

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

Published by United Auto Workers Local 249—Kansas City, Missouri

March 2021

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Local 249 members joined activists from Stand Up KC Feb. 16 at Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt's Kansas City office to demand the U.S. Senate pass a \$15 minimum wage nationwide during budget reconciliation as part of the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill. Photo by Gary Thomas.





Joe Lumpkin Jr. was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award by the Local 249 Education Committee at the February Membership Meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.



Danielle Evans was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award by the Local 249 Education Committee at the February Membership Meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher, left, and President Jason Starr inspect progress on a new sequencing facility for the E-Transit being constructed on Highway 291. Photo by Don Lehman.

## First Local News

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## UAW Local 249

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The Regular Membership Meeting of United Automobile Workers Amalgamated Local Union 249 is held on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the local union hall, 8040 NE 69 Highway, Pleasant Valley, Mo. The Executive Board Meeting is held at 1:00 p.m. prior to the Regular Membership Meeting.

## UAW-Ford Joint Programs

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### Employee Support Services

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### Health and Safety

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### Quality

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### Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

### Job Sourcing and Production Standards

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## Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

UNICARE Medical/Disability Leave Claims 1-877-475-9652

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

Delta Dental (Retired) 800-524-0149

United Concordia Dental Plan 1-800-937-6432

Ford A,X,& Z Plan 1-800-348-7709

www.fordvehicleprograms.com

UAW-Ford Legal Services 800-482-7700

UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

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THE DISTINGUISHED TEENAGER FROM MISSOURI, SENATOR JOSH HAWLEY

## What Texas and Missouri have in common

By Pat Hayes

**P**avon Guzman was wearing a shirt, a sweater, two pairs of pants, and socks the night he died of hypothermia inside his family's mobile home in Conroe, Texas. The family did all they could to protect their 11-year-old son. They all huddled together in one room in a futile attempt to stay warm. His stepfather put another blanket over him the evening he froze to death. Pavon was one of 58 people who died in Texas from extreme cold last month.

Pavon and the others didn't have to die. Their deaths were a direct result of policies adopted by their state government to maximize profits for the energy industry at the expense of human need.

As two winter storms rolled across Texas temperatures plunged below zero increasing demand for electricity and freezing natural gas pipelines and instrumentation used to heat homes and generate power.

ERCOT, the Texas electrical grid, is separate from all the other grids in the country.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Federal Power Act in 1935, the Federal Power Commission was charged with overseeing interstate electricity sales. By not crossing state lines, go-it-alone Texas utilities avoided being subjected to federal rules, according to the Texas Tribune.

The sudden demand for power during the cold, coupled with frozen pipelines forced ERCOT to resort to rolling blackouts to keep the whole system from collapsing. Because the state utilities seceded from the nation's power grid, there was nowhere to go to supply the demand. Across the state, the lights and heat went off and water lines began to burst.

More than 4.3 million homes and businesses in the state were left without power for several desperate days.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott blamed the crisis on frozen wind turbines, but

only 24% of the state's energy generation comes from wind, 56% comes from natural gas, 19% from coal, and almost 9% from nuclear energy.

Of course, some Texas wind turbines did freeze up because — unlike other states — there is no requirement to weatherize them. Wind turbines in other states, Canada, Norway — even Antarctica continued to work just fine.

While Abbott's pathetic attempt to pin blame for the crisis on renewable energy and the Green New Deal was quickly exposed, the sink or swim heartlessness of Republican policies was put on full display by Colorado City, Texas mayor Tom Boyd.

In a now deleted Facebook post, the good mayor told the people he claimed to represent that he was "sick and tired of people looking for a damn handout" and blamed "a socialist government" for the dire situation.

Texas has a Republican Governor and Republican super majorities in the House and Senate since 2003. Nothing can be done that Republicans don't want to be done. Likewise, here in Missouri Republicans have had complete control of both legislative branches since 2003 and the governorship for the past five years.

The Republican policies that plunged Texas into the deep freeze last month are the same policies that have prevented Missouri from having an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and they are a danger to us all.

## Labor News From the World Wide Web

# The Picket Line

## Judge approves UAW consent decree; union has 30 days to propose monitors

**T**he United Auto Workers now has 30 days to propose three candidates to monitor its operations as a part of the consent decree reached last month with the federal government.

On Jan. 29, U.S. District Judge David Lawson approved the consent decree that will put the beleaguered union under a federal monitor for six years and allow members to vote on whether to amend their constitution to directly elect leaders. That referendum could happen by the end of the year. — *Detroit News*

## UAW-Ford workers can expect profit-sharing payouts down 45%

**F**ord Motor Co.'s 2020 profit-sharing payouts of up to \$3,625 for eligible hourly United Auto Workers members will be down roughly 45% from the year before, the automaker said Feb. 4.

The lower payments, to be made in March, are a direct consequence of the eight-week manufacturing shutdown last spring amid the COVID-19 pandemic that walloped the top and bottom lines of Ford and its rivals. — *Detroit News*

## Nick Robinson Sentenced to 12 Months

**E**dward "Nick" Robinson, the former President of the United Auto Workers Midwest CAP and the former Director of the UAW Labor and Employment Training Corporation, was sentenced to 12 months in prison and was directed to pay \$342,000 in restitution to the UAW and the IRS, pending a final restitution hearing, based on convictions for conspiring with other UAW officials to embezzle UAW funds and evade taxes announced U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider. — *U.S. Dept. of Labor*

## Unions show solidarity for Amazon workers in Alabama

**M**ore than 100 people braved a cold, windy rain Feb. 7, not far from Amazon's Bessemer fulfillment center, to show their support for an ongoing drive to form a union among workers there.

Representatives from various unions and some employees who work at the center gathered in a field among restaurants, hotels and gas stations off Academy Drive.

Placards showed support from various local union chapters, such as the Teamsters, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the Democratic Socialists of America. Participants, clad in soggy COVID-19 masks, drove from as far away as Atlanta and New Orleans to take part, some with hand-painted signs.

Mail-in ballots go out beginning next week to more than 5,000 employees at the Bessemer fulfillment center, which opened last March during the beginnings of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 855,000-square-foot center receives and stores merchandise, with workers and robots dispatching approximately 100,000 orders a day.

Employees at Amazon's facility in Bessemer notified the National Labor Relations Board back in November that they wanted to hold an election to create a bargaining unit that would cover full-time and part-time workers. The group would be represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). The votes will be counted March 30.

Randy Hadley, president of the RWDSU Mid-South Council, told the crowd the vote is important because of the opportunity to set a precedent for the online retail giant and other large tech companies. — *William Thornton AI.com*

# Auto Industry Update

## Ford's clear N95 face masks could be huge for teachers, people with hearing loss

**F**ord Motor Co. has designed and created clear N95 face masks so that people with loss of hearing can read lips while protecting themselves from COVID-19, the company announced.

A patent is pending for the new design, which is awaiting federal approval to qualify for N95 status from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

The low-cost, reusable respirators may supplement or replace the use of cloth masks that block facial expression and lips from view as mask wearers seek protection from the increased threat of new coronavirus variants. In addition to the hearing impaired, these masks could be used by people who depend on facial expressions to better do their jobs, like teachers. — *Detroit Free Press*

## Ford to cut back F-150 production due to chip shortage

**F**ord Motor Co. said that it cut shifts at two of its U.S. manufacturing plants, due to the worldwide chip shortage that has also impacted other automakers.

Ford cut two shifts at its Dearborn, Michigan, facility, going down to one shift per day. It is also cutting a shift at its Kansas City, Missouri, plant, going down to two shifts per day.

Both plants produce the F-150 pickup truck, Ford's most popular model and part of the F-Series, the top-selling vehicle in the U.S. Roughly one F-150 rolls off a Ford assembly line every minute.

Both plants were scheduled to be back to three shifts starting Feb. 15. — *Associated Press*

## Ford loses \$1.28B in 2020

**F**ord Motor Co. lost \$1.28 billion last year as it dealt with a huge restructuring, a costly recall and a decline in the value of its pension fund.

But the company said Thursday it is generating strong cash flow and will go all-in on electric vehicles. Ford said it would now spend at least \$22 billion developing them from 2016 through 2025, nearly double what it previously announced.

The automaker said that excluding one-time items, it made 41 cents per share for the year. That beat Wall Street estimates of breaking even. Revenue for the year was \$127.1 billion, down 18% from 2019. Analysts expected \$128.2 billion in revenue for the year. — *Associated Press*

## GM reports 2020 profit

**F**or the year, GM's annual global revenue in 2020 was \$122.5 billion compared with \$137.2 billion for 2019. GM's annual net income was \$6.4 billion compared with \$6.7 billion in the year-ago period. For the quarter, GM's reported a net gain of \$2.9 billion compared with a net loss of \$194 million a year ago. — *Detroit Free Press*

# AutoTechNews: The EV/AV future is now

## Ford has this billion-dollar advantage over Tesla's and GM's electric cars

**F**ord is going big on battery-powered cars. The automaker has announced a near doubling of its planned investments in electric vehicles to \$22 billion through 2025, putting it on par with General Motors and at about half what analysts expect Tesla to spend during the period, according to Morgan Stanley's Adam Jonas.

But while its American EV rivals have been selling all-electric cars for years Ford is just getting started.

Every electric vehicle in the U.S., including plug-in hybrids, entitles the buyer to a federal tax credit worth up to \$7,500 depending on how big its battery is, but once a company reaches 200,000 units sold the credit phases out by half and half again before going away completely over the course of a year.

GM -- which has sold the Volt plug-in hybrid and Bolt EV over the past decade -- and Tesla each reached that threshold in 2018, so their cars are no longer eligible for the program. Ford's are. — *Fox Business*

## Ford Makes \$29 Billion Commitment to Electric and Self-Driving Cars

**F**ord announced during its fourth-quarter earnings report that it will invest \$22 billion in electric vehicles and \$7 billion in autonomous vehicles through 2025. The electric-vehicle stake is an increase over the \$10 billion already pledged to help Ford compete in the race to bring electric vehicles into the mainstream.

In part, Ford may be throwing the money down to compete with GM's big electrification goals, but it stopped short of announcing exactly when, or if,

it will transition to an all-electric passenger-vehicle fleet as General Motors has pledged to do. What it has announced is that a majority of its vehicles will be EVs, with some of its offerings having hybrid and plug-in hybrid powertrains. — *Car and Driver*

## GM Announces Goal to Eliminate Gas and Diesel Vehicles by 2035

**G**M announced last week that it will aspire to eliminate all gas and diesel light-duty vehicles by 2035. GM said it plans to invest \$27 billion in electric and autonomous vehicles by 2025. GM, Ford, and others are competing with Tesla which has a huge head start in the EV world. The EV-only automaker boasts the top-selling electric vehicles with ranges that still dwarf offerings from any traditional OEM. — *Car and Driver*

## Ford steals spotlight from GM Super Bowl ad

**I**n the ad, Will Ferrell discovers Norway far outpaces the U.S. in electric vehicle adoption. The spot, called "No Way, Norway," includes comedians Kenan Thompson and Awkwafina, who join Ferrell on his journey to give Norwegians a piece of his mind.

Ferrell intends to "crush" Norway. "Let's go, America!"

But the Ford team in Norway couldn't just sit back and let it go.

They clapped back on Twitter.

Ford created a 23-second spot to the backdrop of James Bond-style music that features Mustang Mach-E SUVs driving the streets of Norway and delivering pizzas around Oslo, spotlighting the company that not only sells in Europe now (GM doesn't) and sells to Norwegians now (GM doesn't) but currently is delivering an all-new all-electric vehicle now (GM doesn't). — *Detroit Free Press*





Local 249 members joined activists from Stand Up KC Feb. 16 at Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt's Kansas City office to demand the U.S. Senate pass a \$15 minimum wage nationwide during budget reconciliation as part of the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill. Photo by Gary Thomas.

# UAW activists demand Blunt support relief bill

By Pat Hayes

**Local 249 members joined Stand Up KC activists outside Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt's Kansas City office Feb. 16 to demand that he get behind the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package in the Senate.**

The proposed bill would deliver payments of up to \$1,400 to most Americans and add \$400 a week to state jobless benefits. It would also send \$350 billion to struggling state, local and tribal governments.

If passed the bill would also direct \$20 billion into a national vaccination program and send \$170 billion to schools and colleges for reopening costs and aid to students.

In a provision important to the struggling front line essential workers who protested outside Blunt's office, the bill would also gradually hike the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2025.

The federal minimum wage has been frozen for more than a decade since it was raised to \$7.25 an hour. Since then, it has lost 14.8% of its purchasing power to inflation according to the AFL-CIO. Had the federal minimum

wage kept pace with workers' productivity since 1968 the inflation-adjusted minimum wage would now be \$24 an hour.

"For all of the lawmakers arguing that a \$15 minimum wage doesn't belong in a relief package, I'm here to tell you: \$15 is COVID relief," McDonald's worker Bridget Hughes told those gathered outside Blunt's office on a day when temperatures plunged below zero.

"Poverty wages have no place in any kind of recovery," Hughes said. "Another stimulus check will help, but it will disappear after one or two bills. A \$15 minimum wage is a 365-day-per-year stimulus that will help my family survive, and it will boost the economy as tens of millions of underpaid workers like me have more money to spend."

Kansas City restaurant owner,

Howard Hanna, also spoke in support of a \$15 minimum wage.

"Paying workers above the minimum wage and treating employees well is the moral thing to do, but it also benefits business," Hanna said.

"We need dedicated employees whose goals align with ours to provide real hospitality and make our restaurants the best they can be," he said.

"Paying above the current minimum wage has helped us recruit and retain people and deliver great service. Training new staff is expensive. People feel respected when they are paid fairly."

Hanna was greeted with cheers from the crowd as he finished by noting that, "Raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour would raise everyone up. It puts more money in the hands of those who most need it, and who will be most likely to spend it, which will boost the economy."

Hanna said, "Too many business owners focus exclusively on their labor costs, when they should see the potential addition to their revenue from new

customers. More money in the pockets of low wage workers means more money spent in our local businesses."

Local 249 activist Gary Thomas, who participated in the car parade to Blunt's office and spoke at the event noted that, "raising the minimum wage is not a left or right issue, it's an issue of right or wrong."

Thomas, who chairs the union Education Committee said that although these men and women are being called essential workers, they are being paid wages so low that they can't afford the essential things their families need, like rent, food, utilities, and transportation.

"Big majorities of the American public support raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, including right here in Kansas City, where nearly 70% of voters voted for a \$15 minimum wage only to be thwarted by Republicans in Jeff City," he said.

As the rally drew to a close, Blunt signaled his likely opposition to the coronavirus relief bill by calling the police on the peaceful demonstrators outside his Kansas City office.





Members of Local 249's Motorcycle Committee Josh Curtis, Darrin McIntyre, Sharon King, Darren Piper, Sarah Allen, William O'Neal, Jacob Scott, Joe Lumpkin delivered Valentines roses and chocolates to area widows on Valentines Day, Feb. 12. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Local 249 MC delivers Valentine's roses to widows

By Pat Hayes

**M**otorcycle Committee members from Locals 249 and 31 fanned out across the metro Feb. 12 to deliver roses and chocolate to area widows on Valentine's Day. This year marks to fourth year the Motorcycle Committee has participated in the event, according to Josh Curtis, chairperson of the committee.

"The original organization that we worked with in the past wasn't it doing it this year," said Curtis. "We knew what a blessing it was to all involved, so the members of the Motorcycle Committee stepped up and went looking for resources, we found a local florist that was willing to work with our budget, and we went with her to make our 150 roses something to be proud of."

The committee talked to a few retailers about candy and found the best deal and bought 150 boxes. Raven printing also provided service for the Valentine's Day project.

Members from Locals 249 and 31 delivered the gifts across a 100-mile ra-

dius this year. Each committee member was tasked with trying to find leads, and to try and come up with potential recipients.

"Once we started asking around, it got the attention of a lot of people in surrounding communities that had families that worked at Ford or relatives that worked for supply places and other UAW facilities," says Curtis.

The committee reached its goal and headed out Feb. 12 to deliver the gifts.

"We as a committee are welcomed and greeted and blessed by the stories and the appreciation of these ladies, that many feel left out or forgotten,"

says Curtis. "To bring tears of joy to a lady that hasn't gotten a Valentine's Day gift or flower since the passing of their husband is extremely touching."

That's why the committee members were excited to step farther out in communities and bless more widows. The 150 widows reached this year seemed like a mountain to accomplish, say committee members, but the success this year shows the number of roses will have to grow by 50-100 more in 2022.

Despite the freezing and arctic conditions faced by committee members, everyone was safe and most importantly they touched a lot of hearts that day.

"We had two members of Local 31 from the General Motors Fairfax plant, Myron Snow and Todd Holcomb come to help us," says Curtis, "they have become very close friends to our committee's functions. They like to be part of our activities and hope to bring a

passion back to their plant and spark more people to get involved. These two individuals were a huge help to the success of solidarity weekend we had last year."

The Roses for Widows idea originated 10 years ago with Seth Stewart in Spokane, Wash. It has grown and spread across the country in the years since. Much of the national work is organized through a Facebook group, Rose Rush, that Stewart set up.

In addition to single women and widows, Stewart also asks that roses be delivered to women who have had a significant impact in their lives. Deployed husbands and boyfriends will also contact Stewart to add a personal touch to a flower delivery for their significant others, according to CNN.

Local 249's Motorcycle Committee may be one of the newest in the union, but in its short existence it's become one of the most active.



# Sisterhood is Powerful

*A Tribute to Women's Leadership in the Labor Movement for Women's History Month*

## **O**lga Marie Madar was the first woman to serve on the United Auto Workers (UAW) International Executive Board.

Born in the coal mining town of Sykesville, Pa., on May 17, 1915, Madar moved to Detroit with her family during the Depression. After graduating from Northeastern High School in 1933, she began to spend her summers working on the assembly line at Chrysler's Kercheval plant and the Bower Rolling Bearing plant in order to fund her college education. In 1938, Madar graduated from Michigan Normal School (now Eastern Michigan University), having earned a degree in physical education.

In 1941, Madar left her teaching position to aid the war effort, taking a job at the Ford Willow Run bomber plant. It is at this time that she joined the newly formed UAW Local 50. Having taken great initiative to organize well-received community events, Madar was hired by the local to serve as director of recreation, social services and women's activities. In 1947, Madar was appointed director of the International Union's Recreation Department. Among her most significant



accomplishments during this time was winning a long-fought battle to integrate organized UAW bowling leagues.

Madar was first elected to the International Executive Board as a member-at-large in 1966, becoming the first woman to occupy this office. Four years later, Madar achieved another "first" when she was elected as a vice president, serving two terms. Her responsibilities in this position included directing the departments of Conservation and Resource Development, Recreation and Leisure-Time Activities and Consumer Affairs, as well as servicing technical, office and professional workers' locals. Through her elected positions, Madar successfully advocated for increased hiring of women by the International Union and developed leadership training programs to prepare women for greater responsibilities in the union.

Through Madar's efforts, the UAW became the first national union to endorse constitutional ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in 1970. In that effort, Madar established various coalitions including the Michigan Women's Political Caucus and the Network for Economic Rights to make the ERA a political priority beginning in 1971.

A lifelong advocate for equal rights, Madar strove to eliminate discrimination against women and minorities in the workplace and community. To grant working women a greater voice in their unions, Madar played a key role in developing the Coalition of Labor Union Women, an AFL-CIO-affiliated group to which she was elected national president at its founding convention in 1974, the year she retired from a 30-year career with the International Union, UAW.

Former UAW President Doug Fraser called Madar "a trailblazer in the struggle for equal rights." She died in 1996, leaving an immeasurable impact on the UAW and working women across the country. — *UAW*



**D**olores Huerta Before becoming a labor organizer, Dolores Huerta was a grammar school teacher, but soon quit after becoming distraught at the sight of children coming to school hungry or without proper clothing. "I couldn't stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes. I thought I could do more by organizing farm workers than by trying to teach their hungry children."

In 1955, Huerta launch her career in labor organizing by helping Fred Ross train organizers in Stockton, Calif., and five years later, founded the Agricultural Workers Association before organizing the UFW with Cesar Chavez in 1962. Some of her early victories included lobbying for voting rights for Mexican Americans as well as for the right of every American to take the written driver's test in a native language. A champion of labor rights, women's rights, racial equality and other civil rights causes, Huerta remains an unrelenting figure in the farm workers' movement. — *UFCW*

**S**ue Cowan Williams represented African-American teachers in the Little Rock School District as the plaintiff in a case challenging the rate of salaries allotted to teachers in the district based solely on skin color. The suit, *Morris v. Williams*, was filed on Feb. 28, 1942, and followed a March 1941 petition filed with the Little Rock School Board requesting equalization of salaries between black and white teachers.

In 1941, the 86 teachers that taught in Little Rock's black public schools all belonged to the Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association (CTA), which coordinated the campaign for the salary equalization suit. The CTA formed a Salary Adjustment Committee (SAC) to investigate the facts. The SAC's study discovered that white elementary school teachers in Little Rock received an average annual salary of \$526, while black elementary school teachers received only \$331, according to the *Arkansas Times*.

She lost the case, however she won in a 1943 appeal although her job was not reinstated until 1952. Morris taught at Dunbar until 1974, when she retired. Sue Cowan Williams died on May 31, 1994, in Little Rock. — *AFL-CIO*



# For The People Act



Protect & Expand Voting Rights



Create An Ethical & Accountable Government



Reduce The Influence Of Big Money In Politics

*By Chrissy Kline*

**T**he democracy that we consider the foundation of our nation's government is in desperate need of repair and reform. Republicans have begun to chisel away at the already crumbling cornerstone by introducing more than 100 bills nationally to restrict voting rights and undermine the will of the people at the state level. To prevent these attacks from succeeding, Congressman John Sarbanes reintroduced the "For the People Act," also referred to as HR1 or S1 on January 4 during the 117th congress. On February 22, all House Democrats agreed to co-sponsor the bill.

HR1 is intended "to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy."

This bill was first introduced and passed in the United States House of Representatives in 2019 but never reached a vote in the then Republican majority Senate. Congressman Sarbanes said, "House Democrats are united in our steadfast commitment to advance transformational anti-corruption and clean election reforms." H.R.1 will be considered on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives during the first week in March.

HR1 combines several pieces of necessary voter registration expansions and protections. The first of which being Subtitle A, the "Voter Registration Modernization Act of 2021". It is here that HR1 requires the provision of online voter registration as well as assistance to those wishing to register and vote and a receipt upon completion. If for some reason the individual does not meet all eligibility requirements for voting online the State shall

permit the individual to complete all other elements of online voter registration and provide their signature at the time of their ballot request.

Moving on from modernizing the registration process HR1 proposes automatic voter registration at an array of state agencies including allowing state colleges and universities to serve as registration agencies. In addition to these provisions there are measures such as same-day registration, pre-registration for those who are 16-17 years old to be placed on rolls at the age of 18 and banning states from purging eligible voters' registrations for simply voting infrequently.

HR1 doesn't stop there. It goes on to tackle issues such as pilot programs to enable individuals with disabilities to register to vote privately and independently at their residences, creating a two-week window of in-person early voting with hours and days accommodating voters with non-traditional schedules, the ability to turn in a mail ballot in person if preferred and even prepaid postage on mailed ballots.

As for the ballots themselves, they

would all be required to be durable, voter-verified paper ballots that will be used in any form of recount or audit if needed as well.

Moving beyond registration and early voting, HR1 combats gerrymandering by requiring states to establish commissions for nonpartisan redistricting and counting prisoners at their last address rather than location of incarceration for the purposes of said redistricting. This also includes having voting rights restored for those on parole, probation, or post-sentence to end felony disenfranchisement.

All these sections are to help ensure that all citizens are included and represented within our democracy and that all eligible to vote have an unimpeded opportunity to do so.

HR1 removes barriers to expand access to voting, bans congressional gerrymandering through redistricting commissions, securing the integrity of votes once cast by mandating paper ballots, and levels the playing field in House elections by establishing public financing which encourages small-dollar donations through tax incentives.

It will eliminate "dark money" through a requirement that discloses all political spending, even online ads.

Further ethics and corruption measures would apply to everyone, including the President, demanding disclosure of and divestment from any financial interests that pose conflicts of interest, and banning corporations from spending on campaign purposes unless the corporation has established

a process for determining the political will of its shareholders.

HR1 provides for stringent protocols for poll worker recruitment and training and contains measures on federal election integrity involving poll security and making it a crime to mislead voters with the intent of preventing them from voting.

Overall HR1 will not only ensure that everyone is included and represented in our democracy and has unimpeded opportunities to participate but also that major reforms take place that will ensure the sanctity and longevity of the democracy that makes us who we are.

It is no secret that there is a direct correlation between money and corruption in our government and that we can point the finger at both parties all day long. The reality is that it is long past time to make changes to modernize and streamline the voting process in our country to promote fairness and equality in having the opportunity to cast your vote.

HR1 is a step in the right direction to ensure that goal is achieved and to combat the measures being introduced at the state level across our nation to restrict access and ease of voting. Eliza Sweren-Becker from the Brennan Center stated "Rather than going out and trying to persuade voters, we're seeing legislators trying to shrink the electorate in order to ensure job security for themselves." We cannot allow this to happen, and that starts with supporting HR1.



# Arctic cold pauses production at KCAP

By Jim Fisher

**O**n Saturday, February 13, all shifts at Kansas City Assembly Plant were cancelled until February 22 due to extreme cold weather not only in the Kansas City area, but all across the Midwest. Due to the size of our plant the Energy Department said that if the plant remained running it would cause power disruptions to our neighboring communities due to a low energy reserve caused by residential homes using more than normal energy to keep their homes warm. Even with help from our plant Evergy and Independence Power & Light ran controlled rolling blackouts in the area until a normal power reserve was built back up.

On February 22, all shifts of production were returned back to normal operating patterns. With the loss of units from the down week, the Transit System is scheduling Super Production Saturdays for the night shift on February 27 and March 13. The Transit Day Shift is currently scheduled for Super Production Saturday on March 6. The Truck System has returned with all three crews and currently has scheduled Super Production day for B-Crew on March 6.

I anticipate more scheduling changes could happen. It's not just Ford. The entire automotive industry is working to address the supply chain issues with the shortage of semiconductor chips. We will keep the membership as up to date as possible if any more schedule changes occur. However, some of changes are received with little advanced notification to the plant.

The parts shortages don't appear to have a quick fix in place yet. There are some media reports predicting the automotive industry as a whole could lose up to 60 billion in revenue this year due to parts shortages.

As for our members, we build two of the most important vehicles in the Ford system. The Transit and F-Series continue to be a priority due to their extremely high customer demand. The importance of our plant continues to be proven, and members can see continuous upgrades being made to the plant.

While multiple investments and improvements are being made to KCAP there will be a couple short term changes being made as typical with any construction project. One noticeable change will be the parking lot. The plant will be upgrading offices in the administration building, and those that work in the administration building will be moved to trailers in the parking lot. This will cause temporary changes to be made to the parking lot layout.

Construction will continue around the Q-52 area for the 5-bay expansion and the water test area will also see

upgrades coming.

With all the new investments happening here at KCAP I want our members to understand that Local 249 members are in a very unique position, and these expansion projects are not happening at other facilities. We can't take any of this for granted and must continue to stay focused on the things that make us the best in the business.

The company has announced that profit sharing for the year 2020 will be paid out to eligible members on March 11. Profit Sharing is based on your hours worked. Traditionally, that formula is not released until a couple of days before the checks are cut. Once we have that information it will be shared with the membership.

The Local and Plant Management are still working with the supplier on the clothing voucher. All the items have been approved and currently the supplier is working on creating the website for members to view items. I still expect this to take a few weeks.

The items are basically the same as the last time we did the clothing voucher. The only noticeable change is no footwear was approved as an option.

If you're one of the 880 members that still has a dependent verification issue or have not completed sending in the required forms you must call the NESC at 1-800-248-4444 and ask for the dependent verification department and ask to speak to the Dependent Verification Representative. If there is something that needs to be fixed you will need to provide that information and fax it to them. If this is not completed by March 1, your dependents will be removed from your insurance. You can also contact the Benefit Reps at the union hall if you need assistance.

There have been a lot of pay issues inside the plant. It is not acceptable that management on the floor can't figure out how to pay members correctly. To help prevent your paycheck being shorted, members are reminded to check their DROT's daily, and bring pay issues to your supervisor and su-



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reminded members who have not returned dependent eligibility form to call NESC at 1-800-248-4444 and ask for the dependent verification department and ask to speak to the Dependent Verification Representative. Members who miss the deadline risk losing dependent coverage. Photo by Don Lehman.

perintendent.

Both sides of the plant are currently in their rebalance periods. For those that don't know what this means, rebalance is where the company is attempting to cut jobs out, and rebalance that work to other operators.

During the rebalance period your supervisor must sit down with the operator that they are trying to add work to, and explain what work is being added and what step in the process of performing that operation it must be done in.

The company is also responsible for setting up the workstation before any work is moved from one job to another, updating the O.I.S. (Operator Instruction Sheet), and completing

the Manage the Change Process. Unfortunately, the company appears to not be following this process. Some engineers have stated they don't know the process.

The company has used excuses such as "we have a lot of new management", and "we can't find the right paperwork." In addition, the company has tried to avoid working through the Phase Process as also defined in our Local Agreement.

The language specific to rebalance is found on page 106 and 211-215 of the Local Agreement. We recommend all members take a few minutes and read this language to better understand your contractual rights during rebalance.

## First Local News is seeking two new writers

We are looking to expand our team by adding two talented and motivated writers to help us educate, motivate and recognize our membership.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please choose one of the prompts provided and write an essay approximately 500-750 words in length.

**Essays will be accepted until March 1**  
**E-Mail your submission to [info@local249.org](mailto:info@local249.org)**

### Prompts:

- How has my union membership changed my life?
- What is necessary for unions to survive the next 100 years?
- Why do we need unions and how can we successfully organize in today's world?



# Missouri Republicans file 139 anti-worker bills

By Jason Starr

**R**epublicans in Jeff City are truly afraid of the people they claim to represent. Since 2018, Missouri voters have overwhelmingly approved referendums opposed by Republicans to expand Medicaid, legalize medical marijuana, boost the minimum wage, clean up Missouri's famously corrupt political system, and repeal a widely despised right-to-work law. That's why they are now advancing no less than 11 bills to limit the right to place referendums on the ballot through the petition process.

Their contempt for Missouri voters was evident in a recent hearing in the Capitol where Republican legislators said the referendums they oppose were too difficult for "the average Joe voter" to understand.

We may be "average Joes" but it hasn't escaped many of us that the real reason Republicans intend to make it impossible for a majority of the state's citizens to bypass their state legislature by placing proposed statutes or constitutional amendments on the ballot is that they run counter to what the legislator's big-money sponsors demand of them.

It's not just a problem in Missouri where Republicans run the government from top to bottom, it's a problem in every state where Republicans are in control.

"In a backlash to historic voter turnout in the 2020 general election, and grounded in a rash of baseless and racist allegations of voter fraud and election irregularities, legislators have introduced three times the number of bills to restrict voting access as compared to this time last year," according to a report by the Brennan Center for Justice, a nonpartisan law and policy institute.

"Twenty-eight states have introduced, prefiled, or carried over 106 restrictive bills this year." Unsurprisingly, Missouri ranks third in the number of voter suppression bills in the works.

In addition, Missouri's Republican secretary of state, Jay Ashcroft, is pushing for passage of a bill restoring much of the state's voter photo ID law, gutted as unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court.

Let's be honest about what's at stake here. Republicans hold super majorities in both the House and Senate — they've controlled both houses since 2003. They also hold the governor's mansion and have for the past five years. Missouri is, in essence, a one-party state. Nothing can happen that Republicans oppose.

The effort to restrict voting rights and prevent voters from going around the legislature to enact laws through the initiative process is designed to perpetuate one-party rule into the future no matter what the people want. It is both undemocratic and un-American.

In neighboring Kansas where many of our members live, Republicans are advancing measures to make it



Local 249 President Jason Starr displays a multi-page list of anti-worker bills sponsored by Republicans in the Missouri Legislature at the February membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

more difficult to cast a ballot. Temporary expansions of mail-in voting, implemented because of COVID-19, may not be renewed.

Kansas lawmakers in Topeka weighed eliminating the secretary of state's power to extend deadlines for the delivery of mail ballots — a tool that ensures votes still count even in an emergency that disrupts an election.

But in Washington, Democrats are aiming to expand voting rights after taking narrow control of the U.S. Senate. They say the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol should serve as a rallying point to pass legislation that has stagnated for the last two years.

Missouri Republicans aren't moving ahead just on voter suppression efforts, either. In all, they've filed 139 anti-worker bills in this session of the legislature.

Among the "golden oldies" like "right to work" and paycheck deception, Republicans have found new and creative ways to screw working people and fatten the off-shore accounts of their corporate masters.

Gov. Parson and the legislature couldn't get their act together to protect Missourians from the coronavirus. They failed to enact a statewide mask mandate resulting in more than 400,000 reported COVID-19 cases in the state. Worse, the state ranks dead last when it comes to vaccine rollout compared to other states according to CDC data compiled by the New York Times.

While they couldn't find it in themselves to do anything to protect people from contracting the disease, Jeff City Republicans in the Senate are hot to shield businesses, from COVID-19

lawsuits. Protection for businesses that fail to protect their workers has been fast-tracked.

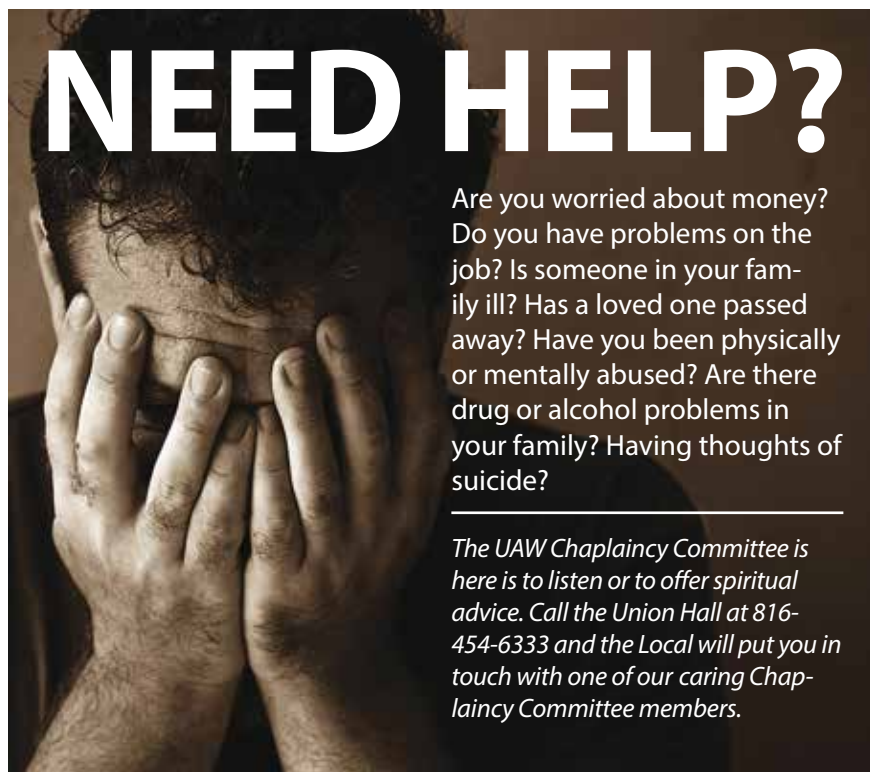
Unfortunately, the care and feeding of businesses by the legislature and governor does not extend to their workers. It will come as no surprise that nothing is being done to protect workers, especially essential workers, from being exposed, providing care when they become ill, or support them when they can't work.

"People are unfortunately going to bring lawsuits," whined Sen. Bill White, R-Joplin, during the debate over the bill. Democrats and labor leaders, on the other hand, see the changes as undermining what few worker protections that exist in the state for essential workers who risk exposure on the job — often without health insurance to pay the bills when they get sick or aid for their families when they can't work.

Many Local 249 members have voiced frustrations with our contracts negotiated in recent years with Ford, GM, and Fiat Chrysler. We have made concessions to allow a two-tier pay structure, temps, and pay increases that don't keep up with inflation, among other issues.

But, we all have to understand that collective bargaining takes place within the framework of the political system we live in. National, state, and local elections have a huge impact on the results we can achieve at the bargaining table.

If we want better contracts we have to show the company and the politicians that we're united behind policies — and, yes, politicians — who support union rights, higher wages, and better working conditions.



## NEED HELP?

Are you worried about money? Do you have problems on the job? Is someone in your family ill? Has a loved one passed away? Have you been physically or mentally abused? Are there drug or alcohol problems in your family? Having thoughts of suicide?

*The UAW Chaplaincy Committee is here to listen or to offer spiritual advice. Call the Union Hall at 816-454-6333 and the Local will put you in touch with one of our caring Chaplaincy Committee members.*



# Biden plan to expand Social Security, Medicare

**N**ewly elected President Joe Biden believes that rebuilding the middle class is a moral obligation. One part of that plan will be of particular interest to Local 249 retirees who depend on Social Security and Medicare along with their UAW-Ford Pension Plan and savings.

UAW retirees over 65 are covered by Medicare and the UAW Health Care Trust. That means the long-term health of Medicare is of paramount interest to retirees. President Biden has pledged to protect Medicare.

Medicare provides health insurance coverage to over 60 million older Americans and people with disabilities. As president, Biden has promised to “continue to defend our nation’s commitment to older Americans and people with disabilities through Medicare, and he will keep Medicare as a separate and distinct program, and ensure there is no disruption to the current Medicare system.”

Roughly 6 in 10 individuals residing in nursing homes are enrolled in Medicaid, including many older Americans, according to Biden.

Unlike the block grant cuts proposed by the former occupant of the White House, the Biden plan ensures that beneficiaries can access home and community-based long-term care when they want it.

His proposal would help Americans pay for long-term care by providing relief for Americans needing long-term care by creating a \$5,000 tax credit for informal caregivers, modeled off of legislation supported by AARP.

Biden sees Social Security as the bedrock of American retirement. Roughly 90% of retirement-age Americans receive Social Security benefits, and one-in-four rely on Social Security

for all, or almost all, of their income. The program has not only ensured that middle-class workers can enjoy the sound and secure retirement they worked so hard for, it also lifted over 17 million older Americans out of poverty in 2017 alone.

The Social Security Trust Fund is already in deficit and expected to be exhausted in 2035. Biden plans urgent action to make the program solvent and prevent cuts to American retirees.

He plans to put the program on a path to long-term solvency by asking Americans who make more than \$400,000 to pay the same taxes on those earnings that middle-class families pay.

He would also provide the oldest beneficiaries – those who have been receiving retirement benefits for at least 20 years – with a higher monthly check to help protect retirees from the pain of dwindling retirement savings.

For many couples, the death of a spouse means that Social Security benefits will be cut in half – putting pressure on the surviving spouse who still needs to make the mortgage payment and handle other bills. The Biden Plan will allow surviving spouses to keep a higher share of the benefits.

The plan would also implement a true minimum benefit for lifelong workers. No one who has worked for decades and paid into Social Security should have to spend their retirement in poverty. The Biden Plan will revolutionize



Local 249’s monthly retiree meetings have been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, but hopes are high that once a high enough proportion of the public is vaccinated the meetings — and fellowship — can resume. Photo by Don Lehman.

the Social Security’s minimum benefit, which has deteriorated over time to the point of being entirely ineffective. Under the Biden Plan, workers who spent 30 years working will get a benefit of at least 125% of the poverty level.

Of course, this plan still has to be passed by Congress and signed into law. With the Senate divided 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans, it’s going to be a battle to win passage of these critical improvements to Social Security and Medicare.

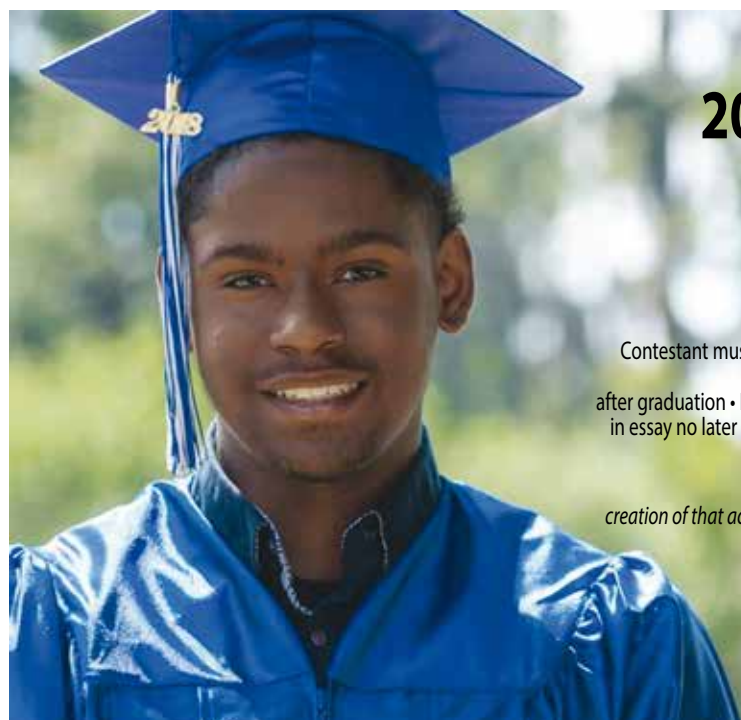
That’s why active Local 249 members — who will rely on these programs in the future — and retirees who are counting on them now need to let their Senators know they want Social

Security and Medicare to be improved and placed on a firm financial footing for generations to come.

You can phone the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to reach your Senator. A switchboard operator will connect you directly with the Senate office you request.

You can write your Senator by addressing an envelope to Office of Senator (Name), United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510. Missouri’s senators are: Roy Blunt and Josh Hawley. Kansas’ senators are: Jerry Moran and George Marshall.

Let them know you support the Biden Plan to expand Social Security and Medicare.



## UAW Local 249 2021 Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest

Sponsored by the Education Committee

First Place: \$5,000 • Second Place \$2,500 • Third Place \$1,500 • Fourth Place \$1,000

For High School Juniors & Seniors

**Sign Up Now! Deadline for Registration is Friday, March 5, 2021**

Contestant must: Be a junior or senior in high school during the 2020 - 2021 school year • Be planning to attend a college, university, or trade school the following school year after graduation • Be a dependent of a member in good standing of Local Union 249 • NOT be a winner of last year’s contest • Contestant must turn in essay no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 30, 2021 • Contestant must not use their name on the paper, but they must use their assigned code number • Name use will disqualify the contestant • Essay’s must be between 800-1200 words.

TOPICS: (1) The National Labor Relations Act gave birth to Unions in America. What was the creation of that act in response to? (2) Amazon could soon unionize. How could the workers win official recognition and what economic impact would it have in the communities in which they work?

A code number will be assigned, and a copy of registration sheet will be returned to you.

Registration forms, will be available at the Union Hall Monday through Friday, until March 5, 2021 8:00 am until 5:00 pm.





Local 249 members joined SEIU Healthcare workers and Jobs With Justice Feb. 10 to demand \$15 an hour at Menorah Hospital. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Local 249 activists defend health care workers

By Pat Hayes

**M**ore than 30 Local 249 activists braved frigid temperatures Feb. 10 to demonstrate their solidarity with Kansas City SEIU Healthcare Workers who are demanding \$15 an hour wage at Menorah and Research hospitals.

Both hospitals are owned by HCA Healthcare, a 187-hospital system based in Nashville, Tenn. HCA Healthcare reported \$3.75 billion in profits in 2020.

Despite those huge profits, SEIU Healthcare's frontline workers have been asked to take cuts in pay and benefits as they negotiate their next contract. HCA stands in contrast with area hospitals such as the University of Kansas Health System, North Kansas City Hospital and Meritas that have already raised their workers' pay to \$15 an hour.

In addition to the SEIU Healthcare workers, nurses at Menorah affiliated with the National Nurses Organizing Committee, struggled to reach a fair

contract last year.

Last April, Celia Yap Banago, an RN who worked more than 40 years at Research Medical Center died after caring for a COVID-19 patient. Before her death, she raised an alarm about the shortage of personal protective equipment, such as masks, gowns and face shields at the hospital.

"It was disturbing to hear the stories from the workers of Menorah Hospital who belong to SEIU," says Local 249 member Gary Thomas who joined the protest.

"The struggles they have to endure to make sure the hospital is clean, secure and ready for the next patient are nothing short of heroic," he said. "Oftentimes we, the working

class, forget that a well-maintained hospital environment begins with the invisible employees. The members of SEIU who clean our sheets, the operating rooms and the hallways. That their jobs are to reduce the spread of disease just as much so as it is a doctor's. Why, once we realize this, would we expect them to earn poverty wages while putting their lives on the line during a pandemic?"

SEIU Healthcare represents healthcare, child care, home care and nursing home workers in the Midwest. Their 91,000 members provide care to children, seniors, patients and people with disabilities.

Union members are fighting for quality care and quality jobs for home care, hospital, nursing home and child care workers.

"No company or corporation should be allowed to not pay a living wage," says Local 249 member Shirley Mata who braved the cold to add her

voice to the protest. "\$15 an hour does not allow for frills. At \$15 you still have to pay rent, lights, water, gas, food for yourself, insurance for a car if you can get one. God help you if you get sick and need medical. After taxes something on that list can not be paid. Shame on any company or corporation leaving any workers homeless, hungry or both."

Dave Grant, Local 249's Veterans' Committee Chairperson also attended the protest. "SEIU Healthcare workers were reinvigorated by the solidarity of the union members supporting them," he said.

Justin Stein, Organizing Director of Missouri Jobs With Justice, who helped organize the protest thanked Local 249 members for their solidarity with these essential workers.

"[Union] leaders at Research and Menorah were really inspired by it. We're really grateful to be in the trenches with you," he said.