



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
District Lodge 66
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Union Herald Article from the desk of:



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IAM National Staff Conference

I was assigned in August to attend the IAM National Staff Conference in New York. Most full time IAM staff were in attendance. Days were spent in conference discussing a variety of subjects. New York is a beautiful city, and I wish I could have seen some more of it, but alas, I was there for work, not play.

New Laws for NLRB and Organizing

One of the things discussed at the Staff Conference was the new NLRB rules regarding organizing. In an organizing campaign, the time from filing to represent with the National Labor Relations Board and the time an election took place was as long as 45 days, sometimes longer. This time period allowed companies to constantly bombard their employees as captive audiences with anti-union propaganda in hopes for a no vote.

With these new rules, everything is more streamlined. The average time from filing to election is around 20 days. Although in my opinion this is still too long of a time frame, it is much better than the former rules.

IAM Endorses Hillary Clinton

Also at the Staff Conference, the IAM has elected to endorse Hillary Clinton for the next President of the United States of America. The vote was a unanimous one.

This decision was a tough one, but was done based on voting records amongst all the current candidates Democrat or Republican (What is it, 20 now?). I know a lot of those that read this paper are in support of the other prominent Democratic Candidate, but his voting record hasn't supported us on issues such as the Import/Export Bank, and several other votes that have had a direct negative effect on Machinist jobs.

"The IAM will not sit on the sidelines while this fight is so clearly underway," said IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger. "Hillary Clinton has been a strong supporter of this union for years and she is now the target of unprecedented attacks, financed on a scale never seen before. The time to help is when help is needed most, and we intend to do just that."

"Our members understand what's at stake in this election; the right to vote, the right to join a union and the right to retire with dignity," said Buffenbarger. "But it's more than just civil rights and labor rights at risk. The evaporation of economic opportunity is a rank obscenity compared to the alarming and growing concentration of wealth in America. It's time for an economy and a president who works for more than just the wealthiest among us."

In the IAM's internal poll of nearly 2,000 members, Clinton outpaced the entire field of 20 candidates by more than 2-1. Among Democratic members polled, the results were more dramatic, with Clinton leading her closest rival, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, by more than 6-1. IAM members also favored early involvement in the election campaign by more than 2-1. The poll's results were also affirmed in a separate independent poll.

"Hillary Clinton's long record of supporting workers' rights stands in stark contrast to her Republican rivals, who seek to ban unions, silence workers, eliminate sensible regulations and give corporations total control over working conditions," said Buffenbarger. "The question should not be why are we endorsing Hillary Clinton now, but rather, what took us so long?"

Since this endorsement, I have been asked quite a few questions about what it means to "endorse" a candidate. As you all know, no union can give a political candidate any campaign funding. It is not legal. Any money raised for a given candidate cannot come from dues of members. Funding can go to the candidate only if that money is donated. An endorsement is a vote of confidence. It is a commitment to that candidate to help in any way we can to further their campaign.

Ron Kind Listening Session

Ron Kind was in LaCrosse this month. I had the opportunity to attend one of his “Listening Sessions” at the LaCrosse Public Library on September 2. If you catch one of these sessions it is worth going to. It gives the general public an opportunity to bring up issues that are true to them in their own congressional district. Whether or not you agree with the way a Senator, or Congressman votes or takes a stance on a particular issue, your voice is important.

These public servants get a lot of time in DC listening to lobbyists who do nothing but talk to legislators about their key issues. Most of these lobbyists aren’t from their home state, or district. Hearing from their own constituents is always welcome as time allows in DC, and especially at home.

Topics brought up ranged from Veterans issues, to TPP, to Import/Export Bank, to Local Issues.

Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch Tours Chart Energy

On September 3, Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch came to Chart Energy. She had been there before when the new addition was opened in the plant. This time she came through to have a tour, talk to the management team, and hold a press conference. The Lieutenant Governor is going to Japan to promote trade with the businesses in Wisconsin.

I appreciate the message she was touting, and trade to outside the US is important, but is difficult to forget that this is the party that has promoted Right to Work, and Act 10 here in Wisconsin. These acts have done damage to the unions here in LaCrosse, and around the state. Not only has the damage been done to the Unions here in Wisconsin, but damage is done to those that are not in Unions.

Right to work states have lower wages and incomes. Average workers in states with Right to Work (for less) laws make 12.2% less than those in non Right to work states. They are also less likely to have Job based Health Insurance. There are higher poverty rates in those states. There is less of an investment in Education (we already see this here in Wisconsin).

Her message was a good one here in LaCrosse this month, but we cannot forget what her party has done to this state, and the impact it will have in the long term. We must act with our pens. Remember all these things that were done when it comes time to be in the voting booth.

Labor Day 2015

Once again Labor Day was a success here in LaCrosse. We participated in the parade, and Labor Fest was a good time filled with games, and good food.

I would like to thank those that helped out to make the day a success. Brad King for providing the truck to pull the DL66 Float, Carla Easterday for all her help in preparation (folding and sorting our shirts, and making signs, and more), and my fiancé Tasha Kuchar for her help that day, and all the other assistance she gives me throughout the year (way too much to list here). Things went very smooth that day because of those three people, and all else who helped (too many to list here).

On that note, we do have some extra shirts here at the District that are available for sale at a cost of just \$12. We got a lot of complements this year on the color and design of these shirts. Get one now before they are gone!

District Lodge 66

Our Delegates had a meeting on August 17, 2015 to do the regular business of the district. They received a thank you from Kylie Bluske on her scholarship award. A motion was made and seconded and passed to make a monetary donation to the Western Wisconsin AFL-CIO's Community Fund. This fund helps with funding things like the Worker's Memorial Day, and the Labor Day Parade. They also motioned to purchase pocket planners for 2016 for Local Lodge Officers throughout the district.