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# Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

## Put a Union Label on It: Elected Leaders from the New Jersey State AFL-CIO

New Jersey State AFL-CIO is putting a union label on lawmakers at every level of government in the Garden State. With representatives elected to state, county and local governing bodies, grassroots union leaders are promoting a progressive, working families legislative agenda.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO put forward 42 candidates for office the November election and of those, 32 were successful in their bids, a 78 percent success rate.

By far this year's biggest win came with the election of IBEW Local 351 Assistant Business Manager Donald Norcross to Congress. A longtime labor activist from South Jersey, Norcross won with nearly 60 percent of the vote.

Norcross started his career as an electrician in the early 1980s, going on to serve as business agent and then assistant business manager of Local 351. He also served as president of the South Jersey Central Labor Council. In 2010, Norcross was elected to the state legislature.

He is one of 815 labor candidates the New Jersey State AFL-CIO has recruited, trained, endorsed and seen elected to local, state and federal offices since it began its Labor Candidates program 18 years ago.

"We started this program because we found that no matter who was in office — Democrats or Republicans — they weren't

New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanek and Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan appear at an Election Day rally with Donald Norcross, New Jersey's newly elected 1st District Congressional representative.

*Continued on page 4* ▶

## Workers' Issues Fare Well in Mid-Term Elections Despite Democratic Defeats

### Minimum Wage

Although Democrats took a shellacking in the November 4, mid-term elections, many workers' issues fared well. Voters in four red states approved ballot initiatives to raise their state minimum wages, sending the message that Americans support higher wages.

Arkansas, Nebraska, Alaska and South Dakota all had initiatives on the ballot to raise wages for America's lowest paid workers. San Francisco, which boasted one of the highest minimum wages in the country already, also opted to increase its minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour by 2018. Sixty-six percent of voters in Illinois supported a non-binding resolution to raise the minimum wage to \$10.00 by next year.

In Arkansas, voters approved the initiative by a 65 to 35 margin, raising the minimum wage to \$8.50 per hour by 2017. Nebraska approved their initiative raising the minimum wage to \$9.00 by 2016.

Sixty-nine percent of voters in Alaska agreed that their minimum wage should

increase to \$9.75 per hour by 2016, and then tie it to inflation so that it rises with the cost of living. Next year, minimum wage workers in South Dakota will see their wages increase to \$8.50, also indexed to inflation.

### Paid Sick Leave

A ballot initiative in Massachusetts giving workers paid sick leave passed. The initiatives guarantee workers in companies with more than 10 employees one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked. Workers will be able to earn up to five paid sick days a year. Employees working at companies with fewer than 10 workers will be eligible for unpaid sick days.

Trenton and Montclair, New Jersey, passed similar measures with Trenton legislating five paid sick days for companies with 10 or more employees and three paid days for workers in smaller companies.

Oakland, Calif, went a little further, guaranteeing workers in companies with more than 10 employees could be eligible to earn up to nine sick days and year, and,

*Continued on page 3* ▶





# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## How will you keep your New Year's resolution?

### Did you resolve to lose weight or get fit this year?

Union Plus, established by the AFL-CIO to provide consumer benefits to members and retirees of participating labor unions, has negotiated health club discounts through GlobalFit.

#### The Union Plus Health Club Discount offers:

- Lowest Price Guarantee: If a health club offers you a lower fee, GlobalFit will beat it by 5%.
- Real savings: Union families save an average of nearly \$200 a year or \$16 a month.
- Choose from 10,000 gyms: Including 24 Hour Fitness, Curves and Anytime Fitness.
- Flexibility: Transfer to another network gym, visit other gyms when traveling, and freeze your membership.
- Best prices on name-brand at home fitness products like Total Gym, The Mediterranean Wellness Program and Zumba DVDs.
- Get discounted rates & find participating gyms: Find a gym at <https://www.globalfit.com/unionplus/index.asp> or call 1-800-294-1500.

#### Other program benefits

- Free guest passes - check out a health club before joining or use health clubs in other cities when traveling.
- Transfer membership between participating health clubs for a \$10 transfer fee.
- Freeze\* your fitness club membership up to 2 months.

\*For transfer, freeze and travel options, some restrictions apply at select gyms & chains. For special union family rates, you must enroll directly through GlobalFit <https://www.globalfit.com/unionplus/index.asp>.

#### Other healthy living programs

- Online exercise & nutrition programs.
- Health Coaching.
- Smoking Cessation.

## Maybe you vowed to set aside more time for yourself or to spend more time with your family.

Everyone is busy these days, it's true. But the beginning of the year is a great time to plan a family vacation, a weekend get away or maybe just take a day trip with your loved ones.

You can plan your trip using these union friendly products and services:

- Union members can save up to 25% on car rentals through **Union Plus Travel Center**. As well as discounted rentals, Union Plus has negotiated discounts at over 50 theme parks, sporting events, theater, movies, restaurants, worldwide vacation tours and more.

- Find a union hotel using the **UNITE HERE union hotel app**. This hotel guide lists hotels in the United States and Canada where workers are represented by UNITE HERE. Hotels on strike or under boycott are also listed. By downloading this app, you can stay at union hotels and stand up for union values. Download the app at by visiting <http://www.unionhotelguide.org>

- **AFSCME** represents thousands of municipal workers at city and state parks and zoos. U.S. Interior Department workers who staff federal parks and monuments are also union members (**NFFE**, an affiliate

of the IAM). **AFGE** represents many employees who build exhibits, conduct research and maintain the world-renowned Smithsonian Institute Museum in Washington, DC.

- Most major U.S. airlines (with the exception of Jet Blue and Delta) are union front to back. Continental has union pilots, but other elements of the line are non-union. Amtrak passenger service is all union. Greyhound buses are operated and maintained by members of **Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU)**, which also represents the operators, drivers and support workers for the Metro (Washington, DC) transit system.

# WALK IN MY SHOES

## Norm Stachulski, Labor Organizer

COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA  
PRINTING PUBLISHING MEDIA SECTOR



**A**fter leaving my job in 2007 to focus on my schooling, I quickly realized I needed something part-time to help with bills. What I didn't realize was this would change my life for the better. I took a job as a mid-nights janitor at a local elementary school. This particular company happened to be union. I loved this fact, it was a new world to me and after a few months I became a union steward. Learning my contract and being involved was fun, I helped people and was able to see my work immediately. After a few years, I was voted the local vice

president and loved every second of it. The highlight of this was speaking in front of thousands on my state capitol building stairs on behalf of my local. I knew I wanted to be able to help more people, I just had to figure out how.

I found out the CWA was looking for organizers, and with my fresh new ideas and people skills I felt like I would be a good fit. After a great O.I. training and interview, I was lucky enough to be picked to organize the Michigan and Ohio area. After my second year, our sector was up in members for the first time in 10 years.

This felt great. We are on a roll. We are helping rebuild the union community, and giving the people back their voices.

Fighting for better worker's rights, equal pay for women, and overall the ability to make a decent living is what I love to do. There are always bumps along the way, but the support we all give to each other is what drives me. Seeing the happy faces on people when they receive their new contract makes everything worth it.

I love my union brothers and sisters, and I love my job. ■

## Spotlight the Label Allied Printing Trades Council

### Printing Sector Bug

To the right of the bug is the shop number which is assigned when the shop is organized.



City and State listed here



**L**ook for and ask for the International Allied Printing Trades Council label—the familiar “bug”—on all printed material.

The bug is your assurance of quality and craftsmanship. The bug also guarantees that the men and women who work on your printed materials receive decent wages and benefits in plants that practice responsible labor-management relations. The label must include the city name and number identifying the

exact union printing plant where the work was produced.

The Allied Printing Trades Council is made up of the Printing, Publishing, and Media Workers Sector (PPMWS) of the Communications Workers of America and the Graphic Communications Conference (GCC) a division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Both the GCC and the PPMWS have distinct labels identifying the shop at which the materials were printed. ■

### WORKERS' ISSUES FARE WELL, *Continued from page 1*

in smaller companies, up to five. California had passed a statewide sick leave law in September, but that only guaranteed workers three days of paid sick leave a year.

#### Right to Work

Voters in Anchorage, Alaska, defeated AO-37, which would have introduced “right-to-work” measures in the city and prevented collective bargaining for city employees.

#### Equal Rights

Oregon voters approved Measure 89, “Equality Rights Amendment.” The passage means that the Oregon Constitution will have a new section stating, “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the State of Oregon or by any political subdivision in this state on account of sex.” More than 20 other states have equal rights amendments in their constitutions.

It should be noted that only 36.4 percent of eligible voters turned out to vote during the midterm elections, the lowest turnout in 72 years. The last time voter turnout was this low during the midterm election was 1942, when only 33.9 percent of eligible voters cast ballots. In 1942, the nation had just entered World War II.

*What's our excuse?* ■



**PUT A UNION LABEL ON IT**, *Continued from page 1*

always attuned to issues affecting working families,” said New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charlie Wowkanech. “We needed to advance our progressive legislative agenda, and we weren’t getting anywhere with traditional methods.”

Wowkanech saw in the makeup of state’s government that a majority of office-

holders were lawyers or business executives, “not elected officials who would always prioritize the issues facing working men and women,” said Wowkanech. “It’s important to bring that perspective to governing, on behalf of New Jersey’s working families.”

So Wowkanech and the New Jersey

our labor candidates program has been.”

The Federation doesn’t throw their young candidates into elections without guidance. They developed a labor candidates’ training school that teaches their future leaders the nuances of running for office and made the training a prerequisite for endorsement, boots-on-the-ground help and funding. The training school teaches candidates how to deal with social media, television and communications, and is free to the candidates.

A significant part of the success of their program also can be attributed to common sense. For example, if a seat needs 33,000 votes to win and the area has 31,000 union members, the federation will support a candidate there. That way, the Federation allocates resources responsibly.

“This has been a very rewarding experiment for us,” Wowkanech said. “The Senate President is an Ironworker. We’ve got Brother Norcross in Congress. The chair of the Assembly Labor Committee is an IBEW member. We’ve got members at every level of government.”

The results have been tangible, said Wowkanech. Successful labor-supported candidates have gone on to sponsor living wage legislation and a first-in-the-nation Project Labor Agreement law. They’ve supported a bill tying minimum wage increases to the inflation rate. They passed a law allowing the card check method of organizing for public sector workers. They passed paid family leave legislation and they are sponsoring a Buy American bill. ■

*“We have one million union members ... We knew if we could help them get elected to office, we would gain seats at the table.”*



New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech and Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Brennan get ready to cut a cake with Bonnie Watson Coleman, New Jersey’s newly elected 12th District Congressional representative, at a state AFL-CIO-sponsored event in her honor before the election.

State AFL-CIO Executive Board decided to try something new.

“We have one million union members,” said Wowkanech. “Many of our members are as smart as those serving in the legislature. We knew if we could help them get elected to office, we would gain seats at the table.”

The federation uses a simple formula: Assess the geographic districts, determine where significant numbers of union members live and support candidates in areas where the chances of Election Day victories are favorable.

Wowkanech likened the program to setting up a farm team in baseball. The state AFL-CIO supports members for local offices – mayors, school boards, committees – helps them gain experience, and helps them move up the political ladder. This is the first year a New Jersey State AFL-CIO-endorsed labor candidate has been elected to Congress.

“The election of our union brother, Donald Norcross, to Congress made history for us,” said Wowkanech. “It shows how successful

**NEW JERSEY'S UNION CANDIDATES ELECTED IN 2014**

Name	Union	Elected Position
Donald Norcross	IBEW Local 351 Assistant Business Manager	US House
John Carmen	UBC 255	Freeholder, Atlantic
Leonard Luciano	AFT 481	Freeholder, Essex
Wayne Richardson	LIUNA 55	Freeholder, Essex
Gerry Balmir	LIUNA 472	Freeholder, Hudson
Carol Barrett	AFSCME 3440	Freeholder, Middlesex
Dale Cross	IBEW 94	Freeholder, Salem
Joseph Ripa	ATU 880	County Clerk, Camden
Bert Steinmann	IBEW 269	Mayor, Ewing
Domenick Stampone	AFT 2375	Mayor, Haledon
Keith Kazmark	AFT 14-015	Mayor, Woodland Park
Vince Sera	AFSCME 71	Council, Brigantine
Greg McAvaddy*	IBEW 351	Council, Buena Borough
Daniel O'Connell	UTU	Council, Delran
Michael Martorelli*	IUOE 68	Council, East Hanover
Michele Liebttag*	CWA 1036	Council, Frenchtown Borough

Name	Union	Elected Position
Kevin Egan*	IBEW 456	Council, New Brunswick
Gina Ragomo-Tait	IBEW 827	Council, Palmyra
Keith Misciagna	IBEW 164	Council, Park Ridge
Kirk Gerety	BAC 2	Council, Somers Point
Lauren Kremper	CWA 1038	Committee, Edgewater Park
Don Krevetski	UBC 715	Committee, Franklin Township
Jason Allen*	CWA 1036	Committee, Pemberton Township
John Hall	USW 943	Committee, Woodstown
Kevin Bucceroni*	AWIU 14	School Board, Black Horse Regional
Michael Heller	AFT 1904	School Board, Bloomfield
Matthew Walker	IUOE 825	School Board, Buena Regional
Mario Christina*	Roofers 30	School Board, Delsea Reg. High School
Howard Miller	IBEW 30	School Board, Laurel Springs
Ken Carman	IBEW 351	School Board, Sterling Regional
James Johnson	OPEIU 32	School Board, Wall
Christopher Hamler	UA 24	School Board, Warren Hills Reg.

\*Incumbent

# Denver's Immigrant Taxi Drivers Build Unionized Workers Co-op

Reprinted with permission from LaborNotes.org | By Minsun Ji

This month 800 immigrant taxi drivers in Denver—from 24 different countries in Africa—joined the Communications Workers (CWA) Local 7777. They hope to break out of poverty and challenge the workplace abuse many endure working for private taxi companies.

The drivers also voted to build a worker-owned taxi cooperative, as an alternative to the existing companies. The local union movement is supporting the effort.

Due to precarious relationships with their employers, taxi workers have been building similar organizations around the country. In Washington, D.C., and Seattle, drivers have joined Teamsters locals; in Boston, the Steelworkers.

In New York City, taxi workers formed an independent group, which has carried out two successful strikes, started chapters in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, and become an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. And like Denver, Portland, Oregon, has a CWA-affiliated taxi worker co-op.

## NOTORIOUS MONOPOLY

Three private taxi companies—Metro, Yellow, and Freedom Cab—have cornered the market in Denver for decades and are notorious for their abuses. Despite the recent emergence of new taxi companies that have tried to break the monopoly, drivers in these three companies are subject to high leasing fees, ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,500 a month.

As independent contractors, moreover, taxi drivers have to cover their own health insurance and benefits, and receive no time off from daily leasing fees. Although legally drivers are not allowed to work more than 10 hours a day, a Metro worker noted that many do work more, just to cover the fees and gas for their vehicles.

A Metro Taxi worker, for instance, owes the company \$127 every day for vehicle leasing—even when the worker is too sick to drive. “The moment we ignite our car in the morning, we owe the company money,” explains Abdi Buni, a leader of Denver’s taxi union efforts.



Whenever a driver protests the fees, “they will just take your car key and you get fired on the spot,” one said at a recent meeting.

It’s hard to organize a union that can negotiate with private taxi companies like Metro. CWA 7777 organized 90 SuperShuttle Denver workers into a union in October 2011, but they haven’t got a first contract yet. The company has used various tactics to delay negotiations—in the meantime cutting worker’s wages by 30 percent. The Labor Board just ordered the company back to negotiations.

No private Denver taxi company has agreed to negotiate with its drivers, whether they join a union or not.

## UNION TAXI CO-OP

In response to the companies’ exploitation, drivers decided to create an independent taxi worker cooperative, Union Taxi—and to join a union as well.

CWA has been supporting workers with protest logistics, lobbying, and coalition-building. The union doesn’t run the co-op, though.

Workers make the business decisions. The vehicle leasing fees they pay are around one-third as high as the ones at the for-profit taxi companies.

Union Taxi’s success did not come easy. It only received licensing approval from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in 2009 after three years of protests and lobbying, against vigorous resistance from the existing companies.

Since then, the company has not been allowed to grow to accommodate the numbers of workers who are interested.

The taxi business is regarded as a protected public service, so the PUC restricts the number of licenses a taxi

business can grant to drivers, to protect existing businesses.

It only granted Union Taxi 262 licenses—while the competing Metro Taxi has 492 licenses, and Yellow has 300.

## ANOTHER CO-OP

This year, workers who wished to leave their traditional companies decided to form a second unionized taxi company in Denver. Within a month of first proposing the co-op idea among themselves, 811 taxi drivers had joined CWA 7777.

“It was our dream to be part of Union Taxi, because leasing fees are only \$800 a month, not \$800 every week to private owners,” said a Metro Taxi worker who wished only to be identified as J.

“The moment that I heard that Union Taxi was a worker-owned cooperative and a labor union with CWA 7777, that was it,” said J. “I wanted to join a worker cooperative because we have an equal voice, and I wanted a union because the labor union will give us more power.”

On October 25 they elected leaders to set up the new cooperative.

Workers will each give an initial investment of \$500 to show their commitment. Next steps will include deciding on the name of the company and crafting governance documents.

It will undoubtedly be difficult to receive state approval for 800 new taxi licenses. But these workers are enthusiastic and committed to a long struggle to build their unionized taxi cooperative. ■

*Minsun Ji founded the Centro Humanitario para los Trabajadores in Denver, which organizes immigrant day laborers and domestic workers.*

# USW Files New Trade Case Against China



## How to Buy Union-Made Tires

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has made it very easy to find union-made tires by requiring that each tire carry a code that shows the company and the location of the plant that manufactured the tire. DOT requires that each tire sold in the United States carry a code that looks something like this: **DOT BE XX XXX XXX**. The two letters or numbers that follow the DOT identify a particular factory as listed below.

- **BE:** B.F. Goodrich, Tuscaloosa, Ala.
- **BF:** B.F. Goodrich, Woodburn, Ind.
- **VE, YE, YU, 8B:** Bridgestone/Firestone, Des Moines, Iowa
- **D2, E3, W1, Y7:** Bridgestone/Firestone, La Vergne, Tenn.
- **2C, 4D, 5D:** Bridgestone/Firestone, Morrison, Tenn.
- **UP:** Cooper, Findlay, Ohio
- **UT:** Cooper, Texarkana, Ark.
- **JU, PC, UK:** Goodyear, Medicine Hat, Alberta
- **JJ, MD, PU:** Goodyear, Gadsden, Ala.
- **DA:** Dunlop, Buffalo, N.Y.
- **JN, MJ, PY:** Goodyear, Topeka, Kan.
- **JE, MC, PT:** Goodyear, Danville, Va.
- **JF, MM, PJ:** Kelly-Springfield, Fayetteville, N.C.
- **CF:** Titan Tire, Des Moines
- **JH, MN, PK:** Titan Tire, Freeport, Ill.
- **B plus serial #:** Titan Tire, Bryan, Ohio
- **CC:** Yokohama Tire, Salem, Va.

In 2009, the United Steel Workers (USW) successfully lobbied for a tariff on Chinese tires, due to an unprecedented surge of Chinese tires under Section 421 of the Trade Act of 1974. Section 421 authorizes the President to impose safeguards—temporary measures such as import surcharges or quotas on Chinese goods—if domestic market disruption is found. That relief expired in 2012.

Earlier this year, the USW filed a new trade case against unfairly traded Chinese passenger and light truck tires.

“Unfairly priced imports of tires from China have resumed flooding the U.S. market,” said USW International President Leo Gerard. “Domestic tire producers have been rapidly losing market share over the last two years. Domestic shipments have been undercut by skyrocketing import growth from China, and while our economy recovers, domestic producers and their workers have not adequately shared in the benefits.”

The USW contends that without intervention by the Administration, U.S. tire producers may lose another 10 million tire shipments to Chinese imports.

Now, in addition to the legally imported tires flooding the market, Consumer Reports warns that counterfeit tires are being sold in the U.S.

After testing three Chinese tire brands for its September 2014 edition of Consumer Reports, the publication warned consumers against purchasing low-priced Chinese tire brands. Author Gene Petersen warned consumers that purchasing “off-brand” Chinese manufactured tires might seem like a bargain but “buying bargain-priced tires such as these Chinese models isn’t the right choice for the long haul.”

Once the article was published, American Pacific Industries, the U.S. manufacturer of Pegasus brand tires—one of the three Chinese manufactured brands tested—contacted the magazine and claimed the tires the publication had tested were “gray market”—produced or sold by a factory and vendor that were not authorized to make or distribute them.

Federal law requires that date codes be stamped in the sidewall of the tire. From that code you can determine where the tires were built and when. Consumer Reports tested tires, E3 3512, 3612, and 5012 indicating the tires were built at the Yellow Sea tire factory in Qingdao, Shandong, China, in August and December 2012. However, company executives say that API ended its relationship with that factory in December 2011. API representatives also claim that many of the company’s molds used for manufacturing disappeared when the contract was terminated. ■





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TIME VALUE

## In This Issue...

Workers Issues Fare Well . . . . .	1
IBEW Local 351 . . . . .	1
Happy New Year Do Buy . . . . .	2
Walk in my shoes . . . . .	3
Spotlight the label . . . . .	3
Denver's Immigrant Taxi Drivers . . . . .	5
Consumer Reports Warns . . . . .	6
AFL-CIO Official Boycotts . . . . .	7

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# EndNotes

By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*



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Union Label & Service Trades Dept., AFL-CIO  
815 16th St. N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006

[www.unionlabel.org](http://www.unionlabel.org)

E-mail: [ULSTD@unionlabel.org](mailto:ULSTD@unionlabel.org)

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**RICH KLINE**, President and Editor • **TIM TUTTLE**, Secretary-Treasurer

**VICE PRESIDENTS:** Ron Piksa, James B. Wood, George Galis, Jane Broendel, Bruce R. Smith, Otis Ducker, Joe Sellers, Robert Roach, Mike Linderer, Lorretta Johnson, Patrick Kellert, Salvatore J. Chilia, Annie Hill, Steve Bertelli, Roy Houseman, Thomas Miller.

## THE TPP IS BACK

The Trans Pacific Partnership is back. President Obama is pitching it in China, yes, China. He wants to get approval abroad and then sell the goods here at home to the newly powerful Republicans in Congress.



What's kind of odd is that China is not included in the trade pact group. In fact, China has been excluded to build US bonds with other Asian nations and to counter Chinese expansion. But maybe that plan was "yesterday." Who knows?

The TPP nations currently include the United States and Pacific rim nations like Vietnam, Brunei Darussaleem and Peru. Yes, that's right, US workers will be competing with workers in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Sharia-law adjudicated Brunei, and Peru with its 25 percent poverty rate.

Other TPP nations are Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand and Singapore. You can just about see the container ships loading US jobs to take home after they offload goods and services in the US.

"This has the potential for being an historic agreement," President Obama has said. Of course, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was historic, too. That one ended with a bang.

The President and his political adversaries in Congress don't appear to agree about much, but they both seem favorable to trade agreements that benefit corporations and financial institutions. So maybe TPP and other trade pacts will bring about a limited rapprochement, a NAFTA-flavored kumbaya, between the White House and the Congressional majority.

How this will benefit working people is debatable, but there's no debate, because the TPP's terms are a secret. It's a secret from the public, and Congress, but not

from the corporate interests that have been influencing it.

The White House figures to sell TPP to the American people when it's already a done deal. It would be a shame if that happens without objection from other Democrats who are still viewed by the public as more in touch with the common person's needs.

## LAME DUCK CONGRESS WILL NOT FAST TRACK THE TPP

We've stopped fast track, for now. But, fast track is being pushed by some very powerful corporate interests. There's no doubt they're going to try again—if not this year, then with the new Congress in 2015. With your help, we stopped them a year ago, and we've stopped them now. If you haven't already, go to the AFL-CIO's NoFastTrack.com and sign the petition. Tell them how bad trade deals have affected you. And read other workers' stories. ■