



THE EAGLE



LOCAL 1103

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HEALTHCARE REFORM: THE BATTLE TO KEEP HEALTHCARE TAX FREE







“CWA Local 1103 Members’ take Health Care Reform message to Washington D.C.”

Think writing a letter to a senator, sending an e-mail or attending a Rally does nothing? Think again! CWA Members along with thousands of fellow Union Members and Community Healthcare awareness groups across the country will tell you

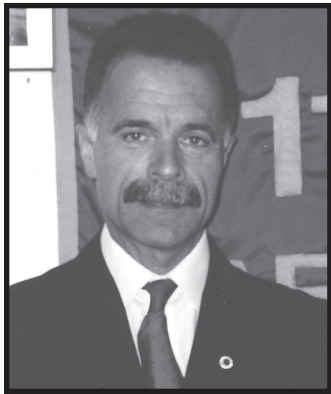
differently.

This story starts with a rural blue dog1 senator who wanted to make republicans happy with a bipartisan deal on Healthcare reform. The problem was he wanted to make that deal on the backs of

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In My View . . .



August 1989 was a tragic year for our Union Family regarding the deaths of Chief Stewards Gerry Horgan and Ray Borella. Some may question our reasons for continuing to speak and feel about our departed Brothers now twenty years later. The answer is obvious; the sacrifices that were made benefited all of us that

were involved in that strike and every Union Member that came in long after it was over. It has been and is our responsibility to inform everyone about what occurred back then, and every time we reap the benefits of Solidarity, Medical, Financial, or Safety we should never forget how that debt was paid.

With respect to Ray Borella he was involved in a much heated verbal exchange with SCABS on his Northern Picket Line in the 89 Strike against NYNEX. Still very upset about the events on the Picket Line when he got home that night he collapsed and died in front of his Wife from a massive Heart Attack.


In that same Strike Gerry Horgan was asked by the Executive Board to help bolster the Picket Line for our Cable Records members at the Valhalla Lac. It was on August 14th on that Picket Line that Gerry was struck down by a SCAB who used her car as a means of breaking through that Line pinning him to the vehicles hood and carrying him at a high rate of speed for approximately 150 yards. Her next driving maneuver forced Gerry off the hood and onto the pavement where he struck his head. He was rushed to the Westchester Medical Center and died as a result of his injuries the next day on August 15th. Gerry was the first and only Union Member ever KILLED on a CWA PICKET LINE in history. Days later over 10,000 Union Members from CWA as well as many other Unions demonstrated in front of NYNEX'S Mid State Headquarters at 10 County Center Road, then that virtual SEA OF RED marched into downtown White Plains to 111 Main Street with a police escort shutting down Route 119 for hours. Since that faithful day a large group of 1103 Members, the 1103 Executive Board, and Gerry's brother Brian meet every August 15TH at the site of that Picket Line in Valhalla to lay a wreath of flowers, followed by a slow respectful motorcade past

the now Mid State Headquarters., The Executive Board and Brian then drive over to Gerry's Grave in Nyack to meet Gerry's Mom and to pay an annual respect to Gerry Horgan. This is the reason that across the country in CWA we respect the Man, his memory and Solidarity by wearing RED on Thursdays.

Every year since these tragedies Local 1103 has hosted a charity Golf Outing to benefit the Families that no longer have there Husbands, there Dads, Sons or Brothers. This year the outing will take place at the Beekman Country Club on Friday October 2. Our hope is that each 1103 work location supports these Families on this most important TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY.

In Solidarity,

Joseph A. Barca, Jr.
President



THE EAGLE

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CWA 71st Annual Convention – Rebuilding the Middle Class

The CWA national convention was held in Washington D.C. from Sunday June 21st through Thursday June 25th and was attended by more than 2500 Delegates from CWA Locals throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Local 1103's entire Executive Board attended and participated in this most important event. Combined with the convention was the Legislative - Political Conference and Capital Hill Lobby day. Local 1103's delegates worked tirelessly over the five days to ensure that our Members interests were properly represented.

Some of the highlights of this year's convention included our own **1103 Retired Members Council President, Jeanette Spoor** who sang our national anthem during the opening ceremony.

CWA President Larry Cohen, received a standing ovation when he exclaimed in his opening address, that labor once again has a friend in the White House and that "It's our time, It's labors time, were are back!" He emphasized that the time for congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act is now. He told the convention that over 70 countries now have a system of majority sign up for joining Unions, but the United States does not. He went on to say that, "We cannot restore the middle class with tax cuts. We cannot do it with federal jobs or another stimulus..... But if workers across the United States had real bargaining rights, it would translate into bargaining and buying power. It's about time we stand up for Union contracts and stop worrying about bankers' contracts. Let the bankers fend for themselves and let's stand up for each other."

Newly appointed **Labor Secretary Hilda Solis**, who comes from

a working class family, addressed the delegates and told how her father helped to organize immigrant workers into the teamsters and that she has never forgotten her roots. She is a true champion of workers rights and an original supporter of the Employee Free Choice Act. She believes that the government has a fundamental responsibility to protect workers from employer abuses

with management. He went on to stress the importance of passing the EFCA.

Vice President Joe Biden delivered a strong message that the Obama administration is committed to helping CWA rebuild the middle class in America, which starts with the passage of The Employee Free Choice Act. The CWA is grateful to him for his perfect

labor voting record over his 36 year career. He thanked the CWA for it's commitment to him when he was starting out in congress and he has never forgotten that. After eight years of an anti-labor Labor Board and neglect of worker protections under the Bush administration it is good to have a friend so close to the President.

Other notable speakers were **Dennis Van Roekel**, President of the National Education Association and **Randi Weingarten**, President of the American Federation of Teachers.

The delegates representing Local 1103 at the convention participated in many discussions, debates and floor votes to fulfill their responsibilities, such as dealing with issues that were brought to the floor by the Resolution and Rules committee, the Finance and Defense Fund Oversight Committees, the Retired Members Council, the National Woman's Committee, the National Committee on Equity and the Appeals Committee.

Local 1103 was also recognized at the District 1 meeting for its role in the Verizon Business organizing campaign. District 1 Vice President **Chris Shelton** thanked all of those locals that dedicated themselves to a long four year effort.

Fran Gottron
Organizer



Members of the Executive Board caucus prior to speaking to Members of Congress about Health Care and the Employee Free Choice Act.

and enforcement of workplace safety standards. Secretary Solis made it clear that the Labor Department "is back in the enforcement business." She spoke about how the Obama administration is leading the way to create good paying "Green Jobs" that "will stay right here in the good ole U.S.A"

Senator Tom Harkin from Iowa and an original sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act also attended. He told the convention that "something is broken" when in 20 to 30% of organizing campaigns workers rights are undermined, in 35% percent a worker is fired for Union activities in 57% employers threaten to close the plant if the workers go Union and in 59% employees are subjected to one on one meetings

Union Workers with good healthcare plans. Senator Max Baucus (D) of Montana and Chairmen of the Senate Finance Committee, theorized that he could raise 320 billion dollars for healthcare reform if he taxed what he called generous employer benefit packages.

What Senator Baucus didn't understand was that our Members fought for those benefits and that our own Gerry Horgan gave his life's blood for them. Now the fight to protect our benefits was on, but this time the field of battle wouldn't be the picket line it was in the halls of congress. Like any conflict, we started diplomatically. We held office visits with our US Congressmembers where we outlined the CWA four principles for acceptable healthcare reform:

- 1- No Taxing Healthcare*
- 2- Keeping our negotiated private insurance plans*
- 3- A public plan for individuals and small business and to offer competition to lower premiums*
- 4- An option to allow younger retirees to join Medicare early or to join a Public Option*

The next phase was the show of force, over a 6-week period we faxed a barrage of handwritten letters to Senator Chuck Schumer's NY district and Washington offices. These letters contained the CWA 4 principles of healthcare and personal notes from the Membership detailing their concerns for reform. Why did we pick Senator Schumer? Because Schumer, as a Senate Finance Committee member is helping to draft the Senate side of health care reform legislation. We wanted to ensure that

as the Senate drafts legislation, CWA's priorities are implemented – and that Senator Schumer knows that many of his constituents are very concerned with any attempt to tax our healthcare.

In the month of June, we took the message right to the steps of congress. CWA legislative and political activists visited our elected legislators and told them: yes, we need Healthcare Reform, but no to taxing healthcare benefits. That point was resonating only two blocks away from the legislator's offices in the Upper Senate Park. Backed by 10,000 Union Members from across the country, Americans demanded healthcare reform but on our terms. One after another Working Americas took the stage and told how the Healthcare System had failed them. These were workers who had healthcare but were denied care, lost coverage because of layoffs or shop closings or couldn't afford the co-sharing premiums that employers demanded. The halls of congress were ringing with the cries of working Americans demanding change.

Our message couldn't have been any clearer for our own Senator Schumer. In a face to face meeting with so many CWA Local officers in attendance that we had to hold the meeting in the hallway, Senator Schumer was told that CWA Members would not accept taxation of their healthcare benefits. CWA District 1 Vice President Chris Shelton led the meeting telling the Senator that taxing healthcare is not only bad for working middle class Americans but, it will lead to employers cutting benefits because they would also be hit with increased payroll taxes. At the conclusion of the meeting Senator Schumer was handed 1,000 handwritten letters from CWA Members telling him not to tax healthcare.

After months of faxes, E-mails, office visits and a massive rally on Washington D.C our message

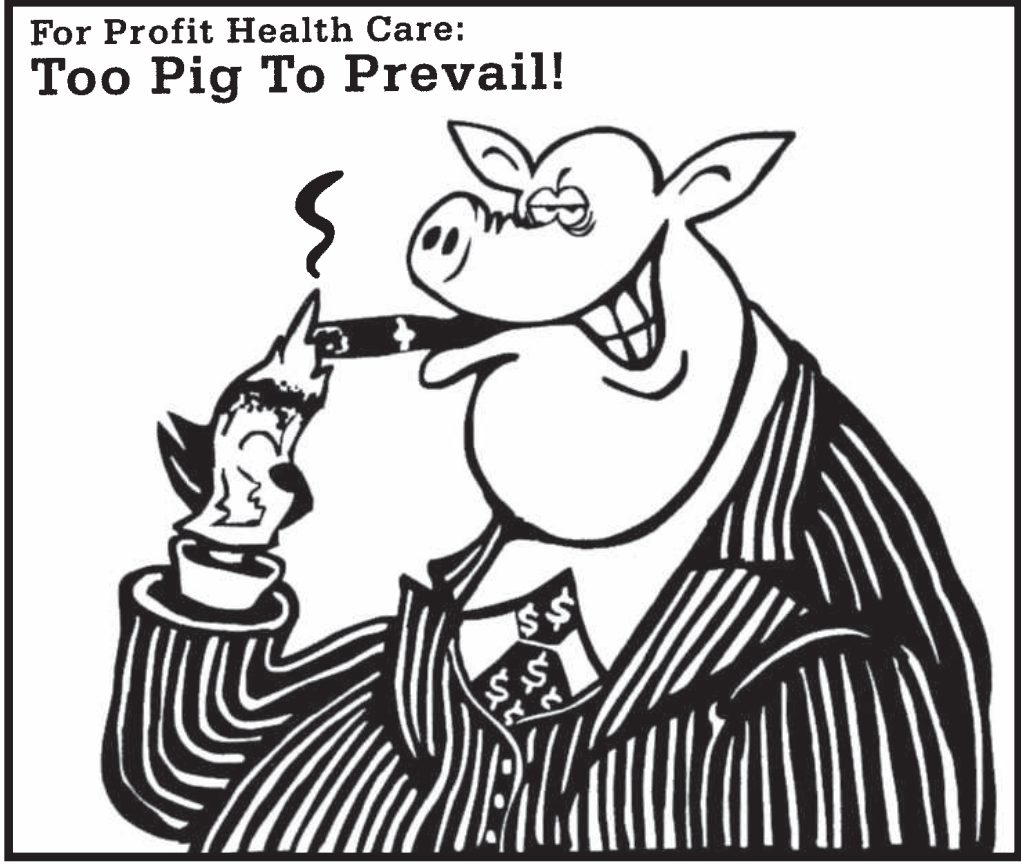
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began to take hold. On July 8, 2009 The NY Times reported that Senator Baucus was under “sharp assault” by fellow Democrats to abandon plans to tax healthcare. One of those Democrats was Senator Barbara Boxer (D) of California. Boxer stated to the Times “working people in many cases have given up raises in pay and instead have gotten health benefits”. “It seems unfair to now tax their benefits. I think that would be changing the rules in the middle of the game in a way that is so harmful and would set them back, so I have a real problem with that” Senator Baucus was even paid a visit by the Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D) of Nevada and asked to rethink his plan to pay for healthcare reform by taxing workers benefits.

At the time of this writing our Brothers and Sisters in AT&T have been working with an expired contract for over two months; the main issue healthcare cost sharing. AT&T is still demanding workers pay 18% of the Healthcare premium by the third year on any new agreement. Yet, this is not a new demand by employers, our municipal units in Connecticut pay between 5 – 12 percent of the healthcare premiums for coverage. To prepare for current police dispatcher contract bargaining we conducted a survey of healthcare cost sharing for dispatchers.

We were only able to find one town that did not demand cost sharing of healthcare premiums. For these workers, taxing their healthcare would be a double slap in the face.

As of this edition of the Eagle we are making headway in shaping Healthcare Reform but we cannot rest. We must continue to keep up the pressure on our Senators and Congress members to not tax healthcare and apply our other principals. We need

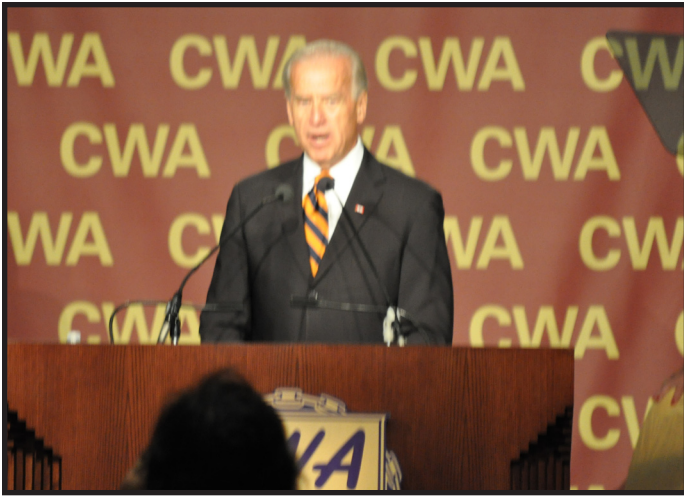


Healthcare reform; however, it must come on our terms. To do that Members must stay involved until a bill without taxation of healthcare is on our Presidents desk.

*Joe Mayhew
Business Agent*

Single Payer Explained

Other than the four principles outlined in this edition, we do not endorse any specific type of health care plan being debated today. However, you should have an understanding of what is being publicly discussed on the news and in congress.



Vice President Joe Biden speaks to the CWA delegation in Washinton D.C.

Single-payer is a term used to describe a type of financing system. It refers to one entity acting as administrator, or “payer.” In the case of health care, a single-payer system would be setup such that one entity—a government run organization—would collect all health care fees, and pay out all health care costs. In the current US system, there are literally tens of thousands of different health care organizations—HMOs, billing agencies, etc. By having so many different payers of health care fees, there is an enormous amount of administrative waste generated in the system. (Just imagine how complex billing must be in a doctor’s office, when each insurance company requires a different form to be completed, has a different billing system, different billing contacts and phone numbers—it’s very confusing.) In a single-payer system, all hospitals, doctors, and other health care providers would bill one entity for their services. This alone reduces administrative waste greatly, and saves money, which can be used to provide care and insurance to those who currently don’t have it.

All Americans would receive comprehensive medical benefits under single payer. Coverage would include all medically necessary services, including rehabilitative, long-term, and home care; mental health care, prescription drugs, and medical supplies; and preventive and public health measures.

Care would be based on need, not on ability to pay.

Hospital billing would be virtually eliminated. Instead, hospitals would receive an annual lump-sum payment from the government to cover operating expenses—a “global budget.” A separate budget would cover such expenses as hospital expansion, the purchase of technology, marketing, etc.

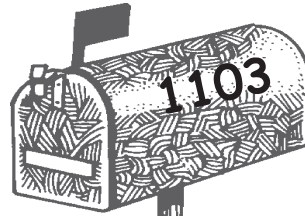


CWA President Larry Cohen listens to Vice President Joe Biden as he delivers message of support to working class families

Doctors would have three options for payment: fee-for-service, salaried positions in hospitals, and salaried positions within group practices or HMOs. Fees would be negotiated between a representative of the fee-for-service practitioners (such as the state medical society) and a state payment board. In most cases, government would serve as administrator, not employer.



LETTERS TO THE LOCAL



Dear Mark and CWA Local 1103,

Thank you all for my Service Gift Award. Special thanks to Mark, your presentation and recognition speech was greatly appreciated. Thanks for all your help in the past. You guys and girls are great, keep up the good work that you do.

Beverly Strang

Dear Joe Mayhew and John Gentile and Everyone at the Hall,

Thank you so much for your contributions to the Friedreichs Ataxia Research Alliance. We are very grateful for your kindness.

*Fraternally,
Al Richards and Family*

Dear Kevin,

That article you wrote in The Eagle could not have been more on the money. Thank you for bringing it to everyone's attention. The article I am referring to is Pushed to the Breaking Point.

Keep up the good work and fight!

*Your Union Brother forever,
Pat Clarke*

Did You Just Retire?

You may be entitled to \$250.00

Recently many people took the enhanced IPP offer and retired last month and we want to make sure that everyone who is eligible, takes advantage of the Service Gift Award of \$250 that they are entitled to.

If you are a Member in continuous good standing in Local 1103 for ten consecutive years, stop by the Union Hall or call for a Service Gift Fund Plan application.



COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA - LOCAL 1103

(AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.-C.L.C.)

345 WESTCHESTER AVENUE • PORT CHESTER, NY 10573



*IN MEMORY
of our
Union Brother*

*GERRY
HORGAN*

*Who was killed on a
picket line in August 1989,
striking with his
Brothers and Sisters against
the greed of a wealthy
NYNEX Corporation*

PERIODICAL



*IN MEMORY OF
E. GERALD HORGAN*

*REST IN PEACE,
GERRY HORGAN*

WE WILL NEVER FORGET