

SEIU Convention Focus Health Care For All

Some 3,000 delegates to the SEIU Convention in San Francisco—including a strong NCFO contingent—marched across the Golden Gate Bridge to focus attention on the nation's health care crisis and demand health care for all Americans.

At the convention, delegates heard from Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry,

who pledged to make health care reform his top domestic priority.

"The two top priorities we must have are electing Senator Kerry as President and solving the health care crisis," pointed out SEIU

President Andrew Stern, who was re-elected during the convention.

"There are now 45 million Americans with no coverage of any kind and families with good coverage are seeing it eroded while costs go through the roof," added NCFO President George Francisco, who was re-elected to the SEIU Executive Board.

The "Bridge the Gap for Health Care" march on the eve of the June

convention was one of 160 actions organized.

Delegates cheered news that SEIU had added 350,000 members during the last four years and would reach the 1.8 million mark by the end of 2004. They also approved an amendment to the SEIU Constitution requiring locals to spend 20 percent of their net income on organizing, allocate \$7.20 per member per year for political education work and have a goal of signing up 20 percent of the membership for political action fund payroll deduction.



NCFO President George Francisco (right) and Conference Vice President John Thacker march across the Golden Gate Bridge along with 3,000 other delegates as part of the SEIU Convention focus on health care for all.

Newsflash

As we went to press, delegates to the NCFO 35th Regular Convention re-elected President George Francisco and Secretary-Treasurer Dan Anderson and also re-elected Conference Vice Presidents Fred Winters, Paul Shiplett, Sharon Munley and Robert Franco. Vice Presidents Timothy Healy and John Thacker, who had been appointed by President Francisco to fill executive board vacancies, were elected to their first full terms.

All Out for Kerry/Edwards



Photo by Scott Brooks

Democratic Vice Presidential Nominee John Edwards addresses a huge Kerry/Edwards rally in Roanoke, Virginia, as NCFO System Council 6 General Chairman Richard Edmonds (right) listens intently from a prominent seat on stage. More than 1,000 NCFO members are expected to volunteer in election-related activities in the union's largest political mobilization ever.

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Ask President Francisco

Q I believe that the Convention is a time for the President to report on the progress the union has made. I won't be there, so please tell me how you think NCFO is doing?
*Lucille Sharp, Local 701
 Cleveland, Ohio*



A You're correct, Sister Sharp, our Convention is a time to look back and evaluate our union's work during the four years since the last one. And it's also a time to set goals for the future.

I'm writing this a few weeks before our September 13-15 Convention, though you and the rest of the membership will be receiving this issue of *The Journal* sometime in October.

I'll be telling the delegates that I'm very proud of the progress NCFO has made in meeting the great challenges facing it—and every other union in our country.

It's no secret that overall the American labor movement has been shrinking for many years due to thousands of manufacturing companies (and now service companies, too) fleeing to low-wage countries. The weakening of the right to organize unions and increasingly aggressive anti-union policies by corporate America and the politicians it backs has fueled the decline, too.

Along with that decline in size came a decline in political power—a problem only made worse by the reality that many unions had become complacent.

Four years ago, our delegates decided that we were not going to just complain about the situation while continuing to do business as usual.

It was decided that NCFO—following the lead of SEIU—was going to take the necessary steps to go on

the offensive and become larger, stronger, more responsive to our members, and more effective.

The two key changes were to build organizing and political action programs and to involve members like you in them. We realize that only by organizing millions of American workers into unions and by involving all of our members in legislative and political battles to defend the interests of working families could we insure a bright future.

That's the only way, for instance, to solve the crisis of runaway health-care costs that's impacting every single NCFO family at the bargaining table. And ultimately, the solution can't be found at the bargaining table, but through government action.

We realized that local unions—and NCFO itself—are failing the membership if all they do is negotiate contracts and represent members who have grievances.

Change always is difficult, especially when you've been doing things the same way for many years.

But I'm happy to report that over all our locals have begun making the changes by devoting resources to organizing new members and by greatly increasing the money being raised and devoted to helping to elect candidates who will help us.

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Most importantly of all, local unions are tapping our most important resource and our most powerful weapon—union members themselves.

We still have a long way to go to build our political clout and to become a true organizing union.

Towards that end, I explained that the most important task for all of us in NCFO between now and election day is to make sure that the most anti-union U.S. President in history, George W. Bush, does not get to spend four more years in the White House.

These are just a few of the most important points. If you'd like to read more, visit our website (www.ncfo.org) where the Report of Officers to the 35th Convention will be posted by the time you receive this newsletter, along with my address to the delegates.

It's not over 'til it's Overtime

PART II

Though the Senate voted against them three times and the House of Representatives once, new rules issued by the Bush Administration robbing an estimated six million workers of the right to overtime pay went into effect on August 23. Companies (like Sears) began stripping workers of overtime pay eligibility that very day.

Congressional Democrats—and a relatively small number of thoughtful Republicans—vowed to continue their fight against the bad changes. And it's certain that if John Kerry is elected President, this blatant rip-off of working American families will be repealed immediately.

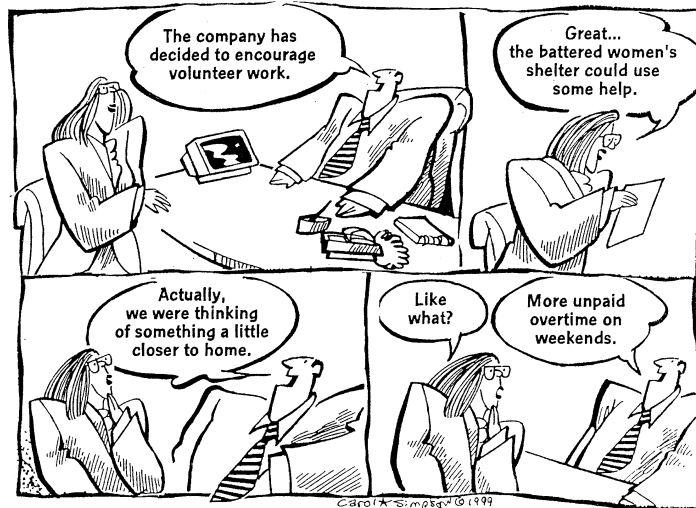
But what if President Bush gets a second term in the White House?

What he has in store for us—especially if he has larger Republican majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives—is a full-scale assault on the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the 1938 law that established the right to the 40-hour week with premium overtime pay rates for any additional hours of work.

Over the decades the FLSA—which also established a minimum wage and limited child labor—was expanded to cover millions of workers originally left out, like agricultural and cannery employees, construction and service workers and public employees—ultimately protecting about 80 percent of employed Americans.

Bush and other right-wing ideologues in the administration, like Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, may ac-

tually believe that anything they can do to fatten the coffers of their corporate campaign contributors at the expense of working Americans is good for the country.



But they can't just come out and say, let's get rid of the minimum wage, or the 40-hour week, health and safety laws or unions. So the idea is to attack them while pretending to do the opposite, as with the regulation issued in August, which they packaged as helping poor people and "strengthening" the law.

So what strategy would a second Bush Administration use to get rid of the 40-hour week and overtime pay? Their approach has already been spelled out by officials like Mark Wilson, who Chao brought with her from the Heritage Foundation—the anti-union conservative think tank where she used to work—to the Labor Department.

Wilson, the author of such papers as "Why Raising the Minimum Wage is a Bad Idea," "End the Involuntary Use of Union Dues," and "How to

Close Down the Department of Labor," also wrote one on "modernizing" the FLSA.

In it, Wilson laments the plight of working women and says we need "family-friendly" changes in the FLSA. You'd think he was about to propose paid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act or a federal program to help working families pay for childcare—two policies that working families in most other industrialized countries have.

Instead he calls for letting employers substitute comp time for overtime pay. Under the scheme employers could give all the extra work to those willing

to accept the promise of comp time, thus robbing families of the overtime money they need. Employers would not have to allow the use of comp time when the employee needs it and could make it available during times it might be planning layoffs anyway.

In short, it becomes just another way to cut labor costs. American workers need more family time through more paid vacation, paid family leave and child care. And we need more money going into wages and less into corporate profits so that people can even afford to take comp time.

President Bush won't push for any of those things. Instead, he will smile and package his destruction of the 40 hour week and overtime pay as a "family-friendly" gift to you and your family.

And he and his pals will laugh all the way to the bank.

**In 2000
Some NCFO
Members
Thought that
George Bush
Might Be
the Answer,
But...**



**Rick McNeal,
Local 933,
Rensselaer, NY**

Ivoted for Bush in 2000 because I thought we needed a change and he sounded very moderate. He made lots of promises and broke them all.

He said there were weapons of mass destruction, but young kids are dying for nothing.

He said he'd help on health care but working men are going deeper and deeper in the hole.

He's been trying to break up and privatize Amtrak. Our jobs, our wage levels and our union are not safe. They will be with Kerry in the White House.

They've Seen How Working Families are

***This Year
They'll Be
Voting for
John Kerry.
They Want
To Tell
You Why.***



**Carol Buck, Vice President
Local 1184, Tacoma, Washington**

I didn't like Gore and probably would have voted for Bush had I gone to the polls.

But everything has gone to hell under Bush and he's done nothing to help seniors with prescription drugs. He's doing plenty to help the drug and insurance companies, but they are not the ones who need help.

I've been a nurse for 35 years and know many people who aren't taking medications because they can't afford them. I've gotten mine cheaper from Canada and Mexico but Bush and his corporate backers don't like that.

Kerry is for allowing the importation of drugs from Canada and allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices and has a plan to control costs and cover 27 million more Americans. He'll get my vote.

didn't feel secure voting for Al Gore in 2000, but Bush has made America much less secure. I'm angry about his war in Iraq and believe he lied to us about why we went in.



Susan Tubbs, Local 1227, Palm Beach County, Florida

As a mother, I fear what a second Bush term would mean for my children and every mother's children.

That was enough to put me on a mission to defeat Bush, so I've been working full time as an SEIU Hero on the campaign.

But I'm also worried about how the economy has taken such a nosedive. And as a school food service worker, Bush's push to privatize everything has really hit home.

To be honest, I wasn't paying much attention to politics when I voted for Bush in 2000.

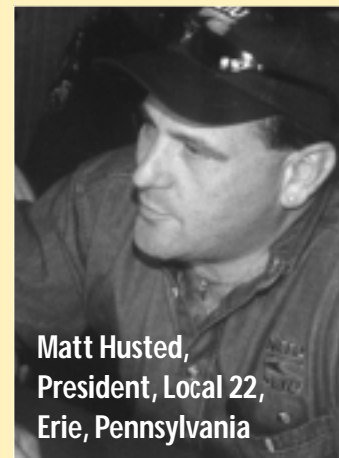
But I've started paying attention and wish I could take that vote back.

The gun rights I was worried about were never under attack.

What are under attack are good American jobs. There are fewer of them every day. I want a President

who will be concerned about keeping and creating good jobs for my children and not just about increasing corporate profits.

I want a President who will actually do something to control skyrocketing health care costs for families and retirees and not see tax cuts for the rich as the solution to every problem.



Matt Husted, President, Local 22, Erie, Pennsylvania

His Policies Hurt and Weaken America

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...voted for President Bush
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...and our rights too—like the right to overtime pay and the right to safety
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...s working people like us who need tax relief, not the millionaires and
...onaires who got it from Bush.



Betty Bullock, Local 77, Berea, Kentucky

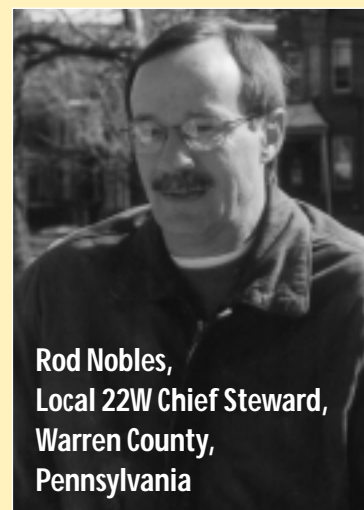
Bullock stuffs vote packets during the 2003 gubernatorial campaign in Kentucky.

I voted for Bush in 2000 but intend to vote for John Kerry this year.

I spent 20 years in the Navy. Kerry saw armed combat and understands what veterans go through.

Bush hasn't done enough to help vets and is proposing to cut a billion dollars from the Veterans Administration budget for next year.

He's also attacking the middle class. Soon there will just be rich and poor in America.



Rod Nobles, Local 22W Chief Steward, Warren County, Pennsylvania

Florida NCFO Activists Make 2004 Election Vow: 'Let's Win By So Much That They Can't Steal It'

The stealing of the 2000 Presidential election in Florida still enrages Local 1220 President Fred Winters every time he thinks about it.

Like many thousands of other African American voters, he was harassed at the polls.

Two pieces of identification were demanded of him (only one piece is required). A seasoned activist, Winters persisted and voted. Other members were turned away.

Thousands of voters were illegally purged from the polls, thousands more had their votes discounted due to confusing ballots and "hanging chads."

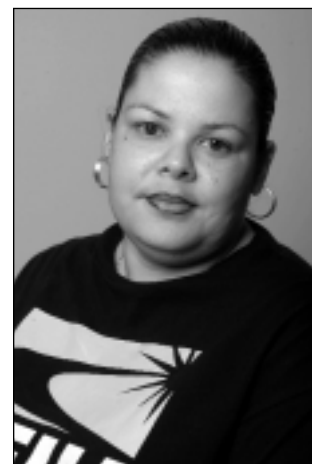
That's why—while Florida is but one of 17 "battleground" states where this year's election is expected to be decided—there's a special energy and determination to win here, as Winters puts it, "by so much this time that they can't possibly steal it."

Both large NCFO public employee locals in Florida—1220 and 1227—are signing up volunteers by the hundreds and playing pivotal rolls in the overall labor movement mobilizations in their areas. After a serious effort by the locals, over 90 percent of NCFO Florida members now are registered to vote.

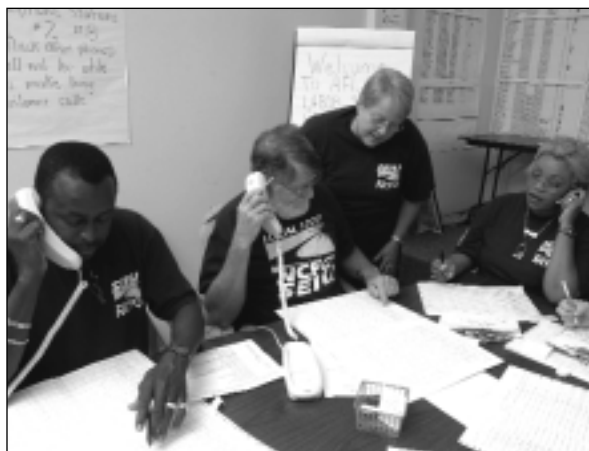
"It was right here in Palm Beach County that we had those confusing ballots and the discarding of thousand of votes of people who were for Al Gore," reflects Local 1227 President Sharon Munley. "That's on top of the



▲ Local 1220 President Fred Winters stresses the importance of a major effort in Florida to other NCFO local leaders gathered in Washington for an organizing and political action "summit meeting" in January. "We must win Florida by so much this time that they can't possibly steal it," he argued.



▲ "I'm a working single mother of two and feel part of something really important working full-time on this," says Local 1227 Hero Yesenia Martinez, who is not yet a citizen. "I plan to vote to reelect President Kerry in 2008."



◀ Local 1227 member John Studer gets a bit of help from President Sharon Munley as Elvis Way (left) and Cheryle Davis-Darrell (right) continue with their calls to area union members during an evening telephone bank.

other outrages. Our people have not forgotten and see a big victory this time as the sweetest revenge."

One such member is Cheryle Davis-Darrell, a pre-school teacher who has been working full-time on election-related activities as an SEIU Hero.

"It's a myth that only 85-year-old people were confused by that ballot. When I walked away, I wondered whether I had wound up voting for Buchanan by mistake," recalls Davis-Darrell. Her anger at the Bush administration has swelled by the so-called "No Child Left Behind" pro-



▲ "I'm still angry about them stopping me from voting in 2000," says Local 1227 member Allene Cunningham. "I'm going to make sure that I vote this year and that this time George Bush stays defeated." The AFL-CIO's My Vote, My Right Campaign intends to have observers—with access to lawyers—at every Florida polling place. Intimidation of African-American voters and illegal purges from voting lists have already been exposed in 2004.

gram which she says is leaving millions of children behind and by what she saw at a protest against expanding NAFTA into a Free Trade Zone of the Americas.

"I saw 1,000 riot cops, tanks and Black Hawk helicopters employed against peaceful union members and retirees. They turned Miami into a police state."

Davis-Darrell, recording-secretary of Local 1227, is one of six Heroes from her local working full-time in various political activities, from over-seeing phone banks and planning

door knocking, to dealing with logistics for all the SEIU Heroes in the state.

That last job belongs to Yesenia Martinez, for whom the experience has been an eye-opener.

"Before coming to Local 1227, the only thing I knew about unions was what management at the Wal-Mart where I used to work told me, which was they were very bad.

"I've learned that through being united in unions we're much stronger," says the single mother of two. "Working on this election, I feel part of something really important. I'm seeing people really coming together."

Over at 1220, Hero Tony D'Elia has been coordinating the overall labor movement effort in his area and is downright excited about the outpouring of volunteers—especially from his own local.

"We just did two days of labor walks, with folks knocking on doors and I had over 90 volunteers just from Local 1220, he says proudly.

A transplanted New Yorker, D'Elia, once ran for local office in a New York City suburb and lost. "I don't like losing," he says. "We're going to win in Florida."

Delegates to the NCFO Convention in Atlantic City will be helping to make sure that happens, too. With D'Elia coordinating, every delegate will call one of the Florida members not yet registered to vote to get them on board.

"I've learned how important it is

to vote," says Martinez, who does not yet have that right. "I've applied for my citizenship and plan to vote to re-elect President Kerry in 2008."



▲ Local 1220 NCFO Hero Tony D'Elia gives instructions to phone bankers Andy Fafard and Jean Carlson. "It was the first time I ever volunteered and it felt good to get involved," Fafard said. Over 600 Florida NCFO members are expected to volunteer before the 2004 election is over.

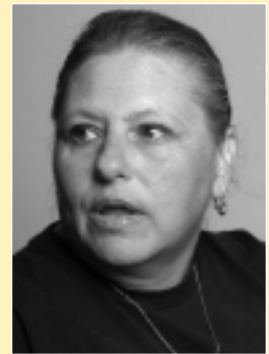
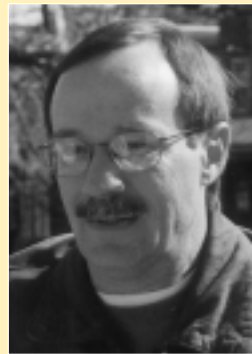
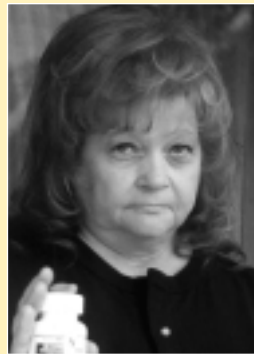
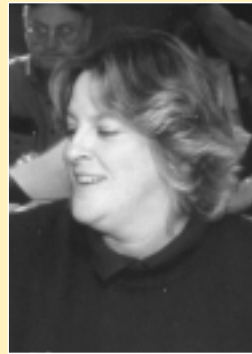


▲ Bob McCallion knocks on the door of a Tampa labor union member during a labor walk. Over 90 Local 1220 members participated.

If your bargaining agent has entered into a collective bargaining agreement negotiated and ratified by your fellow bargaining unit members that obligates employees covered thereunder to pay an initiation fee and monthly dues to the union as a condition of employment, you have the right to be and remain a nonmember of the union. You should be aware, however, that if you decide to become a nonmember, you would give up: the right to attend and participate in union meetings; the right to nominate and vote for candidates for union office; the right to run for union office; the right to participate in contract ratification and strike votes; the right to participate in the formulation of the union's collective bargaining demands; and the right to participate as a delegate to the National Conference or the SEIU Convention. Furthermore, your membership in the union gives it greater bargaining strength in negotiations for collective bargaining agreements, thereby producing a direct benefit to you and your fellow workers.

Individuals who nevertheless elect to be nonmembers are still legally obligated to pay a monthly agency fee to the union. Those who elect this status may limit their financial obligation to a pro rata share of the union expenditures that are reasonably related to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjudgment. Persons wishing to limit their obligation in this manner must inform their local union or System Council in writing.

We Made a Big Mistake in the 2000 Election



It Won't Happen Again in 2004

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