News Items - June 2015


Teamsters! This really IS the time for action

June 3, 2015 | The public is starting to pay more attention to the negotiated-in-secret TPP deal and what its passage will mean for the nation. Fast Track proponents are trying to move quickly, pushing to bring the legislation for the job-killing TPP to a vote in the house. Granting a Fast Track rubber-stamp for the TPP would only accelerate a global race to the bottom in wages and working conditions that nobody wins – except, of course, for big transnational corporations that are eager to exploit labor abuses abroad to pad their obscene profits. But we can win this fight. Literally thousands of organizations – representing the environmental, family farm, civil rights, consumer, LGBT, student and other movements – have united with labor in saying NO to Fast Track. We need your voice, too. Make the call to your Representative now at 888-979-9806 and urge them to vote NO on Fast Track. Then send an email too.

Hoffa: TAA will offer little help to workers hit hard by trade

June 10, 2015 | For years, the Teamsters have been strong supporters of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) legislative efforts that have offered support to thousands of workers who have lost jobs due to bad trade deals. But not this time...

Hoffa: Overworking truckers is dangerous

June 10, 2015 | Highways across Michigan and the U.S. have become increasingly dangerous for motorists. And that will only get worse if Congress approves a transportation spending bill that effectively keeps the suspension of rules in place that allow truck drivers to work longer hours, that permits larger double-trailers and that prevents the U.S. Department of Transportation from raising minimum insurance standards that have been frozen on place for three decades. The fate of those provisions, tucked inside a $55 billion federal transportation spending bill, is now being considered on Capitol Hill. Full story...

Former Sparrows Point steelworker speaks out on impact of failed trade policies

June 11, 2015 | This new ad from the AFL-CIO and USW highlights how the loss of manufacturing jobs due to bad trade policies has hit manufacturing workers like former Sparrows Point craneworker, Mike Lewis, especially hard.
Hoffa applauds trade package vote but warns fight isn't over yet

June 15, 2015 | In a press release issued last week, General President Hoffa said that in rejecting the Trade Adjustment Assistance portion of the trade package, "a resounding bipartisan majority of lawmakers agreed that workers don't want to be retrained for a new career – they want to keep the good middle-class jobs they have now." However, the battle didn't end Friday. "The Teamsters and others who stand with American families must remain resolute. Corporate cronies are likely to try to get TAA and fast track through the house again" this week. Workers voices' need to continue to be heard on Capitol Hill. Read more at teamster.org. Related: Liberals deal Obama a stunning blow on trade -- but one more showdown awaits.

Republican states seek to repeal prevailing wage laws

June 16, 2015 | Expanding their battle with organized labor, Republican lawmakers in the Midwest are moving to scrap labor laws that help unions win a healthy share of the jobs on public works projects and bolster trade union membership. Conservative legislators are targeting "prevailing wage" statutes, now on the books in 31 states [including Maryland], that require paying the local wage and benefit rate –usually union scale– on government construction projects such as building local roads... Full story.

Teamsters endorse pension protection bill

June 18, 2015 | The IBT issued its support today for new legislation that will protect earned pension benefits for retirees and boost multi-employer pension plans for workers and participating employers. The "Keep our Pension Promises Act," sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), will roll back provisions slipped into the fiscal 2015 spending bill approved by Congress last year that made earned pensions benefits vulnerable to cuts. The measure would restore anti-cutback rules so that recipients in financially troubled multi-employer pension plans will be protected from having their benefits cut. Continued...

U.S. judge grants FTC request to block merger with US Foods

June 24, 2015 | Sysco Corp’s $3.5 billion merger with US Foods should be stopped for further review, a federal judge ruled on Tuesday, handing a major victory to the U.S. government in its effort to block the controversial merger. The judge’s decision could ultimately kill the deal between the two largest U.S. food distributors since the further review requested by the Federal Trade Commission is a lengthy process, and deals generally cannot be held together during a full trial. Continue reading... Today's Baltimore Sun story...

Sysco Walks Away From US Foods Merger

June 29, 2015 | Sysco Corp. said Monday it is walking away from its planned acquisition of US Foods Inc. after a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction against the deal last week amid antitrust concerns. Sysco said it will pay US Foods a breakup fee of $300 million. The termination also cancels Sysco and US Food's agreement to sell 11 distribution centers to Performance Food Group, Inc. Full story...