The Time is Now

Working families push for comprehensive immigration reform
President’s Report

A significant moment occurred recently in evaluating the state of the American economy: the business-leaning media company Bloomberg agreed with organized labor’s assessment that the ratio of CEO-to-average-worker pay is more out of whack than ever before. The only disagreement is the degree of absurdity.

The AFL-CIO puts the ratio of CEO-to-worker pay at 354-to-1 while Bloomberg has it slightly lower at 204-to-1. Either way, both parties agree the divide has trended upward sharply in the last sixty years.

For working people, this doesn’t come as a surprise. Talk of recovery and executive bonuses hasn’t made its way down to middle-America where jobs are scarce, raises are scarcer, and
full-time, meaningful employment at a decent wage escapes millions who are actively trying to find a better job.

The labor movement continues to be the strongest advocate for good jobs, fair wages and a strong middle class. Maybe that’s why we’ve drawn the ire of corporate union busters and right-wing politicians blocking appointments to the National Labor Relations Board.

Absent a sweeping overhaul of federal labor law, the biggest game-changer on the horizon is immigration reform. America’s unions have gone all-in to support a worker-centered approach to comprehensive immigration reform that includes a roadmap to citizenship and will keep families united. The AFL-CIO even negotiated an historic agreement with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce over visa programs that bring temporary workers into the country. Labor’s priorities were to protect U.S.-born workers as well as aspiring citizens and hold employers accountable.

With the Senate and House both discussing proposals to overhaul the broken immigration system, unions are keeping a close watch on the process to make sure the bills that surface are fair and represent the values of the labor movement. Bringing 11 million workers out of the shadows and into the light will have a dramatic impact on the way employers respect employees’ rights and the way elected officials represent their communities.

Workers today have fewer and fewer chances to level the playing field against big corporations and wealthy CEOs. Immigration reform isn’t a magic bullet, but would give millions of workers a stronger voice in the workplace and the community, creating a strong ally for organized labor’s fight for a strong middle class.
Teachers fight to keep schools open

The Chicago Teachers Union is leading the fight along with parents and community groups to block a plan by Chicago Public Schools to close more than fifty schools. The groups argue that the closings are unnecessary, will put children’s safety and education in jeopardy, and are unjustified.

“For the past several weeks there has been a resounding cry against school actions from parents, students, educators and community stakeholders,” said CTU President Karen Lewis. “The mayor and the CEO have ignored these petitions for justice at these hearings and apparently have not listened to a single word that was said. Parents have been direct, loud and clear. Students have been loud and clear. Principals have been loud and clear. Teachers, paraprofessionals and school clinicians have been loud and clear: Do not close our schools!”

The teachers have asked the Illinois General Assembly to implement a full moratorium on school closures. The union also plans to work with community allies to launch a massive voter registration and mobilization effort targeting 100,000 new voters, as well as recruit and train candidates for state and local offices.

Security guards reach new contract

Security officers ratified a new contract with Chicago’s Building Owners and Managers Association that will improve communities and make Chicago safer. The members of SEIU Local 1 unanimously approved the contract that includes $4,000 in increased wages and access to family health care over the next three years.

“When responsible companies do their part and invest in good jobs with family health care and a livable wage, our whole city benefits,” said Tom Balanoff, President of SEIU Local 1. “This agreement will boost our local economy in the communities that need it most. Now we will call on employers in the suburbs to follow BOMA’s lead and invest in good jobs that support hard working families.”

The contract covers about 2,000 members who work in downtown buildings that are home to corporations that generate more than $500 billion a year.

“We worked hard, we persevered, we fought, and we won. Now we can feel a little better about our jobs, and, ultimately, our lives,” said Tonya Yarbrough, a security officer at the Chicago Stock Exchange.

More than 5,000 security officers in the suburbs will work to settle their contract by the end of 2013.

Hilton hotel workers get contract

UNITE HERE Local 1 and Local 450 have reached a contract settlement with Hilton Hotels preempting the expiration of current contracts, which expire on August 31, 2013. The agreement covers over 600 workers from the Drake, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago Hilton, and Hilton O’Hare. Hilton is the first major hotel employer to step forward to reach a settlement with workers, presenting a path forward for hotel workers and other hotel companies in Chicago.

The new five year agreement improves job security and provides economic improvements for hotel workers and their families. Hilton workers are among over 6,000 hotel workers in Chicago and area suburbs whose contracts are set to expire this year.

“This is a positive step for the hotel industry in which Hilton is leading,” said Henry Tamarin of UNITE HERE. “We’re coming off very strong contracts from 2009, and this is a continuation of a decade of work to achieve middle class jobs for hotel workers in the City.”

A tentative agreement has been reached with Starwood Hotels, and workers at Hyatt hotels have been without a contract since August 31, 2009. Since that time, Hyatt workers have taken numerous actions, including strikes and the launch of a global boycott in response to unsafe working conditions for hotel housekeepers and Hyatt’s practice of subcontracting jobs. In April, the chairman of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority which runs McCormick Place called on Hyatt to resolve the contract dispute.
Letter carriers help save Saturday delivery

Outrage from citizens and members of Congress has led the United States Postal Service to drop its plan to eliminate Saturday delivery of mail.

The announcement to eliminate Saturday service was made by Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe in February but lacked proper authority. By law, only the U.S. Congress can authorize such a change in operations.

Mack Julion, National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 11 President in Chicago, expressed relief with the today’s announcement from the Postal Service. Without this legislation the need for Postal Reform legislation said Julion. “There is still an urgent battle to protect the Postal Service, but our battle is far from over,”

The union argues that the USPS will not be able to be a profitable entity if Congress didn’t require it to pre-fund the long term viability of the Postal Service.

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75 years of retiree health care in just ten years. No other government agency or private company is required to pre-fund retiree health care.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.DELIVERINGFORAMERICA.COM.

Telecom workers ratify agreement

The IBEW System Council T-3, including members of IBEW Local 21, voted to ratify an agreement reached earlier this year with AT&T covering approximately 6,500 employees working for the company nationwide. The members will receive basic weekly wage rate increases of 2.25%, 2.5%, 2.75%, 3.0% as well as a $1,000 signing bonus.

“We feel this agreement gives our members the job security they were seeking,” said Paul Wright, IBEW Local 21 President and SCT-3 Chairman. “It protects middle class jobs by providing competitive wages and benefits. This agreement reaffirms our commitment to protect the interests of our membership while building stronger relationships with our employers.”

In addition to the wage increases, the telecommunications workers fought for increased job security and to protect benefits, retiree health care and jobs in the fast-paced, ever-changing industry.

The union also recently reached agreements at Comcast West covering the western suburbs and Johnson Controls.

Musicians named to Arts Council

Two representatives of the Chicago Federation of Musicians Local 10-208 have been appointed to serve on the Illinois Arts Council.

Gary Matts, President of the CFM, and Richard Daniels, a member of the board, were both appointed to serve on the council. Matts has served as President of the Musicians’ union since 2004 after previously serving as a board member for twelve years. Daniels is the musical director for The City Lights Orchestra in Chicago and is the past chairman of the board at Chicago’s Mercy Home for Boys and Girls.

“We are proud to represent musicians in the Chicago area and across the state of Illinois on this important council to promote public arts, culturally significant and meaningful programming and outreach to communities across the state,” said Matts. “We are committed to supporting music and the arts and look forward to working through the Illinois Arts Council to create additional awareness and opportunities for audiences to experience live music performances in Chicago.”

The Illinois Arts Council was created in 1965 through legislation sponsored by Senators Paul Simon, Thomas McGloon and Alan Dixon.

NABET CWA contract with ABC 7

The National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-Communications Workers of America (NABET-CWA) and the American Broadcasting Companies (ABC, Inc), a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company, have reached a tentative agreement on a new four-year contract to replace the one that expired March 31, 2011.

“After two-years of protracted negotiations, this latest round of mediation has produced a breakthrough, and this offer is now worthy of our members’ consideration,” said NABET-CWA President Joyce. He added, “The persistence of our members and our bargaining committee to achieve a fair contract was instrumental in this outcome. NABET-CWA also appreciates the full involvement of FMCS Director George H. Cohen and CWA President Larry Cohen in producing the tentative agreement.”

The new contract, when ratified, will cover approximately 2500 staff and daily hire employees working as broadcast technicians, telecommunications specialists, newswriters, producers, desk assistants, publicists, and plant maintenance personnel at various Company Network and TV station operations in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington D.C.

PARENTS, STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS JOIN TEACHERS IN PROTESTING SCHOOL CLOSURES; FEDERAL EMPLOYEES PUSH BACK AGAINST BUDGET CUTS; NALC PRESIDENT MACK JULION SPEAKS AT A RALLY TO SAVE THE POSTAL SERVICE; CARPENTERS LOCAL 13 BUSINESS MANAGER TOM RYAN RECEIVES AN AWARD FROM THE IRISH AMERICAN LABOR COUNCIL; MUSICIANS UNION MEMBERS SHOW OFF THEIR UNION PRIDE (PHOTOS: CTU, CFL, ORLANDO J. VELEZ, LABORERS’ DISTRICT COUNCIL, CHICAGO FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS)
The Time is Now

Alicia Ramirez is a United States citizen. As a school administrator in Chicago’s Pilsen community, she has seen how a broken immigration system affects her students, tearing families apart and leaving others in constant fear.

Not only has she watched how the current system affects others, but she knows what it has done to her own family. Alicia’s husband is an aspiring citizen who has been unable to complete the immigration process. She and her three children live in fear that their loving, hardworking father will be taken away from them.

Alicia joined labor leaders, community activists and others at a rally calling for comprehensive immigration reform as Congress debates legislation addressing this critical issue facing all Americans.

“From hotel workers to custodians to painters and carpenters, we are here today with our allies in the community because we share a common belief that all workers should be treated with fairness, dignity and respect,” said CFL President Jorge Ramirez at Instituto del Progreso in Chicago. “All workers should have rights and protections to speak out against injustice and unsafe working conditions without fear of retaliation or retribution. These are human rights that every working man and woman should enjoy.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka echoed Ramirez and reaffirmed the AFL-CIO’s resolve in leading the push for a comprehensive plan to protect workers and keep families united through immigration reform.

“Now is the time for real immigration reform and I’m here to demand that this reform include...a workable and clear and practical road map to citizenship for every aspiring citizen in America,” he said.

The current system is broken and both U.S.-born workers as well as aspiring citizens pay a heavy price. Organized labor is calling for a worker-centered, comprehensive approach as part of a common-sense immigration process.

On May 1, tens of thousands of people including union members, students, community activists, faith leaders and elected officials marched through downtown Chicago to Federal Plaza to mark May Day with a loud call for a fair immigration process that protects workers and provides a road map to citizenship for millions of aspiring citizens.

Several hundred union members gathered at the Haymarket Monument, the site commemorating the birthplace of May Day and the fight for the eight-hour day, before joining with marchers on their way to Federal Plaza.

America’s unions are going all-out to support reform legislation that will protect all workers—union and non-union, citizens and future citizens. The AFL-CIO reached a breakthrough agreement with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on worker visa programs that will give workers better rights and protections to speak out and seek union representation while also creating a commission to regulate the number of visas based on economic conditions and market demands.

Immigrant workers tend to experience more dangerous working conditions than others. A 2002 study of immigrant workers in Chicago by University of Illinois at Chicago showed that this group of workers tends to have higher injury and fatality rates. Yet they are less likely to speak up to their bosses or report the unsafe working conditions to state or federal regulators because they may lack documents, have limited English proficiency or fear retaliation in the form of firing or deportation.

UFCW International President Joseph Hansen, whose union represents workers, including many immigrants, in industries such as meat packing and food processing, has seen how workers have been exploited by some employers.

“It is the workers we represent who are most victimized by our current immigration system,” said Hansen. “For the UFCW, this issue hits close to home. We remember the ICE raids in 2006 where our members were treated like criminals. We remember hearing the stories of workers terrorized just for doing their jobs.

“America has always prided itself on being a country where anyone who is willing to work hard and pursue their dreams can find success,” he added. “We must live up to that ideal.”

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on the legislation this summer. The House of Representatives may take up that bill or one of its own.

“I’m here to demand that this reform include ...a workable and clear and practical road map to citizenship for every aspiring citizen in America.”

RICHARD TRUMKA
PRESIDENT OF AFL-CIO

WORKING MEN AND WOMEN SHOWING SUPPORT FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM ON MAY DAY INCLUDING DELEGATIONS FROM; WORKERS UNITED, UFCW AND SHEET METAL WORKERS; BOTTOM LEFT: JORGE RAMIREZ WITH TERRENCE HEALY AND GENERAL PRESIDENT TERENCE O’SULLIVAN FROM LIUNA
Charter school teachers join union

Teachers and staff in the one of city’s largest charter school networks overwhelmingly have chosen the Chicago Alliance of Charter School Teachers and Staff (Chicago ACTS), an affiliate of the 1.5 million-member American Federation of Teachers and the Illinois Federation of Teachers, as their bargaining agent.

The decision involves more than 400 teachers and staff in 13 schools operated by the United Neighborhood Organization. In March, UNO and the AFT reached a neutrality agreement under which UNO agreed not to take a position on whether its teachers and staff organized. Some 87 percent of the 415 workers who voted approved Chicago ACTS as their bargaining agent.

The decision by UNO employees to join Chicago ACTS means that more than 20 percent of Chicago’s charter school teachers and staff are now unionized—the highest union density where charter school employees do not automatically have a union.

“This is a turning point,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “This has the potential to change the conversation between charter operators and teachers. It is a signal that the anti-union atmosphere and climate we’ve seen in charters may be changing.”

Brian Harris, president of Chicago ACTS, said UNO’s position during the organizing effort sets a tone that should be followed by other charter school management companies. “UNO’s actions set forth a reasonable standard for other charter school operators to follow, and we expect them to follow similar law-abiding standards,” Harris said. “Instead of taking a hard, anti-union line, UNO has simply followed the law and shown confidence in its employees.”

Randi Weingarten
President of AFT

### ACTS-represented Schools
Learn more at www.chicagoacts.org

- **CICS Wrightwood Campus**
  8130 S. California Ave.

- **CICS Ralph Ellison**
  1817 W. 80th St.

- **CICS Northtown Academy**
  3900 W. Peterson Ave.

- **Chicago Talent Development CHS**
  4319 W. Washington Blvd.

- **Aspira Haugen Middle School**
  3729 W. Leland Ave.

- **Antonia Pantoja HS**
  3121 N. Pulaski Rd.

- **Early College HS**
  3986 W. Barry Ave.

- **Mirta Ramirez Computer Science HS**
  1711 N. California Ave.

- **Howard Area Leadership Academy**
  7647 N. Paulina Ave.

- **Latino Youth HS**
  2001 S. California Ave.

- **Rudy Lozano Leadership Academy**
  2570 S. Blue Island Ave.

- **Youth Connection Leadership Academy**
  3424 S. State St.

- **Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy**
  2520 S. Western Ave.

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Randi Weingarten
President of AFT
American CEO pay increased 15% in 2011 while worker wages dropped 2%  
(Department of Labor)

CEO-to-worker pay has increased 1,000% since 1950  
(Bloomberg)

1978-2011:  
CEO pay increased 725%; worker pay increased 5.7%  
(Economic Policy Institute)

America's Golden Age  
(for CEOs)

J.C. PENNY CEO RON JOHNSON MADE 1,795 TIMES THE AVERAGE WAGES AND BENEFITS OF A U.S. DEPARTMENT STORE WORKER  
THE COMPANY LAID OFF 43,000 WORKERS LAST YEAR YET FAILED TO MEET EARNINGS ESTIMATES AND SALES ARE DOWN 16.6%  
(BLOOMBERG)

WALMART CEO MIKE DUKE MAKES 1,034 TIMES MORE THAN THE AVERAGE WORKER  
(BLOOMBERG)

TARGET CEO GREGG STEINHAFEL MAKES 597 TIMES MORE THAN THE AVERAGE WORKER  
(BLOOMBERG)

FORTUNE 500 CEOs MAKE 354 TIMES MORE THAN THE AVERAGE WORKER  
(AFL-CIO)
Plumbers’ Coyne joins Executive Board

James F. Coyne, Business Manager of the Chicago Journeymen Plumbers, Local 130, U.A., recently joined the Chicago Federation of Labor Executive Board.

“We are proud to have Jim Coyne join the Executive Board of the Chicago Federation of Labor,” said CFL President Jorge Ramirez. “He is a dedicated trade unionist and the entire labor movement will benefit from his leadership and experience.”

Coyne has been a U.A. plumber for 35 years, joining Local 130 in 1976. He became a part-time officer in 1987 before going on to serve as Recording Secretary in 2000 and later Financial Secretary/Treasurer in 2002. In 2012 he was named Assistant Business Manager before his election as Business Manager.

Pharmacists union joins CFL

The National Pharmacists Association Local 1969 has joined the more than 320 affiliated unions of the Chicago Federation of Labor. The NPhA-USW represents more than 1,000 pharmacists at Walgreens locations across the Chicagoland area and northwest Indiana.

“We join the Chicago Federation of Labor and the other Chicagoland unions in labor’s fight for better working conditions for all union members in our communities,” said President Thomas Hanson. “With numbers there is strength and, together, we can have the unified voice for labor that we need.”

Chicago Federation of Labor President Jorge Ramirez welcomed the members of the NPhA to the central labor council.

“We look forward to representing the National Pharmacists Association and working with the hard working men and women they represent,” said CFL President Jorge Ramirez. “The issues they face are felt not only across the retail and health care environments but countless public and private sector industries as well. By building a broad, diverse labor movement, we can advocate effectively for all workers and the need for a strong middle class.”

Convention and tourism industry gets $1 billion boost

A major redevelopment of Navy Pier and land around McCormick Place announced last month will provide an enormous boost to Chicago’s convention and tourism industry and create thousands of jobs for working men and women.

The program will bring to bear nearly $640 million in new investments, which will combine with $470 million of recently announced investments and will become a $1.1 billion program that will create 10,000 construction jobs, 3,700 permanent jobs, and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic growth annually. The program initially features two major components: creation of a McCormick Place entertainment district, and the redevelopment of Navy Pier so the popular attraction will draw even more visitors and elevate it to a world-class destination.

“This is a major investment in our ability to be more competitive and attract new business, conventions and visitors to Chicago,” said Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) President Jorge Ramirez. “Not only will these projects help bring in more revenue for the city and region, but it will stimulate the economy and create thousands of jobs in both the short and long-term.”

A number of labor leaders serve on the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA), the body overseeing McCormick Place and Navy Pier, including Bob Reiter of the CFL, Ron Powell from Local 881 of the United Food and Commercial Workers and Becky Strzechowski of Teamsters Local 700. Jorge Ramirez serves on the Board of Directors of Navy Pier, Inc.

A major component of the McCormick Place entertainment district includes a 10,000-seat events center that will serve conventions and trade shows, will hold many public events and will be home to DePaul University men’s and women’s basketball teams. The district will also gain a new 1,200 room “headquarters hotel” for groups holding conventions and shows at McCormick Place.

The area will also benefit from a new Green Line station announced previously by the Chicago Transit Authority.

Navy Pier will undergo an extensive makeover of its public and commercial space as it nears its 100th anniversary. The pier is currently the most popular attraction in the Midwest and will benefit from the plan that includes expanding the Chicago Children’s Museum, creating additional dining and entertainment venues, and extensive improvement to the physical infrastructure to increase visitors.

“…it will stimulate the economy and create thousands of jobs in both the short and long-term.”

JORGE RAMIREZ
PRESIDENT OF CFL
Ramirez receives national competitiveness award

Chicago Federation of Labor President Jorge Ramirez was recently honored with the America Competes Award for Public Service from the national Council on Competitiveness. The Award for Public Service recognizes a leader who works diligently to create a lasting impact on America’s quality of life through public service and private sector outreach.

“I do not view this award as recognition for any single achievement, but as acknowledgement of the tremendous responsibility before us to make our country and its future stronger for all working people,” said Ramirez.

An award for corporate leadership was presented to ITW, a global industrial manufacturer and supplier.

President and CEO Debora Wince-Smith presented the awards and commended the recipients for their leadership on behalf of the country.

“Both of these outstanding honorees put a premium on United States competitiveness by demonstrating extraordinary dedication to the nation’s economic health by advancing the public dialogue on innovation and collaboration; issues that are pertinent to drive America’s long-term prosperity,” said Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO of the Council on Competitiveness. “We are pleased to honor these upstanding members of the Chicago community who have worked tirelessly in the effort to better America’s future.”

The Council on Competitiveness is a non-partisan and non-governmental organization. It is the only group of corporate CEOs, university presidents and labor leaders committed to the future prosperity of all Americans and enhanced U.S. competitiveness in the global economy.

Carol James: 2013 Woman of the Year

Carol James, the recently retired President of Laborers’ Local 1092, was presented with the Chicago Federation of Labor’s Woman of the Year Award for 2013 at the April delegates meeting.

“Carol James is the type of person every labor leader should aspire to be,” said President Jorge Ramirez. “Her organization and the labor movement are better off thanks to her service and we congratulate her on her well-deserved retirement.”

James began working full time for the union after graduating from Lewis University where she received a Bachelor’s degree in Social Justice. Over the years she rose through the ranks of Local 1092, the union representing public sector construction Laborers employed by the City of Chicago, serving in elected positions of Secretary-Treasurer, Business Manager and President. She was the first female Business Manager of the Laborers’ Great Lakes Region. She served on the steering committee of the Laborers’ International Minority Affairs Department and was elected Chair of the union’s Women’s Caucus.

James thanked all of her colleagues and mentors from the Laborers’ for showing her how to be a good leader. “I didn’t do anything special to deserve this honor,” she said. “I only did what I loved to do.”

James is the 32nd recipient of this annual award.
CFL Delegates Meetings

Tuesday, June 4 • Tuesday, October 1 • Tuesday, November 5

START TIME: 6:00pm WHERE: Chicago Plumbers Local 130 Hall
1340 W. Washington, Chicago

Delegates must present their current Chicago Federation of Labor membership card or this notice for admission. We look forward to full representation from your local union to assist the Federation in the development of its policies.

Robert G. Reiter, Jr.
Secretary-Treasurer

Take Action: Get breaking news and action alerts on your cell phone.

Text CHICAGO to 235246.
Text HELP for more info or STOP to end.
Message & data rates may apply.

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