

Unions: Holding the Line for the Middle Class

Every fight we take on is about making life better for workers, whether it is in a state legislature, the Halls of Congress, at the bargaining table or on the picket line. **Unions are the counterweight to corporate excess and influence.**

It's never been easy, and now is no exception. For nearly four decades, too many bad policies have shaped our economy around the interests of a few. In return, we got outsourcing, shrinking union density, increased corporate power and concentration of wealth that makes it possible for six members of Wal-Mart's Walton family to hold as much wealth as that of 30 percent of all Americans!

When all this came crashing down around us in recent years, many frustrated Americans believed that the fix in November 2010 was to elect new leaders. As a result, we've witnessed major attacks on the middle class, including extreme anti-worker proposals in Congress and an unprecedented anti-union legislative push at the state level. We've also seen companies exploit the economic situation, demanding concessions and layoffs that aren't being rectified now that profits are back up.

This holiday season, we'd like to acknowledge the countless Steelworkers engaging in critical legislative fights, those who are who struggling to keep their jobs or survive unemployment, and all those who are currently making great sacrifices to be the counterweight against greed and corporate excess, particularly our members who are on strike and those who have been left jobless after being locked out by their employers. **As the following members on strike or lockout in the U.S. stand firm for good jobs this holiday season, they support us all and hold the line for the middle class!**

- 1,050 members of Local 207L illegally locked out by Cooper Tire & Rubber
- 82 members of Local 354 illegally locked out by National Gypsum
- 4 members of Local 1693 on strike at Clayton & Lambert Manufacturing Co.
- 179 members of Local 748L on strike at Omnova Solutions Inc.
- 53 members of Local 6966 illegally locked out by Hofmann Industries and HI-Products
- 216 members of Local 285L illegally locked out by Armstrong World Industries Inc.
- Members of both Local 5000 and 9443 are fighting for their rightful jobs after being permanently replaced during strikes that have recently ended.

Reminder: Make sure your local has the communication structure in place to educate and mobilize your members on critical Steelworker issues. Get that training and more at the 2012 Regional Rapid Response Conferences! Visit www.uswrr.org for details.



Members of USW Local 207L in Findlay, Ohio
Photo by Rob Greer, Local 207L Rapid Response Coordinator