



# C O P E Report

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Politics is one of the lifebloods of the labor movement. Our American political system is unique in its opportunities for us to change things for the better. It is not always easy but we must try.

There are constant forces allied against workers. Corporate interests have long understood the strengths of the political system and have used it to strengthen their rights and weaken ours. In fact, we are the only industrialized nation in the world that puts corporate interest's first - people second. We are a long way from President Lincoln's statement that we are a government "*of the people, by the people, for the people.*" That doesn't mean we can't change it; we can change it and we must. To do that, we must commit ourselves to a constant vigilance and willingness to work hard. As Samuel Gompers said, "*elect our friends and defeat our enemies.*" We must do this regardless of party. We must examine the records and find those who are willing to fight with us to equalize society. We must find those who will keep America the "land of opportunity" which has opened up so many doors for our families and so many others.

This year we must recommit ourselves to making sure that every union member and their family has the opportunity to register and vote. Our future demands it.

As we finish the first quarter of 2008 and prepare for what could be our largest political operation yet, let's look back on 2006 and 2007.

## 2006

I can't stop talking about this incredible year. As we reported in the 2006 Officers report at our 2006 convention, we had incredible opportunities before us. The failure and incompetence of the Bush Presidency set the stage for chances that we have not seen in along time. Thanks to all of our leaders and members, we were able to accomplish some great victories. President George and I can't thank all of you enough for your hard work and commitment to electing pro-worker candidates. Let's review our successes.

Labor 2006 - Our members did an incredible job! We distributed over one million leaflets and made hundreds of thousands of phone calls. We had locals take the lead and print their own customized leaflets from the Working Families Toolkit. The leaflets were distributed to workers at

thousands of worksites and to the doors of our members. We continued to make use of the E-Activist list and used the Internet to communicate with thousands of our members about issues as well as candidates.

Some of the major achievements made possible by our unions and union volunteers in the PA AFL-CIO Labor 2006 included: 6,300 union members canvassed door-to-door and distributed issue/candidate leaflets. An average of 600 union volunteers walked every week with walks averaging 800 volunteers in the final weeks before Election Day. Over 2.5 million worksite flyers were distributed to union members. More than 1.3 million local union letters and/or persuasion leaflets mailed to union homes, 5,900 volunteers staffing phone banks, 720,000 live phone calls were made to union members.

Working America - in 2006 Working America really came into its own. They employed thousands of canvassers to talk to and educate non-union members about health care and pensions. They signed up well over 300,000 members in our State.

U.S. Senate - This had to be the best victory for Pennsylvania. For twelve years we endured the arrogance and anti-unionism of Rick Santorum. In 2006, optimism and hope trumped right-wing hatred. Bob Casey ran and ran hard. The labor movement put out an unprecedented number of flyers to our worksites comparing the Casey record of support for working families and the Santorum record of hypocrisy and anti-worker votes.

Governor - Since this was Governor Rendell's reelection, we approached the campaign a little differently. He had been ahead in all of the polls so our focus here was reaffirming with our members Governor Rendell's support on some of our key labor issues. His operation combined with labor, helped drive the results in the congressional races.

Congress - 2006 was a fantastic year as it related to Congress. We beat three anti-union incumbent Congressmen. In the 4th Congressional District, Melissa Hart was defeated by Jason Altmire; in the 7th we beat Curt Weldon with Joe Sestak; and in the 10th Chris Carney beat Don Sherwood. The democrats picked up an additional seat in the 8th when Patrick Murphy beat incumbent Mike Fitzpatrick. The PA AFL-CIO was neutral

in this race. Our entire pro-labor Congressional delegation won re-election.

State House - We had a terrific operation in the State House and won a number of races that we weren't expected to win. While we have many Republican friends in the State House, the Democrats took control. This is important to us because the Chairs of committees and the Majority leadership control the flow of business. This is critical when we want pro labor legislation moved out of committee onto the floor for a vote.

### 2007 Election in Review

The victories of Judge Seamus McCaffery, Judge Debra Todd and Christine Donohue will help ensure respect for the rights of working families on the courts. All three have strong union backgrounds: Judge McCaffery is a 38-year union member, (FOP); Judge Debra Todd is the daughter of a USW member from Aliquippa, PA; and Christine Donohue is the daughter of a coal miner, (UMWA) and a seamstress, (ILGWU). The PA AFL-CIO also endorsed the victories in retention elections for the State Appeals Courts, (listed below).

These major victories, as well as others in County and Municipal elections were all made possible by the mobilization of volunteers and union voters by Area Labor Federations, Central Labor Councils and Local Unions, as well as the Pennsylvania Alliance of Retired Americans (PARA) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women, (CLUW). Union member to member activities included: phone calls, door to door canvassing, plant gate leaflets, direct mail, and local union publications to union households throughout Pennsylvania.

The leadership and volunteers in the Schuylkill County Labor Council and North East Area Labor Federation made election history by electing County Commissioners that give Democrats the majority for the first time since 1971.

The following are statewide results:

#### **Pennsylvania Supreme Court**

Judge Seamus McCaffery, (D) 1,205,930 – 30 %

Judge Debra Todd, (D) 1,060,192 – 26%

#### Retention Candidate:

Justice Tom Saylor, (R) 1,161,216 – 66.8%

#### **Superior Court of Pennsylvania**

Christine Donohue, (D) 1,075,591 – 19.4%

#### Retention Candidates:

Judge Joan Orié Melvin, (R) 1,131,028 – 64%

Judge John Musmanno, (D) 1,026,123 – 61.9%

Judge Correale Stevens, (R) 1,057,652 – 63.8%

## **Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania**

### Retention Candidates:

President Judge Bonnie Leadbetter, (R) 1,039,087 – 63.3%

Judge Doris Smith-Ribner, (D) 1,029,404 – 62.8%

Judge Bernard McGinley, (D) 1,016,637 – 62.6%

### 2008

This is, of course, a presidential election year. The level of activity for the PA AFL-CIO will increase to the highest level we can attain. As of this writing, it appears as if the Republican candidate will be John McCain. The Democratic race is still in flux although by our convention, the first week in April, it could be clearer. Even though the approval of the Republican Party is low, John McCain seems to have been able to distance himself from the ineptitude of the Republicans on the economy. It will be our job to educate our members about his record. He will be a very formidable candidate in Pennsylvania. In addition to the Presidency, we of course have our Statewide Officials: Attorney General, Auditor General, and Treasurer. Also, we have all of Congress, the odd numbered State Senate Districts and the entire State House of Representatives.

We will have to rise to an even higher level as we reach out to educate our members and their families about the importance of this election. There are many misconceptions out there about the respective candidates and it will be our job to educate and inform our members about the issues that concern working families.

Our workers have seen their wages lose value to inflation and eaten up by health care premium increases. **It's time we said "Enough!"** It's time us to take our country back from those who put obscene profits over workers. We can do that by working harder than ever to elect our friends and defeat our enemies. We won't stop until we win. See you on the campaign trail for workers.

