

May - June 2015

# SOLIDARITY

## Bridging the Gap

**Bargaining convention  
gets our members ready  
to help their families and  
communities**



THE MAGAZINE FOR UAW MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

# It's time to bridge the gap between working people and the wealthy

*Editor's note: The following is an edited version of UAW President Dennis Williams' March 25 speech to delegates at the 2015 Special Bargaining Convention at Cobo Hall in Detroit. For the full speech, please go to <http://bit.ly/1FHYWVz>.*

Our union, like so many working men and women in this country, has been under attack in so many ways – whether it's by the Supreme Court ruling that set back the Voting Rights Act or a state that takes away a state worker's right to collectively bargain and passes right-to-work legislation that attempts to undermine work place unity.

All are designed to diminish workers' rights, to diminish collective bargaining, and diminish the fundamental democratic principles our country developed to build the greatest nation on Earth.

Without these principles there would have never been a middle class or an equality of income.

The United States' economy or any economy can't have long-term growth without a balance.

A free market society must have working men and women with disposable income – real purchasing power – to be a consumer of goods.

A society built on low-wage jobs does not deliver purchasing power, therefore slowing economic growth, shrinking the middle class, which puts more working people in jeopardy and more in poverty.

It slows growth in our

communities, cities and states.

Small businesses cannot survive.

Who pays the price? We do.

Who suffers? The American people, the worker, retiree and our children.

Communities and state governments start cutting services, laying off people as their tax base diminishes.

*We cannot be ready to accept that everyday people in the United States of America work 40 hours, 50 hours and more and are living in poverty.*

Over the years we have seen the worst and the best of government.

A government that ignored Wall Street and banks to the point of an economic collapse, as we saw in 2009, and today a recovery that has given life once again to many of the industries and sectors of the economy we represent.

But yet, it has left too many people behind.

At the same time the separation of the working class and wealthy continue to grow apart.

In fact, an article in Forbes stated that CEO pay is 296 times as the average worker in 2013.

In the same article it reported the United States has the highest percentage of low-wage workers of any developed nation.

When consumers ... can't afford a car, a house or products, if they can't save for their children's college or are strapped with debt, then I say there is something wrong in this country.

It's time for a renewed commitment by all the labor movement to join together; a rebirth and a commitment to grow the middle class!

We need a commitment from our representatives in our state houses, a commitment from our federal representatives and a call for equality, both racially and economically.

As an American citizen we cannot be comfortable living in our country while children are going hungry, while Americans are working as temporaries on a full-time basis – referred to as “Perm-a-Temps” – without a future, without any employment security.

We cannot be ready to accept that everyday people in the United States of America work 40 hours, 50 hours and more and are living in poverty.

We ask President Obama to join us, to once again declare as a nation to end poverty in the United States of America.

Renew the American spirit; we

call upon workers everywhere, white collar and blue collar, to once again unify, join together – be part of the labor movement and help us rebuild the middle class, rebuild our nation.

This year we all have a great responsibility, full of challenges.

As you have seen we have a lot of members who will be negotiating contracts across the country, with a great deal at stake.

Our challenges are real, there is global competition, and competitors that have advantages, both economically and governments that manipulate currency and put up barriers to imports in their own countries.

No one can afford to get this wrong.

Our government cannot negotiate another bad trade agreement.

Companies cannot make bad decisions in their products or engineering processes.

Nor can we not face the facts or the realities.

I say this because we have listened to the concerns of our members and we will continue to listen.

But brothers and sisters, as you heard from the officers, the state of our union is as strong as ever. We are up to face any challenge we may have.

We are focused on negotiations, organizing, community and political action.

I truly believe that the companies we deal with know that we can be creative and thoughtful.

But they also know that sharing in bad times must be equally shared in good times.

Brothers and sisters, it is our time, our time to once again be unified in solidarity, and a clear understanding that it's time to bridge that gap.

Our union will never abandon the principles in which we were founded:

- That workers need a voice in the workplace, to have the right to collectively bargain.
- Equality.
- A fair day's work for a fair day's pay.
- Equal pay for equal work.
- Nor will we ever forget our retirees!

The Executive Board of the International Union, your elected officials, are ready to stand up to the challenge and I know in our unity and our solidarity that you are, too.



*Dennis D. Williams*



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Top photo by Marvin Zeigler/UAW Local 600



# A lesson in Solidarity

## Members in Ohio learn a great deal by standing together during lockout

Saturday, June 14, 2014, should have been a day like any other for the 174 UAW members of Local 2387. It was a sunny, warm day and the Country Music Festival was kicking off in Lebanon, Ohio. Members had not even finished their shift at Hayashi Telempu North America, also known as HTNA, when they were asked to head for the gates. At 3:15 p.m., security guards moved to the plant entrances and set up blocks. All UAW members were told not to show up for work on Monday.

It was a lockout.

“We had been in bargaining for a while and things were rough. The company demanded a 15 percent pay cut. They wanted to get rid of our five paid personal days, double-time pay, outside contracting language,” said Rachelle Howard, a member of the bargaining committee and a first-shift steward. “They wanted us to give up our seniority language and they wanted us to more than double what we

already paid for our health care.

“On top of that, they wanted a new two-tier wage system. We couldn’t even vote on their offer because for several weeks their draft language was incomplete and during this period the company was being very difficult to work with on the language changes.”

HTNA is an auto supplier that makes interior carpet for companies like Mitsubishi, Toyota, Lexus and Honda. The members have been organized since 1998. But the turn of events that day was shocking to the members of Local 2387.

“This is a small town and many of us have worked here for decades. When the tsunami hit Japan, we pulled extra duty to help out HTNA because their home base was really affected by the disaster. Whatever the company has asked for, we’ve done for them,” Howard said.

Looking back, the signs of the

lockout were on the horizon. In the weeks leading up to their May 31 contract expiration, the company gave mandatory overtime to meet “increased demand.” The extra inventory gave them the cushion to bus in 300 to 400 temporary workers – many from out of state – to do the work of UAW members.

“The cost of housing and transporting them and hiring a fully staffed security company 24/7 was probably extraordinary, but it was worth it to HTNA to try to bust our resolve,” Howard recalled.

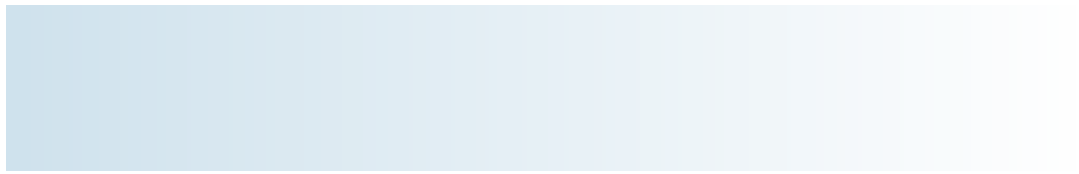
Even the weekend of the lockout, UAW members found a receipt for a heavy chain and the maintenance crew – the first ones to arrive to start the machines – had been cryptically told not to report the following week.

The lockout lasted about four months.

“It was not easy at all,” Howard said. “We’re talking families,



The passing of Dave Cox – during the lockout – weighed heavily on the minds of Local 2387 members. Had it not been for his UAW contract his family would not have had life insurance. His UAW leadership worked to make sure his wife received his negotiated benefit, which she wasn’t aware of.



The company’s efforts to break the union through the use of replacement employees failed.

PHOTOS BY RACHELLE HOWARD / UAW LOCAL 2387

Local 2387’s stand against HTNA showed the determination and solidarity of the membership, which felt betrayed by the company after helping it through difficult times.

mortgages, children. None of us had ever been on a strike before, let alone a lockout. One of our members died of an aneurysm during the lockout - he had been on the line with us that morning and was gone by the next day.

“Without the insurance provided by the UAW, his family would have had nothing,” Howard said.

“We all got UAW strike pay and health insurance and unemployment after a while.

The sentiment on the picket line was the same – after all the Local 2387 members did for HTNA, the lockout felt like ultimate betrayal.

“We knew what HTNA was doing was an injustice and we stood together against them,” Howard said.

During the lockout, the union filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board. HTNA eventually paid nearly \$1 million to the union and its members as a settlement. In the end, Local 2387 members reached an agreement that was

*“They wanted a new two-tier wage system. We couldn’t even vote on their offer because for several weeks their draft language was incomplete and during this period the company was being very difficult to work with on the language changes.”*  
Rachelle Howard

sustainable. It didn’t include the 15 percent pay cut and the health care costs were higher but not at the outrageous amounts that the company first wanted. On Nov. 3, UAW members returned to work.

“We learned some real lessons during those four months about company greed. But we also learned a lot about each other. I can say for sure that we are a much stronger union after this than before.”

Howard paused and weighed her words carefully.

“Without question, in the first few weeks members were angry and taking it out on their union. But the more we talked, the more transparent and honest the bargaining committee was with our fellow members, the more they saw that this was a choice HTNA made to squeeze money out of its loyal employees. It didn’t take long for them to know that HTNA locked those doors without any regard to their lives, their family or our community. By standing together as a union, we learned about character and loyalty.”

## Persistence pays off

### New contract at New York University a hard-fought battle

It took years, but the first graduate workers at a private university to successfully unionize now have an historic agreement after 99 percent of the Graduate Student Organizing Committee unit of UAW Local 2110 voted in April to approve their first contract.

The contract ratification with New York University covers more than 1,200 graduate employees, members of the GSOC-UAW Local 2110. They perform teaching and research for the university and, with their new contract, are now working men and women at the only private university in the country with a unionized graduate employee workforce.

“This contract is a major step forward for our members,” said UAW Region 9A Director Julie Kushner. “They did not back down after being stripped of their bargaining rights in 2005. Their commitment to justice will have a huge impact

on the working lives of teaching and research assistants throughout the university. Their victory has already inspired other private sector graduate employees to organize.”

It was hard work for the members to get this ratified contract. In 2000, they were the first group of private university graduate workers to unionize and then win a groundbreaking contract at NYU. Five years later, however, NYU withdrew recognition of their local by using a Bush-era National Labor Relations Board decision that denied collective bargaining rights for graduate employees. For the next eight years members fought to have recognition restored. The university finally agreed to recognize the UAW, but made it contingent on an election overseen by the American Arbitration Association. The university pledged to remain neutral during the election, and in December 2013 employees voted 98.4 percent in favor of reinstating



The newly ratified contract with New York University covers more than 1,200 graduate employees who perform teaching and research duties. It's the only private university in the country with a unionized graduate employee workforce.



It's been a long road, but a successful one for academic employees at New York University. NYU pledged to remain neutral during the election, and in December 2013 student employees voted 98.4 percent in favor of reinstating UAW representation.

UAW representation.

The April 2015 agreement includes key improvements in the work lives of graduate employees at NYU, including gains in wages and health care, a 90 percent health care coverage subsidy for individuals and a fund to help members with dependents, child care benefits and tuition waivers. In addition, it doubles the starting hourly wage to \$20 over the life of the five-year agreement for UAW members at NYU's Polytechnic School of Engineering, who perform and support cutting-edge research.

"This contract will make a real difference in our

lives here at NYU, and will raise the bar for private sector graduate working people nationally," said Lily Defriend, a doctoral candidate in the Anthropology Department. "Right here in New York City our campaign and this contract win have contributed to graduate employees at Columbia and The New School organizing at the UAW."

The UAW represents more than 45,000 academic workers across the U.S., including graduate employees at the University of Massachusetts, University of Connecticut, University of Washington, University of California and California State University.

*"Their victory has already inspired other private sector graduate employees to organize."*

*Region 9A Director Julie Kushner*

*Joan Silvi*

# Workers' Memorial Day 2015

## We mourn for those we've lost on the job; renew our vow to fight for the living

One week after UAW members marked Workers' Memorial Day came the sobering news of two fatalities at FCA US' Jefferson North Assembly plant in Detroit.

While details of the separate tragedies were still being investigated at Solidarity's press time, it reminds all of us the importance of workplace safety.

"Our heartfelt sympathy is extended to the family, friends and all of those who worked with two UAW Local 7 members who died recently," said UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell, who directs the union's Chrysler Department. "These are tragedies not only for the families of the victims, but for those who worked closely with them."

While the incidents remain under investigation by state and federal health and safety officials, as well as by union and company health and safety professionals,

it is a tragic reminder that UAW members work at some exceptionally dangerous occupations.

Workers' Memorial Day was started in 1970, the same year Congress passed the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Many job hazards are unregulated and uncontrolled. Unfortunately, there are some employers who don't take the health and safety of their workforce seriously. Some employers – and the organizations that lobby for them in Washington and in state capitols – vigorously oppose health and safety improvements.

The UAW fights hard to make sure workers who report job hazards or job injuries are not fired or disciplined. In every contract negotiations, UAW negotiators seek to build on the health and safety improvements

that were made in previous contracts.

Along with the two deaths in May, six UAW members died in 2014 and another in January.

"These fatalities devastate families and tear at our hearts," said UAW President Dennis Williams. "We grieve for those workers we've lost and recommit ourselves to the goal of having all of our brothers and sisters return home safely each and every day to their families."



LISA BROWN / UAW LOCAL 211

PHOTO BY SHARON WILLIAMS / THE LABOR PAPER

Above right: UAW members joined other union workers in placing flowers on the gravestones of those killed on the job in Peoria, Illinois. Above: Workers at UAW Local 211 pause to remember those killed or injured on the job at General Motors' Defiance Casting Operations plant in northwest Ohio.



## The UAW mourns the loss of members who died on the job since Workers' Memorial Day 2014:

1. June 10, 2014 – Jacob Frisella, 21, sequencer at Ventra Belvidere LLC, Belvidere, Illinois, UAW Local 1268, two years seniority.

The victim was building front grill and fascia assemblies for automobiles. Near the end of his shift he was called to a line that was running behind schedule. He bent into a press to adjust the parts and the machine cycled, crushing his head. Safety systems on the machine, including the light curtain reset switch, activation switch, and computer programming, did not comply with safety requirements.

2. July 11, 2014 – Zachariah “Zach” Pyles, 29, Child Protective Services worker, Benzie County, State of Michigan Department of Human Services, UAW Local 6000, three years seniority.

Brother Pyles was traveling on a winding portion of U.S. Highway 31 near Beulah, Michigan, at approximately 2:40 p.m., when he was killed in a car/truck collision on his way to an investigation. He served two tours of duty (2007-2013) in Afghanistan and Iraq as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army National Guard.

3. Aug. 27, 2014 – Mohammed Kamal Uddin, 47, taxi cab driver, Stamford Taxi, Stamford, Connecticut, seven years seniority, UAW Local 376. The victim was stabbed to death on his last fare in the

early morning hours. The cab did not have cameras or a partition separating the passenger seat from the driver. The assailant was captured and charged with murder.

4. Sept. 9, 2014 – Kristine Wittlinger, 42, Child Protective Services worker, Jackson County, State of Michigan Department of Human Services, UAW Local 6000, 2½ years seniority. The victims, Kristine Wittlinger and Andrea Hicks, were killed when their car was struck by a semitruck from behind as they were turning left off of U.S. 127, a narrow two-lane lane highway. They were on their way to a home call near Jackson, Michigan.

5. Sept. 9, 2014 – Andrea Hicks, 33, Child Protective Services worker, Jackson County, State of Michigan Department of Human Services, UAW Local 6000, four months seniority. The victims, Andrea Hicks and Kristine Wittlinger, were killed when their car was struck by a semitruck from behind as they

were turning left off of U.S. 127, a narrow two-lane lane highway. They were on their way to a home call near Jackson, Michigan.

6. Oct. 4, 2014 – Khelan Laster, 37, production worker at Malteurop North America, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, UAW Local 9, 3½ years seniority. Laster developed asthma at work after exposure to wheat dust, a known sensitizing agent. On Sept. 29, 2014, he was working alone processing grain into the malt used in beer manufacturing. He suffered a severe asthma attack. He radioed for help before losing consciousness. He was transported to the hospital and placed on life support. He died five days later.

7. Jan. 17, 2015 – Don Becker, 59, inspector, General Electric Company, Evendale, Ohio, Local 647, 37 years seniority. Brother Becker fell in the parking lot in November 2014. He had surgery, was discharged from the hospital, and returned home. He developed a blood clot that moved to his lungs and killed him two months later.



# Mourning the 'Gentle Giant'

## Former Vice President General Holiefield leaves rich legacy

You knew when General Holiefield entered a room. If you somehow missed his towering frame, you certainly didn't miss his booming voice or gregarious nature.

Those traits will be greatly missed by UAW members and others whose lives he touched in one way or another. Holiefield died of pancreatic cancer on March 9. He was 61.

"General was a gentle giant who was a tireless advocate for UAW members and also a respected leader in the community," said UAW President Dennis Williams. "He was a dedicated trade unionist who helped UAW members at Chrysler through the dark days of the auto crisis when we were not sure the company or the industry would survive. He demonstrated tremendous insight and leadership through that period of uncertainty."

In November 2013, Holiefield announced that he would retire at the union's 36th Constitutional Convention in Detroit last June. Previously he had been elected to a second term as a UAW vice president at the 2010 convention.

Holiefield joined the UAW in 1973 when he went to work at Chrysler's Jefferson Assembly Plant in Detroit. In 1975, he transferred to Chrysler's axle plant on Detroit's lower East Side, where he quickly became active in UAW Local 961.

Local 961 members elected him to serve as their chief steward in 1987. He was elected local union vice president in 1990, and became president

two years later. In 1992, local union members elected him as a delegate to the UAW's 30th Constitutional Convention. A year later, his local's members elected him president and bargaining chair by acclamation.

Holiefield was appointed to the UAW International staff in 1995 by then-President Stephen P. Yokich and assigned to the union's Chrysler Department, then directed by Vice President Jack Laskowski. In 1997, Laskowski promoted Holiefield to appeals board coordinator, with responsibility for handling arbitration cases for the Chrysler Department.

Two years later, Vice President Nate Gooden promoted him to serve as an assistant director of the union's DaimlerChrysler Department, and to administrative assistant in 2002.

In 2004, then-UAW President Ron Gettelfinger appointed Holiefield as his top administrative assistant, the union's top staff position. He was the first

African-American to serve in that capacity.

"General's positive contributions to working men and women of the UAW, the labor movement and in the community are felt every day and will not be forgotten," said Vice President Norwood Jewell, who succeeded Holiefield as director of the union's Chrysler Department. "We are grateful for the legacy he leaves all of us."



In 2004, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger appointed Holiefield as his chief administrative assistant, the union's top staff position. In that capacity and as vice president of the union's Chrysler Department, Holiefield helped forge the tough agreements that kept UAW members working during the auto crisis.

# Walter Reuther's foresight important yesterday ... and today

Forty-five years ago, on May 9, a small plane flying in dense fog and rain that carried Walter Reuther, his wife, May, and four others crashed on approach to the Emmet County Airport in Pellston, Michigan.

There were no survivors. But what did survive was Walter Reuther's legacy. He was a man short in stature but gigantic in his advocacy for working Americans, union and nonunion alike. Many of the advances in economic and social justice that some may take for granted today are because of Walter Reuther's incredible foresight. This interview with Mike Wallace in 1958 (<http://bit.ly/1ClI2pW>) demonstrates what Walter Reuther always knew – that working people must have purchasing power to keep the economy growing. It rings just as true today as we've recovered from the Great Recession, but the gains are not being shared with all of those responsible for the hard work that made the comeback possible.

It's time to bridge the gap.



## Tennessee drops in rankings due to political interference

As UAW members we know we bring value to our employers and communities, despite what some anti-union lawmakers might say.

The same anti-union lawmakers who interfered in the February 2014 union election at Volkswagen's Chattanooga, Tennessee, plant may have just made their state more uncompetitive. That's according to Chief Executive magazine, which rates the best and worst states for business. Tennessee fell from third to fourth.

Politicians in that state tried to tie \$300 million in incentives for Volkswagen's expansion in Chattanooga to labor talks being concluded to the "satisfaction of the state."

"State politicians shouldn't have messed in Volkswagen's unionization business," the magazine said in its story on the annual rankings.

We agree with corporate America on this one.

### UAW V-CAP: Investing in our future

The UAW cannot use union dues to directly support federal candidates and, in an ever-increasing number of states, any candidate for public office. Our only means of monetary support for many labor-friendly candidates is voluntary political contributions from UAW members to UAW V-CAP (our union's political action fund).

Members can contribute to V-CAP in multiple ways. Many of our contracts have "check off" which

allows for direct contribution to V-CAP through payroll deduction. Members and retirees can also give to V-CAP directly with a check. Either way, a modest contribution of \$10 a month comes to about 33 cents a day and allows our union to support candidates who support our values. Send to:

**UAW National CAP Department**  
**8000 E. Jefferson Ave.**  
**Detroit, MI 48214**

## Temporary restraining order issued against Lear Supplier prevented from retaliation against sick worker

UAW members know how important it is to have representation in the workplace so health and safety concerns are addressed. UAW-negotiated contracts protect working people who report health and safety concerns from retaliation.

It's why Kim King, a Selma, Alabama, woman who was fired from Lear Corp. for raising health and safety concerns, wants to form a union.

In April, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order against Lear, one day after a U.S. Department of Labor complaint accused Lear of interfering in a federal investigation over dangerous conditions at its Selma plant. The judge has now entered a preliminary injunction which prevents Lear from retaliating against workers who make complaints to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

King and others at Lear make foam for the seats and headrests in Hyundai vehicles. She complained about exposure to the hazardous

chemical TDI, which is used in making foam and can cause severe respiratory illness and lifelong asthma if handled without proper precautions. King now has asthma. She was suspended a few days after attempting to deliver a letter to Hyundai management asking it to help secure safe working conditions at its suppliers. A week later, she was fired.

Not only was King fired, but Lear sued her for defamation and requested a restraining order against her. The government alleges that the lawsuit is all part of an effort to intimidate her.

King, a key witness in the government's investigation, worked at the factory for nine years, making \$12.25 an hour.

"The disparity in power, control, resources and the ability to inflict harm is clear in the relationship between Ms. King and defendants," the government said in its complaint.



VINCE PISCOPO

Lear sued Kim King for defamation. The government says it's an attempt to intimidate her. She suffers from exposure to the hazardous chemical TDI, which is used to make foam.

Local 1435 members at Chrysler's Toledo Machining Plant in Perrysburg, Ohio, took up a collection for nearby striking BP Refinery workers, raising \$1,625 to help their fellow brothers and sisters.



MARCI LEAHEY / UAW LOCAL 1435

# No more endless delays

## President's veto will help bring fairness to union representation elections

A strong labor movement is essential for a vibrant middle class and a thriving economy. Even recent reports show that as union membership decreases middle class incomes drop.

That means without stronger labor laws the ability for any worker to raise a family on a decent wage, and claim a share of the American Dream is in jeopardy.

The working men and women at ThyssenKrupp in Danville, Illinois, know this all too well and last fall they did just that, reclaiming their right to form a union and have democracy in the workplace.

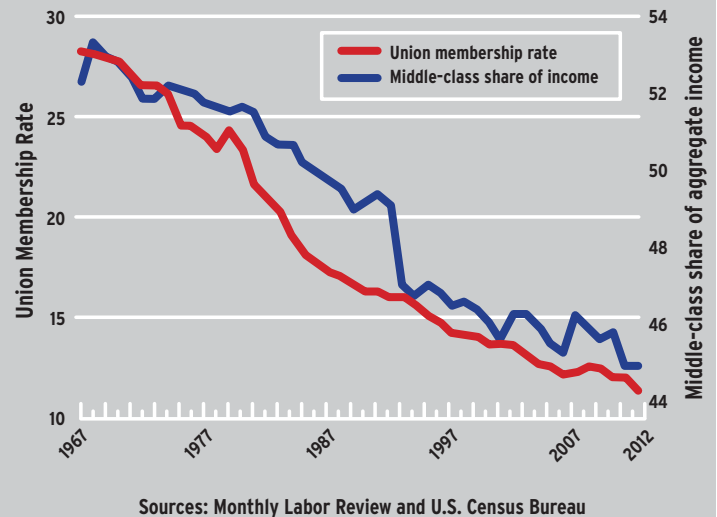
(ThyssenKrupp is one of the world's largest steel producers and it manufactures components and systems for the automotive industry, elevators, escalators, material trading and industrial services.)

Last fall, employees at ThyssenKrupp attempted to form their own union and had a 62 percent majority. In response, the company held captive meetings, placed anti-union literature throughout the plant and marched pro-union workers through the plant and up the stairs into the bosses' offices, giving the impression that they were in trouble for their pro-union activities. In stark contrast, the company allowed anti-union workers to meet and give away "VOTE NO" shirts while those supporting a union were not allowed to talk or distribute anything pro-union on company time.

Managers even told employees that they would move their jobs to China. In response, the UAW filed charges on the employees' behalf with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and won many of them. The company was forced to allow billboards that informed employees of their rights. However, because of our weak labor laws, this company is still able to deny justice by preventing its workforce from exercising their rights by creating delay after delay. This same story is taking place all over the country every day. Our weak labor laws enable unscrupulous employers to use a variety of tactics to stop organizing efforts.

In recognition of this fact, the NLRB issued modest rules in December to modernize its election procedures and reduce unnecessary litigation and delays in the election process.

**As union membership rates decrease, middle-class income shrinks**



The rules are aimed at making the process run more smoothly and predictably, which would benefit all parties.

However, right-wing politicians in Washington wasted no time in attempting to block the rules from ever taking effect. This spring, both the House and Senate passed resolutions that would wipe out the rule and prohibit the NLRB from adopting a similar rule unless specifically authorized by Congress. Under these resolutions, the board would not be able to issue rules requiring electronic filing of election petitions, consistent with practices in all federal courts, adopt new technology, or standardize best practices in areas covered by the December 2014 rule. The UAW strongly opposed this draconian legislation.

Fortunately, President Obama vetoed it and the new rules will likely go into effect. Anti-union extremists will continue to advance their agenda in states all over the country and on Capitol Hill. It's all the more reason that we need strong labor laws that protect working people when they want to have a free and fair choice on union representation.

*Source: UAW Legislative Department*

# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LIFTS US ALL

Delegates adopt resolution that sets bargaining priorities for all negotiating committees

## SPECIAL BARGAINING



In late 2008 two domestic automakers were near a collapse that could have taken down the remaining U.S.-based automaker and quite a few transnationals and other manufacturing businesses as well.

There was a lot of pain and uncertainty for UAW members and it was a time that could have moved the Great Recession into the second Great Depression. But it didn't happen. Instead there were federal loans to automakers, restructuring within

both companies and a great deal of sacrifices from UAW members who remained solid in the ranks.

These actions, plus leadership from President Obama, put UAW members in the forefront of one of the greatest comebacks in U.S. manufacturing history. General Motors, Ford Motor Co. and FCA US are healthy companies once again. Auto sales are up. Manufacturing is back. And with it are many other industries and workplaces that rely on the

strong manufacturing base that once supported a middle-class lifestyle in this country.

As we enter bargaining with the domestic automakers this summer and many other employers following that, many UAW members are reflecting back on those uncertain days and rightly asking, "What about our sacrifices?" For delegates at the 2015 UAW Special Bargaining Convention, the message to employers was clear: "Bridge the gap."

# CONVENTION 2015



# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LIFTS US ALL

## Setting a bargaining agenda

With delegates gathered from all regions and sectors, as they do every four years to set the UAW's bargaining priorities, everyone focused on the theme: "The Power of Collective Bargaining Lifts Us All." And it does. It doesn't matter what industry or workplace – working people are working people. As the UAW enters its 80<sup>th</sup> year, the needs of working people remain the same; decent wages, affordable health care, retirement security, a fair and just grievance process and health and safety, among many others.

"We have thousands of individual contracts in the UAW. We represent many different

sectors of the economy, whether its gaming or higher education, IPS (independent parts suppliers) insurance, health care, heavy truck, agricultural implements, aerospace or auto," UAW President Dennis Williams told delegates as the convention opened. "Our purpose here is not to try to develop individual proposals for each of those thousands of individual contracts, or even any of the major contracts. Our purpose here is to set an agenda on behalf of all UAW members under the Articles of our Constitution as we represent UAW members in the bargaining process," Williams said.

Everyone works together for the same goal. The bargaining agenda allows negotiating teams

to look back and re-examine what delegates expect them to accomplish as they try to hammer out agreements. The convention dialogue helped to shape the process moving forward. "We will all refer back to this framework adopted here this week to guide us in each of our individual negotiations," Williams said.

## A comprehensive resolution

The Resolutions Committee, chaired by T.J. Gomez, president of Local 387, which represents workers at Ford Motor Co.'s Woodhaven (Michigan) Stamping Plant, presented a comprehensive resolution for delegates to debate.

"We face many political, social and economic challenges, but we



The 2015 UAW Resolutions Committee: Front row: Susan Pratt, Local 2213; Recording Secretary Tracey Dye, Local 889; Sally Auer, Local 2256. Back row: Mike Phillips, Local 8275; Chairperson T.J. Gomez, Local 387; Rick Ward, Local 685; Jesse Riggs, Local 723; David Barker, Local 952; Van Simpson, Local 2250; Ernestine Dawkins, Local 8888; Henry Pires, Local 470.





**Resolutions Committee Chairperson T.J. Gomez from Local 387 told delegates that we must demand that employers bridge the gap between the inequality in some of our agreements.**

are still among the fortunate 11 percent of workers in this country who have a seat at the bargaining table,” Gomez told delegates. “In the next four years we must demand that employers bridge the gap where inequality exists in our agreements, win stronger job opportunities, provide safety and

security for our members, and expand prosperity and respect for ourselves, our families, and our communities.”

The resolution was presented in sections so delegates could focus on it topic by topic, and then presented for a final vote at the end of the convention. The

resolution, which can be viewed in its entirety at <http://bit.ly/1F5nt71>, gets into the details of our bargaining philosophy and other issues critical to our members’ success, such as wages, job security, health care, group insurance, profit sharing, temporary work, work schedules, health and safety, non-discrimination, discipline and grievance, member orientation, veterans’ issues and many others.

Chad Troncin, a delegate from Local 249 who spoke at the convention, said it was absolutely essential to secure economic and social gains for all workers.

“We must bring the bottom up as we are our brothers and sisters keepers,” Troncin, a team leader in the paint department at Ford’s Kansas City Assembly plant, told delegates.

Mike McComb, a delegate at Local 963 in Adrian, Michigan, spoke about health and safety, particularly about coordinating with other plants owned by the same company. McComb, who represents members at Chemtura, a chemical company that supplies automakers, noted that its sister plant in Butler, Pennsylvania, has many of the same health and safety problems.

“To prevent future (health and safety) occurrences, it is crucial to exchange information,” McComb said. “The best contract means little if you lose your life or your health.”

Local 862 President Todd Dunn, who represents members at Ford’s Louisville and Kentucky Truck assembly plants, called for support of veterans’ issues.

“The battles do not come without a cost,” Dunn said. In addition to the physical sacrifices,



**Chad Troncin, a delegate from Local 249.**



**Ryan Buchalski, vice president of Local 598.**

there can be economic problems when veterans return to civilian life, Dunn added.

“There are so many young veterans who are having trouble landing a job,” he said.

Local 598 Vice President Ryan Buchalski, who represents members at General Motors’

Flint Truck Assembly Plant in Michigan, said the convention gave him hope as he gets ready for negotiations later this year. He particularly appreciated President Williams’ points about getting out on the shop floor and holding discussions with members. They want to be

included in the process and it’s detrimental to negotiations not to have leadership getting feedback from those they are elected to represent.

“If you’re not out talking to members, it’s your own damn fault,” Buchalski said.

## Labor Secretary: Every stakeholder must succeed

### Convention guests add their insight on building a middle class, solving inequality

In America’s Gilded Age there were a few exceptionally wealthy interests at the top, a small middle class, and tremendous poverty below. Working people had no rights and no voice. The prevailing attitude among the economic elites was this: “Don’t like your job? There’s the door.”

And there were plenty of people willing to step in and take the job, no matter how unsafe or torturous the conditions. The Gilded Age, roughly the period between Reconstruction and the Progressive Era at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, saw the rise of exceptionally wealthy families and powerful business interests at the expense of everyone else.

The exceptionally wealthy and powerful business interests are at it again. “These folks want to re-create the Gilded Age,” U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez told delegates at the 2015 UAW Special Bargaining Convention in Detroit. “The Gilded Age was not a golden age.”

Perez, along with Cornell William Brooks, president and CEO of the NAACP, and Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan

and others gave delegates insight on the progress Americans have made, and where we are falling short.

Income inequality is a serious issue, said Perez, a former civil rights lawyer. Last year, the Wall Street bonus pool was worth \$28.5 billion. That’s roughly twice of all total earnings of minimum wage workers combined.

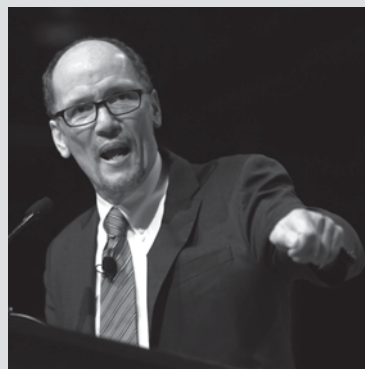
“It is the defining issue of our nation today,” Perez told delegates. “It is the principal piece of unfinished business in this room and in this nation.”

To fix income inequality, workers must have a voice, he said, noting the attempts by billionaires such as the Koch Brothers to silence workers. A strong, democratic union movement equals a strong middle class. America, he said, wins when workers win. And workers win through collective bargaining. Union workers, he said, earn on average \$200 more per month than nonunion workers.

Perez credited UAW members for the partnership they forged with the government and the auto companies for helping to spur the economic recovery. But it

is incomplete if every hard-working American cannot share in the prosperity.

America would be better served by a “virtuous cycle” where every stakeholder succeeds. He pointed to the codetermination model that



U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez says income inequality is ‘the principal piece of unfinished business’ in our nation.

## Direct reports from leadership

However, the convention was about more than setting a path forward for bargaining and selecting negotiators. It was also a clear statement about the need for delegates to hear directly from

UAW leaders on progress made in the last four years and where we as a union need to focus in the future.

UAW Secretary-Treasurer Gary Casteel, who also directs the union's Transnational Department, noted that in

addition to bargaining with the domestic automakers, Local 2488, which has represented members at Mitsubishi in Normal, Illinois, will also bargain a contract this year.

"I have every confidence this process will go smoothly. And



The NAACP's Cornell William Brooks: Too many people in full-time jobs cannot make ends meet.



Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan: City remains committed to manufacturing.

Volkswagen uses that he called a part of its organizational DNA.

"When you have a voice, not only do workers succeed, employers succeed and communities succeed," he said.

## Injustice affects everyone

Brooks gave an impassioned speech on economic inequality, injustice in the criminal justice system and the right to vote. Noting the strong ties between the labor and civil rights movements, Brooks said both movements need to speak as one on those issues.

There are too many people who want to work full-time and are stuck in low-paying part-time employment, Brooks said. And the current situation where people work hard at full-time jobs but cannot make ends meet is not sustainable, he told delegates.

"There are people in this room who understand that it will simply not work in this American economy – not now, not ever," he said.

He called racial profiling and the over-incarceration of young African-Americans not a problem simply for the black community, but "a deeply American problem." And when someone has paid their debt to society, oftentimes they have problems finding employment.

"He deserves a second chance – particularly if he hasn't had much of a first chance," Brooks said.

He called the Voting Rights Act the most effective civil rights legislation and criticized lawmakers who, "in Machiavellian frenzy," seek to undo the voting rights that were gained during the civil rights struggle. Onerous voting requirements affect millions of

minorities, college students, those with disabilities and the elderly, including his own mother who has multiple sclerosis.

"If it's wrong to keep someone from voting 50 years ago because of their color, it's wrong to keep them from voting today because of disability and age," Brooks said. "It's just not right."

Tim Mason, president and bargaining chairman at Local 647 at General Electric in Cincinnati, Ohio, said he appreciated the passion Brooks employed in his speech.

"He's a powerful speaker," Mason said. "I think he sent the delegates a really good message."

Duggan, who welcomed delegates to the Motor City, noted the deep, long-standing relationship between the city and the UAW. While many cities have opted to pursue jobs in sectors other than manufacturing, the Detroit mayor said, Detroit remains committed to making sure it has a manufacturing base in addition to pursuing other areas for economic growth.

"Detroit and the UAW are going to continue their long and strong partnership," Duggan told delegates.



Tim Mason: Brooks' speech was 'powerful.'

# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LIFTS US ALL

that's really a testament to our local leadership, who showed us a long time ago how to work with foreign carmakers to get things done," Casteel said. "I believe the long history and positive experience at Mitsubishi shows how transnational organizing can be successful, for both the employer and the employee."

Casteel also recognized the leaders at Local 42, which was formed to represent Volkswagen employees at the company's

Chattanooga, Tennessee, plant, and Local 112, which was formed to represent Mercedes employees at the company's Vance, Alabama, facility. Both locals are working hard to one day gain full representation at their respective plants, just like other Mercedes and Volkswagen employees have all over the world. Casteel also updated delegates about the organizing campaign at Nissan in Canton, Mississippi.

"It's going to be a long road,

but it's an important one," he said. "On behalf of all automotive workers in America, we're not going to let up."

UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada, who directs the union's General Motors Department, Vice President Jimmy Settles, who directs the union's Ford Department, and Vice President Norwood Jewell, who directs the union's Chrysler Department, introduced their respective bargaining teams to delegates.



Top: David Barker of Local 952 and Van Simpson of Local 2250 accept the V-CAP Award on behalf of all Region 5 members. Middle: Frank Stewart, a delegate from Local 42 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, makes a point during the debate on the resolution. Bottom: UAW Secretary-Treasurer Gary Casteel gives delegates an update on transnational organizing.





Top: The Region 1A Choir did an outstanding job with the national anthems at the start of the bargaining convention. Right: UAW President Dennis Williams stopped briefly for a photo with retired Presidents Bob King, Ron Gettelfinger and Owen Bieber.



Also introduced were the bargaining teams at John Deere Co., and for State of Michigan employees.

Delegates also learned that UAW Region 5, which represents our members in 17 states in the western part of the country, once again won the award for raising the most funds for the Voluntary Community Action Program Award with \$1.5 million. The region has topped \$1 million three times.

“I just want to thank the active and retired members and the staff,” UAW Region 5 Director Gary Jones said. “The Region 5 family did it again.”

### Delegates steel themselves for bargaining

Delegates adopted the comprehensive resolution overwhelmingly.

Jesse Riggs, a member of the Resolutions Committee from Local 723, told delegates, “We’re also going to be bargaining for the unorganized and their families. It is a guide to bargaining that we will use every day, and by using it we will reach our goals,” he said. “If we come together to demand our rights at bargaining tables across the country, we will succeed.”

Words from the delegates

reinforced the message from President Williams.

“This is our time. The stakes are high, the pressures are real and we know that as we succeed, so do our families succeed, American working men and women succeed. Therefore our communities succeed, and our economy succeeds,” Williams said.

“Our success lifts all others in this economy,” he said. “Yes indeed, as in the past, the power of collective bargaining lifts us all.”

# UAW Ford members show off their artistic side

We know about the craftsmanship that UAW members build into cars and trucks. Maybe less known is the incredibly artistic side of some of our members when they're out of the plant and pursuing excellence through paint, ink, plaster, limestone and other materials.

The UAW-Ford Art Collaborative was held on March 27 to show off the talents of both union and nonunion employees at Ford. Judges awarded Richard Haskin of UAW Local 245 in Dearborn, Michigan, the first-place prize in photography and also the "Best in Show." Here's just a sample of some of the best work from our members at Ford:

"The Breeze"  
Digital Drawing  
Tony Coleman  
UAW Local 2000  
Avon Lake, Ohio



"Trying to Buy a Real One"  
Photography  
Simeon Frierson  
UAW Local 551  
Chicago, Illinois



"Franken Vase"  
Joseph Reimers  
Spalted Maple Wood Turned Vessel  
UAW Local 897  
Buffalo, New York



"Infinity Bridge"  
Photography  
Robert Weir  
UAW Local 1250  
Cleveland, Ohio

“Brother Patrick”  
Angela McQueen-Lakes  
Fiber Art  
UAW Local 863  
Cincinnati, Ohio



“Monarch on Zinnia”  
Photography  
Joseph G. Elden  
UAW Local 600  
Dearborn, Michigan

“The Conversation”  
Photography  
Richard Haskin  
UAW Local 245  
Dearborn, Michigan

“Mustang Now & Then”  
Earnest McMillion  
Lithophane Carving of Photo  
UAW Local 3000  
Woodhaven, Michigan



## There's still time to apply for the 2015 UAW Family Scholarship Program

# Learn about the value of your union with your family in a beautiful setting

The UAW Family Scholarship Program was created to provide an environment where members may take their families to the Walter and May Reuther UAW Family Education Center in Onaway, Michigan, (Black Lake), and help them gain an understanding of the values of the union and what it does to advance the rights of working people. Members, through lively discussion and interactive exercises, also gain an understanding of the value of union membership, and how what happens at the bargaining table not only affects them, but their families and communities as well.

Children learn what their parents learn at an age-appropriate level. For children ages 4 through 6 years old, Day Camp provides a playful environment with creative activities that teach the basic functions of the union and child safety. Youths between ages of 7 and 10 enjoy a variety of outdoor activities that include golf, gym, swimming, along with unique arts and craft workshops also used to teach the value of union membership. Here's a short video that describes the conference: <http://bit.ly/1OAJzWB>.



In the Family Scholarship Program, the UAW covers the cost of all lodging, food, and programming for the member and their family.

Teenagers from 11 to 14 years of age will enjoy a schedule filled with Union Involvement workshops combined with outdoor activities. Teens from 15 to 18 years of age will participate in a program to help prepare them for entry into the workforce.

The adult program is designed to coordinate with the schedules of children's day camps.

Active members can now bring their grandchildren on the same basis as their children. The dates are July 5-10, July 12-17, which will also be for those who need Spanish translation, and July 19-24.

At the end of the program, all ages leave with a renewed spirit that carries over to family, workplace, and community. The UAW covers the cost of all lodging, food, and programming for the member and their family.

For more information about how your family can be a part of the UAW Family Scholarship Program, please contact your local

union president, unit chairperson, or fill out this scholarship application at (<http://bit.ly/1IYvevT>).

DON LEHMAN / UAW LOCAL 249



# Building a stronger middle class

## UAW posts membership gains for fifth straight year

The workplace isn't always fair, but when people come together united in one voice, the sound can create a wave of change.

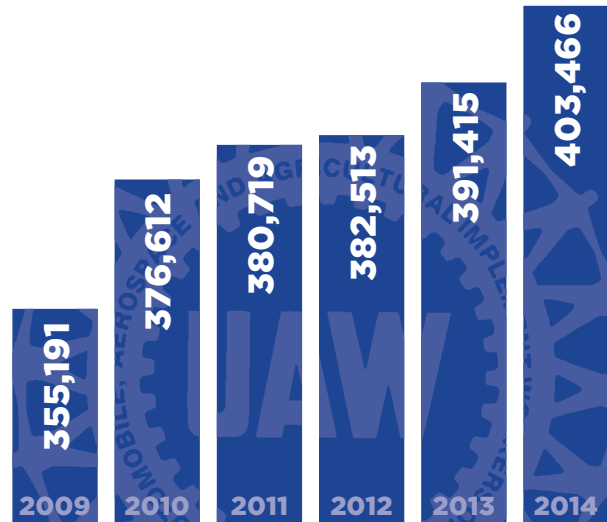
"We need the union. We need a voice," said Tawanda Forest, a table games dealer at the Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore. Forest, along with more than 700 other table games dealers, recently bet on building a better life for herself through union representation.

Forest is one fresh voice from the casino that recognized the union after a majority of employees voted for representation by the National Gaming Workers Coalition, which includes the UAW, Teamsters, Operating Engineers and Unite Here.

The Baltimore casino workers became UAW members in April.

"Each one of us has a hope for a better life for ourselves, our families and our communities. We're making a difference and people are beginning to see that again," said UAW President Dennis Williams. "Helping to build a stronger middle class is what we've done for 80 years and I think people are reminded of that as we look around and see that as special interests push down on working people, working people are pushing back and turning to unions."

For the fifth straight year, UAW membership grew. It gained more than 12,000 new members in 2014.



These growing numbers were reported on the union's Labor Organization Annual Report, Form LM-2, which is filed yearly with the U.S. Department of Labor.

The report shows UAW membership at 403,466 in 2014, compared to 391,415 in 2013.

The strong collective bargaining agreements negotiated in 2011 played a critical role in the decisions of Ford, FCA US and General Motors to invest in plants, add shifts, insource previously outsourced work and add tens of thousands of jobs.

UAW membership also has climbed as a result of successful organizing drives in gaming, higher education, automotive suppliers and other sectors.

The Department of Labor numbers do not reflect the total number of UAW members. Members not reflected in these numbers include those newly organized and in the process of bargaining a first contract and those in the academic sector who are represented by the UAW but have not yet signed membership cards. Including those union members in the total brings the number to well over the reported 403,466 for 2014.

New UAW member Sybastian Steven Joseph from Horseshoe Casino in Baltimore sums it up best: "Unions help change the working lives of many people. Solidarity is necessary for true unity in the workplace."

*Denn Pietro*

## Did you know?

Through organizing new workplaces and negotiating agreements that bring jobs back to our existing workplaces, the UAW has added more than

# 48,000

members since 2009.



Here's one more thing  
union families can share.

**Plan ahead** with a mortgage from Union Plus. The Union Plus Mortgage program with financing provided by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is one of some 40 benefits available to help union members. The program is exclusively for union members, their parents and children. Benefits include mortgage hardship assistance to help protect members' homes in the face of financial hardship. With Union Plus, a mortgage is more than a monthly payment. It's long-term protection for everything your home means to you.



**Learn more at [UnionPlus.org/Mortgage](http://UnionPlus.org/Mortgage)**

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# Memorial Day 2015

## Pause to remember the sacrifices made

Memorial Day remains a special day of remembrance for all UAW members as we pause to reflect on the sacrifices made to protect and preserve our freedom, including those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

At UAW Local 163 in Detroit, the Veterans Committee continues to build on its project to remember those who have fallen, all of those who have served, and those continuing to serve. Committee Chairperson Tod Reber said the local began a joint effort with Detroit Diesel Corp. three years ago to build a war memorial, raising a total of \$46,550 through donations and brick paver sales. The project, dedicated in time for Veterans Day 2014, continues to add pavers, including 18 more in time for this year's Memorial Day observances.

With the unwavering support of UAW Local 163 President Ralph Morris Jr., DDC Shop Chairperson Mark Gibson, DDC leadership and salaried personnel, UAW Local 412, and the entire Detroit Diesel and Axle Alliance membership, the memorial is a proud reminder of the importance of our holidays to honor those who have served. To view the installation ceremony in its entirety, visit <http://bit.ly/1Qim8Pt>.



SCOTT BRYSON/ UAW LOCAL 163

Members of our armed forces as well as representatives from veterans' organizations spoke at the dedication of the monument at Detroit Diesel. Local 163 Veterans Committee Chairman Tod Reber says pavers continue to be sold to support the monument.

Because we receive so many letters to Solidarity, we cannot print them all and reserve the right to edit for length. Please keep letters brief and include your name, address, daytime phone and local union number. Send to:

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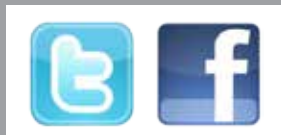
PRO-Member is about what makes a union strong: membership. The UAW is strongest when every member knows that he or she is a vital part of the whole. It was that simple idea that led to our first organizing victories. PRO-Member builds on these basic principles and tells our story through the voice of members.



Through video, interviews and testimonials, UAW active and retired members tell their stories about their experience in the union. Though they come from multiple sectors and geographies, there is a common element in all of their voices: that we are at our best when we work together to build our union.

PRO-Member also highlights innovation. Recognizing that our lives are busy and we communicate differently today than we did in the past, PRO-Member features the work of local unions taking creative approaches to age-old problems.

Finally, PRO-Member is about the future. Union membership is under attack – both by legislators who want to undermine the legal right to be organized and outside groups funding campaigns against unions. But we will prevail because our ideas are timeless – that we are stronger when we stand together. That simple point cannot be undone through a sound bite or internet meme. It's who we are, it's what we do and it's what PRO-Member is all about.



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