



October 14, 2010

PREPARING FOR BATTLE -- ILLINOIS

Welcome to the *Battleground Bulletin*! This is the first fall issue of the CWA's 2010 newsletter about election efforts in the Battleground States of District 4: Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Be watching for a new *Battleground Bulletin* every few weeks to keep you up to date up until Election Day.

Some of our hard-fought gains for working families are being threatened by forces that want us to return to the anti-worker, anti-union policies of the Bush years. We can't let that happen. CWA members from District 4 played a huge role in electing Barack Obama and a Union-friendly Congress. This fall, we'll have to work just as hard to keep up the fight for affordable health care, retirement security, Wall Street regulations and the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. In fact, the real work is only beginning.

We know that the Tea Party is no picnic for working Americans. It's more like a free ride for moneyed special interests. Working together, we can make sure that their party is over.

WHERE THE ACTION IS

Governor Pat Quinn this year signed a bill into law that will help create up to 20,000 new good-paying jobs over the next year at small businesses around the state. He has launched hearings to investigate unwarranted health-care rate hikes. To create good-paying jobs, he plans to push for the state's first public works construction program in more than a decade.

His opponent, by contrast, is pushing the failed Bush-era policies of tax cuts for big business, with the hope that the massive profits "trickle down." We know how that one works!

Quinn stands up for labor – and labor stands up for him. He faces a tough battle, and CWA District 4 activists need to be there for him.

In the battle for the U.S. Senate, **Alexi Giannoulias** is also in tight race. He's a progressive candidate with good, common-sense ideas. His FutureWorks plan is a detailed economic strategy to jump-start our economy and create the next generation of good-paying jobs. His plan includes tax relief for working families and small businesses, cracking down on deceptive and dangerous corporate practices that hurt our economy. He's running against a congressman who has supported cutting taxes for the super rich while at the burden of the middle class.

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CWA District 4 activists are also eyeing four important congressional races:

- In the 10th Congressional District, **Dan Seals** wants to add to Union-friendly Congress by pushing policies that create jobs and cut taxes for the middle class. "We can get America back on track&mdashand get the economy we deserve," he says. He's running against an ultra-conservative who has ducked several candidate debates.
- In the 11th Congressional District, **Debbie Halvorson** is fighting to retain her seat. Halvorson has been a strong voice in Washington for working families on issues like jobs and health care. Her opponent is backed by right-wing groups that favor privatizing social security and oppose common-sense Wall Street reforms.
- In the 14th Congressional District, incumbent **Bill Foster** is the first Democrat to represent the district since the 1970s. Foster was a strong backer of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Credit Card Bill of Rights and broadening health-care coverage for children.
- In the 17th Congressional District, incumbent **Phil Hare** is a friend of union workers. Hare was the former president of UNITE Here Local 617 and has been a staunch defender of working families while in Congress. He has worked to strengthen collective bargaining rights and to boost workplace safety. He is facing a Tea Party candidate who has expressed admiration for Glenn Beck's ultra-conservative agenda.

These candidates are pledging to continue important work that benefits all Americans. That work is being threatened by challengers with deep-pockets who would undo all we have accomplished in the last two years. Don't let it happen! District 4 members can make a difference!

THE RICH GET RICHER

Feel like you're working harder but falling farther behind?

You're not alone.

Eight years of Bush administration policies and unchecked Wall Street bandits have stretched the income gap between the richest and poorest Americans to its widest amount on record.

Young adults and children, in particular, struggled to stay afloat in the recession. The top-earning 20 percent of Americans -- those making more than \$100,000 each year -- received 49.4 percent of all income generated in the United States, compared with the 3.4 percent earned by those below the poverty line. At the very top, the wealthiest 5 percent of Americans, who earn more than \$180,000, added slightly to their annual incomes last year, census data show. Families at the \$50,000 median level slipped lower. "Income inequality is rising, and if we took into account tax data, it would be even more," Timothy Smeeding, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who specializes in poverty, told the Associated Press. "More than other countries, we have a very unequal income distribution where compensation goes to the top in a winner-takes-all economy."

Working people know that the only way to reverse that trend is through organizing, and the only hope of organizing is through passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), which essentially re-establishes the right of workers to join unions and bargain collectively.

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That's what makes the upcoming elections so important. EFCA won't happen if we sit on our hands and do nothing. If we continue to stay active and engaged, we win – as do future generations.

PLEDGE TO AMERICA: FAILED POLICIES, WARMED OVER

We're hearing a lot this election about the Pledge to America. Feel like you've heard it all before? You have.

The 48-page pledge is a fancy-looking rehash of the same Bush-era economic agenda that got us into the mess we're in today. Deregulate big business. Slash government services. Beat down the middle class. Starve the working class so the Wall Street fat cats can get that much fatter.

Sounds like the same old contract these guys have been pushing for years.

We have a different agenda. Affordable health care. Jobs and fair trade. Secure retirements. The right to organize and bargain collectively.

What can you do to help? Support worker-friendly candidates in the battleground races. Put up a yard sign. Go door-to-door. Volunteer at a call bank. Talk to your friends and neighbors.

District 4 members can – and will – make a difference. But there's not much time before the election. Watch for the next *Battleground Bulletin* for important news and updates!

In Our Unity....There is Strength:

Elizabeth VanDerWoude
President
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