the

USW, United Steelworkers), and also by community and immigrant rights groups like Voces de la Frontera (which also helped organize the union) and the United States Students Association, the nation's largest and oldest student-led organization.

Only it's not yet a union.

Technically, an election on becoming an official union must be held by the National Labor Relations Board under rules that determine who is in the workforce and if a majority of those want a union.

NLRB has now suspended any vote until it investigates unfair labor practice charges affecting who should be allowed to take part in the election.

In Wisconsin the boycott call is being listened to by AFL-CIO local federations that include in their full membership, through Solidarity Charters, labor groups that are part of other federations, such as Change to Win. All are being urged to honestly weigh the rights issues involved.

Jorge Becker of the organizing committee for the Palermo workers related a history of the dispute, discussing how the workers "have been talking for more than a year" about collectively addressing health and safety concerns, and fair treatment in advancement

and other protected issues. In response, Becker says, in May the company used inquiries about immigration status of some workers from ICE to "threaten" the employment of workers interested in unionizing.

The company denied that unionizing efforts had anything to do with their actions against workers, that it was all about legal status, but ICE, the federal agency, had also sent the company a letter saying it was suspending any interest in "suspect documents." The timing of the ICE letter and the treatment of the let-go workers, or the workers who walked out in protest, is a crucial area of the dispute.

ICE - the federal immigration authority - has off the record told Labor Press that it has actually been investigating hiring practices at Palermo for nearly two years. Publicly in June, after learning there was a unionizing effort involved, it sent Palermo that letter suspending any inquiry into suspect documents. ICE cooperates with the federal agency in charge of labor issues, the NLRB, which has long ruled that it is illegal to intimidate workers on unionizing by invoking in any way their immigration status.

Becker and other workers claim that Palermo started firing workers with suspect documents after getting the ICE letter, not

before, which would validate the ULP (Unfair Labor Practice) -- one of the basis of the legal action filed at the NLRB by Richard Saks, the lawyer for the workers, a group which has now associated itself with the national USW, an AFL-CIO affiliate.

Palermo defends its view through high-priced legal talent, local community officials who are friends and supporters of the family-started business, which has also provided these officials campaign support, and its track record of charity giving and community involvement as it grew from a neighborhood bakery and pizzeria into a national brand.

Observers who understand how organizing works says it is natural, along with the workers themselves, that supportive Latino, church and community groups have also openly encouraged Palermo employees to look at the virtues of unionizing to address their complaints. Voces' executive director, Christine Neumann-Ortiz, is listed as business agent for the workers in NLRB filings.

Under US law workers agree to work for a company on the company's terms, but still deserve the right to address grievances. The workers interviewed at Palermo say they simply want a voice on practices and working conditions and that unionizing seems the best way, though they know it does not affect their legal status.

Through a translator, one worker at Palermo told Labor Press, "There are nice plantation owners and mean ones, but they are all plantation owners."

Legally, the entire issue is in limbo. The initial request for a union election -- either with the Palermo Workers Union or with the UFCW, which has also expressed an interest in the workers' concerns - has been put

on hold to investigate charges against Palermo. Palermo excluded some 75 workers it had let go and included more than 80 replacement workers. Saks has challenged this.

The NLRB has frozen the presence in Milwaukee as witnesses all workers involved to determine the merits of the case.

There is also a semantical muddle. The workers say they are on strike. The company says they are not. Though even the AFL-CIO in its national boycott call refers to the workers who left Palermo in the dispute as "strikers," the law is clear: You can't be on strike unless you have a contract signed by both sides. So the company can claim these were at-will employees who left.

However, that's not the end of it. The NLRB will determine whether the workers were let go directly or indirectly because of unionizing activity --- and that is a violation of the law and makes them far more than "at-will" workers.

The investigation may also reveal Palermo's hiring practices regarding workers it had reasons to suspect on legal (immigration) grounds but put to work anyway because of their value. Palermo has reason to worry about its hiring record, because federal law is clearly aimed at punishing misbehaving companies, not people who are good workers and want jobs. "We never target them, they are just sometimes caught in the headlights," an ICE official in D.C. told Labor Press.

Best guess - it will be weeks before the NLRB determines the facts.

But the boycott keeps the pressure on resolving the dispute by negotiation -- and may have triggered the approach to Trumka to help resolve the issue.



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Fracking changes

Guidance sought for more than a decade has now been instituted to protect hydraulic fracturing (fracking) workers from exposure to crystalline silica.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have issued a hazard alert for workers who toil in the fracking industry. The alert states that employers must ensure that workers are properly protected from overexposure to crystalline silica.

The alert came in response to union representatives, Public Action and others in recognition that exposure to crystalline silica has been closely associated to the respiratory disease silicosis and many other health issues, such as tuberculosis, lung cancer and kidney disease.

Crystalline silica and its effects can be found in many industries, such as construction, foundry and metal work. Crystalline silica is one of the main components of the fracking process, and it has been reported that up to 4 million pounds of crystalline silica sand is needed in the production of one fracking well.

OSHA began updating its rules for crystalline silica in 1997, but there have been delays. In May of this year, the AFL-CIO, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the United Steelworkers of America joined Public Citizens in complaining to the Obama administration about the seemingly endless delays in new standards, which played into many complaints that the fracking industry seemed to be getting a pass on requirements of water and air safety as well. That led to the alert order to fracking industry workers from the federal agencies.

NALC food drive again restocks pantries

The annual food drive for the nation's soup kitchens, homeless shelters and pantries for the poor outdid itself for the ninth straight year, exceeding 70 million pounds of donated food, in the one-day service May 12 by union letter carriers.

In its 20-year history, the NALC food drive has collected more than 1.2 billion pounds of food, from virtually every post office or mail route nationwide.

Though disappointed that the 2012 collections in Milwaukee didn't match last year, Scott Van Derven, president of the state letter carriers association, still reported astonishing tons of good collected at community doors and distributed to food pantries in the Milwaukee area. Branch 2 collected 600,959 pounds of food

Calendar

Visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org for updated events

Monday, September 3

Labor Day and Laborfest!

11 a.m. parade, noon to 5 p.m. Maier Festival Park (Summerfest). See Pages 4-5

Wednesday, September 5

Delegate Meeting

6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Wednesday, September 26

Executive Council Meeting

2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Wednesday, October 3

Delegate Meeting

6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

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Agnew's sweatshop image returns

"Portrait of a Textile Worker" is coming home to Wisconsin, on loan from Manhattan's Museum of Art and Design (MAD) to be part of artWORK, celebrating past and current visions of labor at the Crossman Gallery, UW-Whitewater Sept. 6-Oct. 6.

MALC members well remember contributing to Terese Agnew's prize winning enormous quilt made totally of tiny clothing labels contributed from garments. By the thousands, residents snipped off the labels and sent them to Agnew who assembled the results at her Milwaukee studio. The MAD now has the quilt in its permanent collection.

Agnew, recently featured in a PBS documentary on notable American craft experts, now lives in rural western Wisconsin. She will attend the Sept. 6 opening reception in Whitewater.

Notable photos and art from WWII to contemporary times are also featured. In October, noted metalsmith Stacey Lee Webber will serve as visiting artist for the exhibition.

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Debunking myths about unions

Bill Fletcher, Jr. - who went to work as a shipyard welder after graduating from Harvard University - has spent most of his adult life as a labor activist, working as an organizer and educator at United Auto Workers, National Postal Mail Handlers Union, Service Employees International Union, the AFL-CIO, and presently at the American Federation of Government Employees.

Now he's authored a book: *"They're Bankrupting Us: And 20 Other Myths About Unions."* The Beacon Press publication arrives in August at bookstores, so Northwest Labor Press associate editor Don McIntosh spoke with Fletcher for an advance insight.

Who is this book for?

This book is for people who know very little about unions, and particu-

larly for people who watch too much Fox News.

Your book lists 21 myths about unions. What do you consider the top three?

That they bankrupt us, that they're all corrupt, and that they were good once but are not needed any more.

That last one - that unions were necessary back in the day, but are no longer needed because laws protect workers

now - what do you think of that?

The reality is that for most workers in this country, there is no protection for their basic rights in the workplace. In a workplace, you have no freedom of speech, no right to assembly, no right of individual protest. And when people say "unions were needed once," they are often referring to the days of the sweatshops. The problem is those sweatshops are coming back.

If you look at growing industries in Los Angeles, it's not auto plants and aerospace, it's light electronics, textiles and garments. It's small shops that are incredibly oppressive and very easy to shut down by the owners when they feel threatened. And who is there to protect all of these workers? In light electronics, they're largely Latino and Asian immigrant women. So there's been a reemergence of things that people thought were gone.

[Partly it's because] we're still dealing with the ideology of Reaganism, the ideology of get rich, go on your own, collective action is useless. This is an ideological problem we have to face up to.

When people go into a workplace and say, "this is horrible," their first impulse is not to organize but to get out. The idea that collective struggle pays is an idea that we have to win people back to.

What about the idea that unions bankrupt us?

In the public sector, the notion that unions bankrupt us looks at how much money is spent on salaries and benefits, but it does not look at where the public sector should be getting its money or why there's been a decline in the contributions by the wealthy.

So instead of having a discussion about how we fund the public sector, we discuss how you cut costs, and you inevitably get to the question of contracting out, capping wages, eliminating benefits, cutting services.

Unions often go on the defensive, in some cases trying to accept cuts in order to show that we're understanding, or in other cases trying to show that we don't cost that much. What we don't do many times is go on the offensive and say let's talk about where the money lies, and how to raise the money -- so that the education system, for example, can be what it once was.

And the idea that unions are corrupt?

Some union people are going to be very upset with me for having broached that subject, but I felt this book needed to be credible, and we all know that at different points in time there's been corruption and there's been the



Author Bill Fletcher Jr.

mob. So let's deal with it directly and also dispel myths.

It's largely a historical question. There's been a lot done to clean this up. The main thing I wanted to get across is what they said in the report [of the President's Commission on Organized Crime, in 1985] that unions that have a healthy culture of democracy and activism tend to be the unions that have less mob influence.

And I wanted to make a distinction between corruption and the mob. We've got to put it in perspective.

Very few people decided after the Bernie Madoff scandal that we should end capitalism. I didn't hear Fox News come to that conclusion. But when there is a problem in a union, the right wing will seize upon that to make sweeping allegations about unionism.

Your book debunks the idea of "union bosses." I always thought of that phrase as an age-old slander that the real bosses and their lackeys use, but lately I've been seeing the term used even in news articles in newspapers. What's wrong with the term?

Many things. When people see the term, it brings to mind an autocratic regime, and it conveys that there's no difference between a leader of a union and a leader of a company. It's defamatory, because in any other part of society, you wouldn't hear, for example, the president of AARP being called a "boss" or the person that's the head of United Way. The fact that union leaders are elected is ignored with the term "labor boss."

And the other thing about the term is there is a very subtle suggestion of the mob. It's a term that we should forbid.

Your book focuses on union myths that are believed by people who are not in unions. Are there also myths that union members believe about unions?

Oh yes. That there's no point in trying to change anything because the fix is in, that there's a leadership group and it's never gonna change. That the union has goobers of money. That the union exists to take care of me as an individual. And that I don't need to do anything, because the union will take care of it for me.

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Courses instruct unions how to organize for change

"It's a whole new ball-game. The past few years have brought dramatic changes to unions in ways unimagined," said instructor Don Taylor. "Leading a union through these changes even while changes continue is incredibly difficult."

For this reason, The School for Workers has developed a comprehensive set of courses to address the unique needs of today's working people and labor unions. Key among the programs is "Leading Your Organization," September 25-27. Registration for the fall courses is now underway.

This course will bring together activists from unions

across the state and help them develop strategies to make the necessary changes to move their union forward.

Future economic conditions, contract struggles and work place disputes are just a few of the challenges facing union leaders today. "Leading Your Organization" is a comprehensive 3-day program to help leaders avoid their union's stagnation, rekindle their vision, build involvement and plan to succeed. More importantly, this course will help unions reconnect with their members and build workplace power and organizational momentum.

Another critical topic from the School for Workers addresses

collective bargaining and the current environment in which it takes place. "Essentials of Collective Bargaining" October 8-10, is a comprehensive overview of the bargaining process and the factors that impact collective bargaining outcomes. Topics also include strategic and tactical planning, membership mobilization, and labor law.

Immediately following the Essentials course is "Advanced Bargaining Tools" October 11-12, which provides specific skills important for successful negotiations. Day one is dedicated to the skills of costing contract proposals, while the second day covers techniques to conduct

research for bargaining and using that research as a part of your overall contract effort.

The School for Workers received the highest recognition in 2012 for "Outstanding Contribution to Labor Education" from the United Association for Labor Education (UALE), the leading professional association for labor educators in the United States and Canada. More information is available at schoolforworkers.uwex.edu or by calling 608-262-2112.

Provided by Terry Walsh, marketing specialist for the school.

Switch in spokesman

The calm spokesman for the Milwaukee County Board for six years will move to the county's airport next month to fill the new position of marketing and public relations manager. Harold Mester will be replaced as chief spokesperson for the board by public relations assistant Velia Alvarez, according to an announcement by board chair Marina Dimitrijevic.

Mester's move combines a lifelong interest in aviation (he's a licensed pilot) with the international Mitchell Airport's expanded interest in marketing. The new job also pays up to \$78,000 a year.

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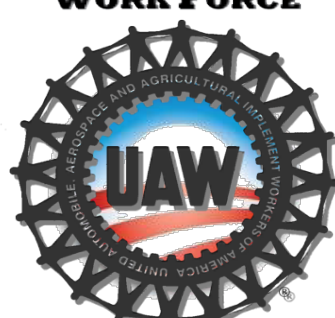
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Editorial

Traditionally, the nation pauses on Labor Day to honor workers with parades, speeches, cookouts and campaigning.

This Labor Day 2012 demands a lot more. That's because the state of workers in the United States is at one of its most perilous points in our history.

The deterioration of union membership is inescapable. It is not government the right wing moneybags want to make so small they can drown it in a bathtub, it is organized labor.

- Fewer than 8% of private-sector workers are unionists, along with less than one in eight workers overall.

Lack of density harms all workers, union and non-union. By their united bargaining power, unionists raise their own wages, living standards and working conditions. If density is high enough, non-union firms must match - or come close to matching - those increases. That raises living standards and purchasing power for everybody.

But density is not high enough. For the last 30 years, private employers, aided and abetted by government policies, have waged a relentless war to destroy unions. After the 2010 election, that war spread to the public sector. The result can be seen in workers' wages and standards of living: Flat or declining ever since 1980.

- Workers have always been able to fight back by marshaling their troops politically. They still can. But their voices are being drowned in the tsunami of corporate, special interest and billionaire cash inundating our political system. When out-of-state mega millionaires can throw tens of millions of dollars into one election alone - such as the June 5 gubernatorial recall fight in Wisconsin where special legal quirks allowed Scott Walker to raise 30 times the money before any opponent was named - labor and its legions are outmatched.

- Federal policies aid and abet the power of multi-national corporations through so-called "trade treaties," which give those firms unlimited rights to exploit low-paid unprotected workers overseas, while having US taxpayers - workers - subsidize the export of their own jobs.

The Democrats must listen harder to union concerns and the lessons of fair trade. But due to a GOP filibuster, legislation to yank the US tax subsidies for moving jobs overseas died in the Democratic-run Senate and never even got a hearing in the GOP-run House.

- There are many people - too many - who are either ideologically blinded, willfully unknowing, or both, about the condition of US workers. They

know their fellow citizens are struggling, but they figure that either (a) "It's your fault" or (b) "So what? I got mine. Fend for yourself." And they back policies and politicians designed to further crush fellow citizens, not realizing that when others are dragged down, they fall, too.

- The unavowed aim of the anti-union forces is to convert the US into the 310-million-person equivalent of what used to be called a Third World nation, where a small oligarchy of the ultra-rich rules dictatorially over a large mass of serfs and slaves.

There is no one answer to reversing the bleak outlook that faces workers on this Labor Day. But the GOP sure made it easier August 11 by completing its

presidential ticket with most active anti-union pairing in history.

It was an open call for people who care about worker values to back the side concerned about their issues.

Not Romney. He supports eliminating union security contracts and spreading the so-called "fight to work" legislation to the entire nation. He has made a fortune on global changes that encourage outsourcing while American jobs evaporate.

His vice presidential choice wants to eliminate Medicare in its current form, opposes bills demanding equal pay for equal work for women, seeks to defund Planned Parenthood and is an extremist even for many pro-life citizens, backing laws that remove contraceptives as an essential element of health

care, echoing the ultra-vaginal probe rules backed by the right in Virginia and removing protection for any woman facing abortion no matter the circumstances or her physician's advice.

Electing pro-worker officials is only a part of the solution. The officials have to be held accountable to union goals after election.

Mass mobilization, as in the 1930s, helps. But it must go beyond mass mobilization of union members and their families. People - millions of people pledging their votes -- need a unified cause to rally around, expressed in plain and simple terms that even the uninformed and uninterested can understand.

Labor rarely has done that since the 1930s. This Labor Day is the time to start anew.

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