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Dear Member,

NEW ZEALAND LABOUR NEWS



UNION AID TURNS TEN!

American Income Life was proud to be a leading sponsor for the *tenth anniversary celebration of Union Aid*, the community charity organisation dedicated to supporting working families.

The May 3rd event, held in Auckland at the Freemans Bay Community Hall, was a well-deserving tribute to Union Aid's ten years of tireless work and advocacy for the right to fair pay, freedom from debt and violence, access to safe housing and transport, education and healthcare.

UnionAID supports working people, advocating for their rights and the rights of their communities, so they can live with dignity and prosperity in Asia and the Pacific.

UnionAID, established by the **New Zealand Council of Trade Unions** in 2004, is dedicated to alleviating poverty and achieving social justice for international workers through development of unions, worker-led cooperatives and education facilities for workers and their families.

A highlight was the speech by Kuini Lutua, former General Secretary of the Fiji Nurses Association and more recently manager of UnionAID's project with the National Union of Factory and Commercial Workers.

A passionate and inspiring speaker, Kuini Lutua has been on the front lines of the struggle for better work and wages in Fiji for the past two decades, and continues to work closely with garment and other factory workers in Fiji.

MANAGEMENT AND MIGRANTS ADVANCE EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION

Extrastaff Management Limited has become the second labour-hire company to sign onto a set of ethical labour-hire standards -- following Enterprise Recruitment, which led the way last year.

The *Fair Labour Migrant Agreement* (FLMA) between Extrastaff and FIRST Union - **Union Network of Migrants** (UNEMIG) was signed May 3rd at the Philippine Embassy in Wellington.

Extrastaff, an "on-hire recruitment and industrial consulting" service company, has a large migrant Philippino workforce in the **construction sector**. The agreement comes on the heels of a high-profile sting operation that led to four other companies being suspended from hiring overseas workers.



UnionAid Programme Manager Laila Harre, Fijian labour activist Kuini Lutua, AIL's Mario Soljan and Steve Friedlander. AIL sponsored Lutua's travel from Suva

The landmark agreement, which focuses on migrant workers, "sets a precedent for other companies to follow and we invite more to do so ... I believe this agreement will be monumental in the construction industry."

To address the ongoing exploitation and abuse of migrant workers in New Zealand, the Union and the Company agreed to set a labour standard, which includes providing pastoral care services, living costs associated with work and a Living Wage minimum.

Philippine Ambassador Jesus Domingo was present at the signing, as was Extrastaff Managing Director Tom Tschudin, and FIRST Union General Secretary Dennis Maga.

BOGGING DOWN BIG BEN

The company that makes **Big Ben pies**, a favorite of Kiwis, is not as favorable to the workers who make them.

George Weston Foods, which also makes Tip Top, Bûrgen and Ploughmans bread, and Golden crumpets, is one of the two main players in New Zealand's bread market. The company is owned by the Weston family of Canada and the UK, who have a recorded wealth of more than NZ\$19 billion.

The workers at George Weston Foods in Wiri, who have been bargaining with the company since last September, make the iconic pies. They went on strike over pay wages May 2nd for the second time in two months. Some of the workers have 20+ years of service with the company.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRIPARTITE FORUM

A memo-of-understanding (MOU) has been reached between Government, unions and bus operators, which includes the establishment of a tripartite forum tasked with reviewing the Worktime and Logbooks Rule and achieving a Living Wage as a minimum standard.

In a letter to the unions, Transport Minister Phil Twyford further established the Living Wage as a minimum standard for all public transport bus drivers in New Zealand.

"We have been campaigning for over two years now for the living wage to be a minimum standard for bus drivers through our *Bus Fair* campaign. (This) is extremely positive news for drivers not already receiving living wages and key to attracting more drivers into the industry." -- *FIRST Union spokesperson, Jared Abbott*

FISHERIES WORKERS BARELY AFLOAT

Workers at **Moana New Zealand** in Ruakaka walked off the job April 26th -29th, taking the strike action for the Living Wage.

The company and workers, who have been in bargaining since January, agreed on conditions but pay wage negotiations have come to a halt.

Moana New Zealand has reported a net profit after tax of \$21.4 million for the year ending 30th September 2018. Their offer was just 3% above current minimum wage.

Moana worker Erica Poa said, on the wage increase, "In this region, there aren't many jobs, it would mean a lot to us workers at Moana who are struggling to support our families".

MIDWIVES DELIVER ON DHBs MECA SETTLEMENT

Midwives who are members of **Midwifery Representation and Advisory Service (MERAS)**, have voted overwhelmingly YES to a pay settlement. The April 14th vote, which followed a two-year renewal process of their multi-employer collective agreement (MECA) with the 20 DHBs.

District Health Boards (DHBs), established by the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, are responsible for ensuring health and disability services to populations within a defined geographical area.

The vote saw a majority of members gain increases of up to 17.5% by August, 2020, when they will earn \$78,353 a year. Midwifery graduates will start at \$59,222 a year, an increase of nearly 20%.

A big win for MERAS has been the development of a separate pay equity process for midwives and signed by MERAS, the DHBs and NZNO. A separate Midwifery Accord has also been agreed to address challenges in the midwifery workforce.

The ability for midwives to strike in the past has been hindered by their practical responsibilities in managing "life preserving services" (LPS). "On the plus side, the LPS requirements highlighted the fact that midwives can't be replaced." -- *MERAS Co-leader, Caroline Conroy*

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL PROVIDES RELIEF

The **Domestic Violence - Victims Protection Bill**, passed by Parliament last July, went into effect in April, making New Zealand the second country in the world to pass such legislation, after the Philippines.

The law allows those experiencing violence in their lives up to ten days leave per year to be able to better deal with the effects of domestic violence.

A 2017 report in The New Zealand Herald said that the country had "the worst rate of family and intimate-partner violence in the world," estimating that 525,000 New Zealanders were harmed every year.

FIRST Union Central Regional Secretary, Sheryl Cadman, says the leave will go a long way to helping those who need it, "We hope

employers will be forthcoming in accepting and implementing the new law. It also prohibits an employee from being treated differently with regards to their employment in relation to any domestic violence they may be facing."

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR NEWS

POLISH TEACHERS STRIKE FOR "DIGNITY"

Teachers from across Poland gathered in Warsaw on April 23rd to demand higher wages in a dispute that underscores the deep political divisions between the country's conservatives and liberals.

The action, in front of the Education Ministry, came on the 16th day of a strike that has closed most Polish schools. Organizers said demonstrations were held in a total of 22 towns and cities.

Slawomir Broniarz, head of the Polish Teachers' Union, said they were fighting "for teachers' dignity."

ILO: URGENT ACTION NEEDED TO MANAGE E-WASTE

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has called for urgent action to better manage the toxic flood of electric and electronic waste (e-waste).

Members of the ILO, Representatives of governments, workers' and employers' organizations met for a Global Dialogue Forum in Geneva, Switzerland April 9-11, agreed that governments should "increase and promote investments in waste management infrastructure and systems at all levels, as appropriate, to manage the rapidly growing flows of e-waste in ways that advance decent work."

The world produces as much as 50 million tonnes of e-waste a year, and only 20% is formally recycled, even though it is valued at €55 billion.

US LABOR NEWS

NATIONAL NURSES UNITED GO AFTER PHARMA

National Nurses United (NNU) rallied outside of the national headquarters of The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) in support of Medicare for All.

"The only groups opposed to Medicare for All are the ones profiting off of the status quo - insurance companies, Big Pharma, and the lobbyists who carry out their agenda, said Zenei Cortez, President of NNU, the largest union representing registered nurses ("RNs") in the United States." Last year PhRMA, the pharmaceutical industry's top lobbying group, spent \$28 million on lobbying.

Following the April 29th rally, nurses used Band-Aids to cover the walls of PhRMA's headquarters with the GoFundMe pages of Americans who have been forced to crowdsource their medical expenses.



AIL VPs Susan Fuldauer and Lori Pelletier on the line with NNU

On Tuesday, NNU lobbied in support of the *Medicare for All Act of 2019* before the House Rules Committee.

H.R. 1384, proposed by Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), also has the support of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the International Association of Machinists (IAM)."

STATEWIDE LEADERS CELEBRATE SOLIDARITY ON THE PICKET LINE

After eleven days on strike, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) leaders have reached a tentative agreement with Stop & Shop.

UFCW members in 240 stores in Connecticut, Massachusetts and other parts of New England walked off their jobs April 11th to protest the company's proposed cuts to health care, take-home pay, and other benefits.

"Today is a day to celebrate the power of a unified labor movement with broad public support. 31,000 hardworking retail workers stood up against a corporate behemoth and showed the power of working people and the community banding together in solidarity." -- Steven Tolman, President of the Massachusetts AFLCIO

THE U.S. MAIL IS NOT FOR SALE!

On April 15, Tax Day, thousands of American Postal Workers Union (APWU) members and allies took to the street to spread the news that the US Mail is not for sale.

At more than 100 locations from Hawaii to New England, activists fighting for the public good passed out flyers and spoke to citizens about the vital, public good the USPS provides, all without a dollar of taxpayer money.

The Trump administration, in its June Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Report, called for total privatization of the USPS.

The USPS is not the only service in danger. In its fiscal **2020 The Trump Administration budget** proposal public health and education services are being slated for massive cuts, along with federal employees' pay and benefits.

The proposal follows the recent 35-day government shutdown by Trump, and directly hits many of the 800,000 federal employees, some of whom are still awaiting backpay and struggling to recover from the financial chaos.

"With this budget proposal, President Trump is showing once again that his administration has nothing but contempt for the health, education, safety, and security of our nation - and a savage disregard for the federal workforce." -- *American Federation of Government Employees President J. David Cox Sr.*

FIREFIGHTERS: EPA MISMANAGING CHEMICAL RISKS

In a hearing before the US House Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change, firefighters testified that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is "systemically ignoring exposure risks" and other dangers to workers under the agency's implementation of the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety Act.

"Fire fighters, like other Americans, have put our trust in the EPA to regulate these toxic chemicals, but unfortunately, have witnessed only modest efforts by the current Administration to protect the health and well-being of workers exposed to such chemicals."
-- *International Association of Fire Fighters Asst to the President for Health, Safety and Medicine Patrick Morrison*

Fire fighters dying from occupational cancers now account for 65% of the line-of-duty, and many of the chemicals in question have been linked to cancer, including a class of chemicals called PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl substances). The IAFF, unwilling to wait for the EPA to act, is sponsoring three research projects relating to PFAS and the health effects.

AFSCME/OAPSE PREVAIL

Striking members of **Ohio Association of Public School Employees (OAPSE) Local 390** at Claymont City Schools headed back to work after being on strike for nearly three weeks. Union members voted 2-1 on April 16th to approve a contract. The 84 strikers have been working at Claymont City Schools without a contract for 22 months.

UTILITY WORKERS EMBRACE WIND ENERGY

Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) recently met with lawmakers in Washington, DC advocating federal funding for crucial training programs that will help grow Michigan's renewable energy workforce.

Members of Local 104 and Local 124 were a part of the American Wind Energy Association's (AWEA) annual advocacy day, which included 170 individual participants and 250 meetings with U.S. House and Senate lawmakers in one day. Michigan ranks 15th in the nation for installed wind capacity and continues to attract investment in installed capacity and the wind energy supply chain.

SEIU CONVENES NATIONAL FORUM ON WAGES AND WORKING PEOPLE

The "National Forum on Wages and Working People: Creating an Economy that Works for All" was held in Las Vegas, Nevada, on April 27.

The day-long forum, jointly convened by the **Service Employees International Union (SEIU)** and the Center for American Progress Action Fund, featured 2020 US presidential contenders Senators Kamala Harris (D-CA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), as well as former Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-TX), former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro and former Gov. John Hickenlooper (D-CO), and was moderated by Steven Greenhouse, former New York Times labor and workplace reporter.

The forum focused on how leaders propose to unrig our economy to ensure higher wages, economic security, and opportunity for all working people.

SAG-AFTRA FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE OF THEIR WORK

The SAG-AFTRA National Board, meeting this weekend in Los Angeles at SAG-AFTRA Plaza, approved the establishment of the National TV/Theatrical Contracts Wages & Working Conditions Plenary and Negotiating Committee, and appointed President Gabrielle Carteris chair.

The board also unanimously approved the landmark 2019 Commercials Contracts tentative agreement reached with the Joint Policy Committee on April 2, recommending members vote yes. The contracts now go to the union's membership for ratification.

MACHINISTS UNION MOBILIZING IN PUERTO RICO

The **International Association of Machinists (IAM)** officially welcomed more than 500 new of the previously independent **Union Carpenters of Puerto Rico (UCPR)**. The signing comes after UCPR members had voted unanimously to join the IAM.

The UCPR joins a growing IAM presence in Puerto Rico, which already includes workers at PepsiCo/Frito Lay.

The carpenters are a critical part of rebuilding the island, which is still recovering from the historic damage of Hurricane Maria. The IAM, led on the ground by IAM Business Representative and Puerto Rico Federation of Labor President José "Lole" Rodríguez-Báez, was instrumental in relief efforts to working people on the island.

MONTANA FEDERATION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES MOBILIZATION AND SOLIDARITY

The MFPE held a mobilization and solidarity campaign in Helena last month, training 36 members with help from the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers volunteers from around the country. The focus of the training was to re-familiarize members with MFPE after its historic merger last year, and to strengthen state employee membership. The Montana federation has about 1,500 state employee members in and around the state capital.

It was the 15th member mobilization program organized by AFT Public Employees and the division's first program held jointly with the



*IAM International President Robert Martinez Jr. (left) with UCPR members
Pic: IAM*

NEA, which added new perspectives and skills.

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