

METALETTER

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Metal Trades Coalition Endorses Change for DOD Workforce, Not Destruction

The 30-plus unions of the United DOD Workers Coalition “believe that constructive change in the

inference and the implication” of the DOD campaign to paint labor’s opposition to the specific plan as



Ray Crowell, Page One Photography

Metal Trades Department President, Ron Ault testified April 12, before the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and Agency Organization of the House Committee on Government Reform on the perils of NSPS.

worksite is long overdue,” declared Metal Trades President Ron Ault in his testimony before the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and Agency Organization of the House Committee on Government Reform.

Workers join unions “because they want to see change and they expect us to help them implement it,” Ault said. That’s why the unions of the coalition resent “the

obstructionist, he said.

Ault went on to say that while unions want a more open, objective workplace that helps workers perform effectively, and to remove prejudice and ambiguity from the workplace, NSPS runs contrary to those objectives.

The union testimony cited examples of union innovations

Union Building Is Topic for MTD’s 2005 Conference

October 26-27, Las Vegas

Delegates to the 2005 Annual Metal Trades Conference will focus on union building — organizing unorganized units, strengthening the organized — October 26 and 27, 2005 at Bally’s Paris Hotel in Las Vegas.

Speakers will deal with a range of issues — including an update on the National Security Personnel System, base closures, the future of U.S. shipbuilding, developments in nuclear energy and job safety under the general theme of building the union.

“Metal Trades councils confront the most difficult challenges in our recent history — to counteract the anti-union policies of federal and private employers. The only way we can prevail is to strengthen our units, broaden our representation and become more effective. Business as usual simply will not cut it,” declared Metal Trades Department President Ron Ault.

The Department has issued its initial call to constituent councils and invitations to international presidents of affiliated unions. Ault said the Department is shaping the agenda and talking to prospective speakers. More details will follow.

Continued on page 4

Where Is the Outrage?

American workers have had their rights systematically stripped by elected politicians. We are no longer paid overtime after working more than eight hours in a workday. Up to six million American workers have had their overtime taken from them. Millions of good jobs that support a middle-class lifestyle and provide basic benefits, such as health care and retirement, have been shipped overseas. The employers that sent those jobs out of the country reap the profits of cut-rate wages and government policies that favor their actions.

Polluters are writing the nation's environmental policies. Drug companies, along with oil and energy corporations, have perverted our political system, buying votes in Congress and exercising virtual control over the federal agencies that should be protecting the interests of American citizens, not the corporations.

In late April, the Department of Defense and the Office of Personnel Management began the statutory "meet and confer" process under these new personnel rules that will eliminate basic workplace protections for three-quarters of a million

American civilian workers—and serve as a template for the balance of federal agencies. Entitled the National Security Personnel System, or NSPS, it was enacted by a disinterested Congress—the same Congress that failed to defend the eight hour day and overtime; the same Congress that ignores the export of middle class jobs.

I am reminded that Congress has a long and shameful history of enacting horrible laws and heaping injustice on those it is supposed to represent. Slavery was once legal. Racial inequality was once the law of the land. Women were once denied the vote.

We could blame those who are exploiting the opportunities that Congress has provided. The people of the Bush Administration who planned and wrote these unjust laws are certainly not our friends. But, as the old country song says, "you knew I was a snake when you let me in." No, the real blame lies with Congress—men and women we elect to represent our interest who, once elected, turn their back on us and sell their votes to the highest bidders. We share that blame when we fail to stand up and protest injustice. We share that blame when we follow the Judas goat into the slaughter house.

Recommended Internet browsing for Metal Trades Affiliates:

- www.metaltrades.org
- www.uniteddodworkerscoalition
- www.aficio.org
- www.americanshipbuilding.com

Support Dow Workers In Argentina; Urge Company to Negotiate Acceptable Pact

Argentine union employees at the Dow Chemical Bahia Blanca City facility near Buenos Aires, Argentina need help from U.S. trade unionists. Julio A. Leguizamon, general delegate of the Chemist and Petrochemist Union, in a note to the Metal Trades Department, charges that the company initially refused to recognize the Argentine union and refused to negotiate to renew an agreement which expired in 2002. After three years, Leguizamon says, the company did agree to discussions with the union, but has stubbornly refused to negotiate a final agreement.

The Argentine union has launched a mobilization campaign to counteract the all-too-familiar anti-union tactics Dow seems to use worldwide. Leguizamon has asked union members to write to Dow Argentina's President Oscar Vignart:

Quimica Argentina, SA
Av. E. Madero
900- 7 Piso
C1106ACV,
Buenos Aires, SA
Or, via Fax:
54-114319-0381

Are Your Lawmakers On Board With the Shipbuilding Caucus?

The American Shipbuilding Association reports that the following members of the House of Representatives have joined the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus. The caucus is made up of lawmakers who share concerns over the erosion of America's shipbuilding infrastructure. They include:

Jo Ann Davis (R-VA)
Gene Taylor (D-MS)
Gary Ackerman (D-NY)
Todd Akin (R-MO)
Rodney Alexander (R-LA)
Tom Allen (D-ME)
Richard Baker (R-LA)
Henry Bonilla (R-TX)
Jo Bonner (R-AL)
Allen Boyd (D-FL)
Jeb Bradley (R-NH)
Robert Bady (D-PA)
Henry Brown (R-SC)
Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
G.K. Butterfield (D-NC)
Eric Cantor (R-VA)
Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
Duke Cunningham (R-CA)
Susan Davis (D-CA)
Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)
Thelma Drake (R-VA)
Anna Eshoo (D-CA)
Bob Filner (D-CA)
Randy Forbes (R-VA)
Trent Franks (R-AZ)
Virgil Goode (R-VA)
Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)
Bart Gordon (D-TN)
Gene Green (D-TX)
Mark Green (R-WI)
Robin Hayes (R-NC)

Maurice Hinchey (R-NY)
David Hobson (R-OH)
Steve Israel (D-NY)
Darrell Issa (R-CA)
William Jefferson (D-LA)
Walter Jones (R-NC)
Patrick Kennedy (D-RI)
Jim Langevin (D-RI)
Rick Larsen (D-WA)
John Larson (D-CT)
Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ)
Stephen Lynch (D-MA)
Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI)
James McGovern (D-MA)
Mike McIntyre (D-NC)
Charlie Melancon (D-LA)

Mike Michaud (D-ME)
Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-CA)
Candice Miller (R-MI)
Chip Pickering (R-MS)
Todd Platts (R-PA)
Mike Ross (D-AR)
Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD)
John Schwarz (R-MI)
Bobby Scott (D-VA)
Rob Simmons (R-CT)
Chris Smith (R-NJ)
Bennie Thompson (D-MS)
Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH)
Roger Wicker (R-MS)
Joe Wilson (R-SC)

China Plans to Dominate Global Shipbuilding

In 1990, China had virtually no shipbuilding. Today, it holds 14 percent of the global market and plans to expand that capacity considerably. According to the American Shipbuilding Association, China's healthy hold on the commercial niche gives it a cushion to spend on military hardware, including ships.

China has launched an ambitious shipbuilding program with a new class of ballistic missile submarines which will outnumber the U.S. sub fleet by 2010. According to the U.S. China Commission, China will have more submarines than the U.S. within five years and more military vessels than the U.S. fleet by 2015.



Ault Testimony: 'Pay for Performance' a Sham

Continued from page 1

and accomplishments that have advanced national security during crises—including:

- Assistance in organizing volunteer teams to make repairs to the USS Cole after she was nearly sunk in a terrorist attack and repairs to the submarine, the USS San Francisco, following an undersea accident that crippled the vessel, killed one sailor and injured more than a dozen others.
- Initiatives by the Metal Trades Department to minimize work rules under a cross-training program negotiated between former MTD President John Meese and Admiral Tom Porter.
- A special apprenticeship program negotiated between the Navy and the Metal Trades Department to deal with lagging numbers of skilled ship repair personnel at federal shipyards.

Ault stressed the Department's objections to NSPS are based on principle, arguing that employee performance depends upon training and morale "buttressed by a strong belief in management that operates on objective, transparent and fair rules." He said neither the substance of the NSPS rules, nor the process under which they were developed "qualifies as fair or transparent."

He charged that "pay for performance" is a sham which will pit employees against each other and limit cooperation. He accused DOD of "outright misrepresentations" to Congress and the public.

Washington Post Editorial Criticizes NSPS

Says Rules Could Politicize Workforce Practices

The Washington Post's editorial pages criticized NSPS in a March 1, 2005 editorial, charging that the rules could lead to greater "politicization of what should be a neutral government department."

The Post described NSPS as "an extremely complex system of distributing performance based pay" based on rules which provide "few details about how performance will actually be measured."

"Second," the Post said, "this proposed reform, even more than its predecessors appears to curtail union rights in unnecessary ways."

"More important, Congress ought to ask for explanations and explore in greater depth the whole issue of civil service reform. Because these personnel decisions involve so many people, and could have such national impact, lawmakers should consider stepping in to help define what performance criteria mean, to preserve a meaningful appeals process and to ensure that unions stay involved in government employee affairs, at least when there is no reason to bar them."



Ray Crowell, Page One Photography

Metal Trades Department President Ron Ault talks with Rep. Rob Porter (R-OH), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and Agency Organization, following testimony challenging details of the NSPS proposals.

Excerpt from UDWC Testimony

"The recent wave of adulation for the late Pope John Paul II—especially his role in collaboration with his countryman Lech Welesa in igniting the spark that destroyed Soviet Communism—is a sharp reminder to all of us—especially those involved with shipyard labor—of the importance of free trade unions to the fabric of freedom of our own nation. Some may recall that Mr. Walesa was a mere shipyard electrician before he became head of the first free Polish state since before World War II.

"I mention the Pope and the Polish labor movement, Solidarnosc, as a reminder to us all that anything which compromises the right of free trade unions to represent the aspirations of working families is an anathema to America. I strongly suggest that NSPS represents an imminent threat to that freedom."

Tentacles of NSPS—Coming to a Job Near Yours

Since the Pentagon's National Security Personnel System (NSPS) was unveiled the Metal Trades Department and the 30-plus unions of the United DOD Workers Coalition (UDWC) have warned that those who want to trash workers rights won't stop with DOD workers.

President Bush announced early this year that he hopes to export features of both NSPS and the Department of Homeland Security personnel regs—tight restrictions on bargaining and so-called “merit pay”—to the entire federal government.

Civilian Feds in War Zones

There are thousands of American civilians whose workplaces are war zones: Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo and Uzbekistan. They include federal civilian Pentagon personnel and contractors. Benefits and pay for federal civilians vary widely from those enjoyed by contract personnel and even uniformed military.

Take taxes, for instance. For the military, the first \$5,600 in monthly salary is tax exempt—no federal, state or local taxes. For civilian contractors, the first \$87,000 in annual earnings are exempt from federal, state and local taxes as long as they are out of the U.S. for 328 days. Federal civilians serving in war zones get some breaks from state and local taxes, but they pay full federal taxes on their earnings. Some military brass arrange visits to a war zone at the end of every month for a day or two in order to gain a tax break.

Of course, all military, civilian

Taking their cues from the White House, several Republican governors lost no time in stepping on the union rights of employees they control. Indiana's newly-elected Gov. Mitch Daniels, who cut his teeth as Bush's director of the federal Office of Management and Budget, revoked bargaining rights for 50,000 state workers there. In Missouri, freshly-minted Gov. Roy Blunt ordered union contracts revoked there, and California's movie-star Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has attacked a range of employee rights, from workers comp to pensions. In Maryland,

and federal personnel face serious risks in war zones. Although there is apparently no definitive count on how many civilian contractors or federal personnel have been wounded, maimed or disabled in Iraq, if the ratio for military casualties is the same for all, there would be at least 2,000 contractors and 500 federal civilians wounded in Iraq.

In Iraq, more than 1,500 uniformed military personnel and some 240 civilian contractors have been killed; five federal civilians have been killed.

Republican Robert Ehrlich has tangled with the state legislature over numerous pro-worker measures and ordered the shutdown of state labor offices that handle worker claims for unpaid wages.

“It's pretty obvious that this is the Republican labor agenda,” says Metal Trades President Ron Ault.

IBEW Local Leader Returns to Iraq Despite Earlier Wounds

Gary York, vice president of IBEW Local 1688 in Yankton, South Dakota, is back in Iraq despite serious wounds he suffered in an earlier volunteer stint as part of Operation Restore Iraq Power on Christmas Eve 2003.

York received the Medal of Freedom from the Army Corps of Engineers in recognition of his service two years ago. He suffered head wounds from a bullet and shoulder wounds from shrapnel in the Christmas Eve attack.

York spent several weeks recovering in hospitals in Germany and at Walter Reed in Washington. He returned to his job in May 2004. York began a second tour in Iraq on April 20, 2005, according to Rick Bartels, president of the Yankton local.

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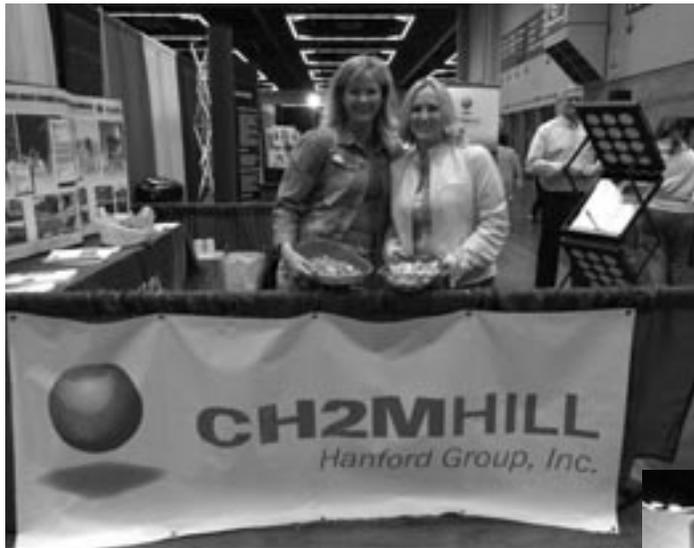
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Metal Trades Department Affiliates Make AFL-CIO Union-Industries Show Debut



Three major Metal Trades Department units—two of them from Hanford—took part in the 2005 Union Industries Show in Portland, Oregon in late April. Joy Turner, communications director for CH2MHill, and Becky Holland, recording secretary for the Hanford Metal Trades Council represented CH2MHILL (upper left). Iron Worker Tom Seeley (upper right) represented Hammer, the safety training operation at the Hanford nuclear facility. General Dynamics Electric Boat of Groton, Connecticut sent Wayne Burgess and Mel Olsson, both UAW members attached to the EB design unit. More than 200,000 visitors attended the Show, which is conducted annually by the Union Label and Service Trades Department of the AFL-CIO. The show is intended to demonstrate the vast range of union-made goods and services to the general public.

Photos Courtesy of Ray Crowell, Page One Photography



Executive Council Meeting

Metal Trades Department President Ron Ault huddles with members of the Department's Executive Board during the Department's board meeting in March. From left: Sheet Metal Workers General President Mike Sullivan, Iron Workers General President Joseph Hunt, Ault, IAM President Tom Buffenbarger and Boilermakers President Newton B. Jones.

The Board reviewed the Department's activities, focusing closely on developments associated with the controversial National Security Personnel System (NSPS) evolving within the Department of Defense.

The Metal Trades Department Joins Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; Supports Efforts to Guarantee Places To Hunt and Fish for All

After learning about the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) and its goal, to **guarantee us all places to hunt and fish**, the Metal Trades Department has decided to endorse and officially join with the TRCP. President Ron Ault is also encouraging all Metal Trades Members, especially those who hunt and fish, to join TRCP.

While many groups take on the important work of protecting and preserving fish and wildlife habitat and others safeguard our rights to own, use and enjoy guns, bows and yes, even fishing equipment, the TRCP is pulling together the country's leading hunting and fishing groups in a partnership to focus on **"Guaranteeing Us All Places to Hunt and Fish...Now and Forever!"** And while TRCP combines forces with the habitat groups and supports the 2nd Amendment and citizen's rights to own and use guns, it realizes that even if we have unprecedented numbers of deer, turkey, and elk, and rivers and

lakes teeming with fish, and closets full of guns, bows and fishing rods, it won't matter if we don't have **access** to places to go hunting and fishing. And it's not just any places we are interested in, but places that provide quality hunting and fishing opportunities, for average men and women and their friends and family.

TRCP's conservation policy work is diverse. It encompasses many issues, above all, TRCP wants to assure the continuance of our hunting and fishing traditions and an outdoor way of life long cherished by generations of Americans. TRCP embraces T.R.'s philosophy of "The greatest good, for the greatest number," and uses it as its guiding principle.

Furthermore, TRCP provides its partners with vital information on important issues and provides them with easy ways to join in taking action to make their voices heard and help assure a bright future for hunting and fishing. Add chances to win great hunting and fishing

trips and equipment, and it's little wonder that in just a few years over 100,000 individuals and 1375 affiliated groups representing non-profit conservation organizations, outdoor businesses, local rod and gun clubs and unions have joined the TRCP. Taken collectively, the individual membership of TRCP's affiliated partner groups exceeds 8 million individuals.

So if you haven't already joined the TRCP, don't delay, join Larry Csonka and tens of thousands of others. TRCP is Dues Free and you can join by either logging on to www.trcp.org, calling toll free 1-877-770-8722, or filling out and sending in the clip-out form below. When you do your name will automatically be entered into TRCP's Rusty Wallace Prize Package Give-away. Most importantly, when you join as an individual partner you'll become part of a hunting and angling organization that's growing fast and working hard to **"Guarantee Us All Places to Hunt and Fish...Now and Forever."**

Join the TRCP, It's Free.

Please clip off this portion and mail it back to:

TRCP, PO Box 16868, Missoula, MT 59801

Log on to: www.trcp.org for more information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Email addresses and contact information will not be sold or shared. Communication via email helps keep TRCP free.

New Leaders: Columbus, GA, Metal Trades

Recently installed leaders of the Columbus, Georgia, Metal Trades Department, representing workers at Ft. Benning. From left: Trustees David Clegg and John Jacquin—both of IUOE Local 926; Sgt-at-Arms Johnnie Walton, IUOE 926; President/ Financial Secretary Mike Culpepper, IBEW Local 613; Vice President Chip Hughes, LIUNA Local 515; Treasurer Jerry Owens, SMWIA Local 85; Recording-Corresponding Secretary Jeffery Rolling, UA Local 52 and Trustee Equilla Quick, SMWIA Local 85.



Lawmakers Demand More for Vets; Charge White House Is Shortchanging VA

Led by Democratic Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), Sens. Daniel Akaka (D-HA) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)—both ranking members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, lawmakers are calling on the White House to beef up appropriations for the Veterans Administration.

The three Democrats developed a six-point agenda for VA—including full funding to reopen the VA healthcare system for all vets, a seamless transition from active duty to veteran status, elimination of claims backlogs and reduced claims processing times, increases in education benefits, burial benefits and expansion and protection for long-term care and mental

health services.

Overall, the number of veterans seeking healthcare services has increased some 150 percent over the past eight years while appropriations for the program have failed to keep pace.

The President's current budget calls for a \$1 billion cut in the VA budget on top of a \$1.4 billion shortfall last year.

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