



**PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO  
UPDATE**

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**IMPORTANT!  
MAKE COPIES AND DISTRIBUTE THE PENNSYLVANIA  
AFL-CIO UPDATE TO ALL UNION ACTIVISTS**

**Governor's Health Reform Plan Needs to Guarantee Cost Savings for Purchasers, Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Tells House Insurance Committee**

Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President William George, testifying before the State House Insurance Committee last week, applauded Governor Ed Rendell for proposing the most comprehensive health reform plan of any state in the nation however the legislation House Bill 700, needs some fine-tuning to address the issue of how cost savings will be passed along to purchasers – unions, business and individuals - of health care.

"With 96% of the voters already covered by some form of health insurance the key issue for them is health care cost containment to protect the vast majority of Pennsylvanians – 89% - who are already insured but are concerned about losing it due to spiraling costs," Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President William George told members of the committee. It is critical that the legislation contain tangible cost savings for current purchasers - labor and business - to build broad-based public support for the entire reform package," George said.

The Governor's plan proposes to Cover All Pennsylvanians which will eliminate cost shifting which occurs when uninsured workers need health care and costs current purchasers an estimated \$1.4 billion in annual costs. The plan also proposes to introduce a pay for performance system that will stop paying hospitals for care associated with hospital acquired infections, medical errors and other avoidable costs which is estimated to save \$6.2 billion in annual costs. The problem is there are no guarantees in the legislation that these cost savings will get passed along to purchasers, George said in his testimony.

George presented to Committee members a list of suggestions to assure that cost savings do get passed along to purchasers and additional ways to lower costs and improve quality which are not included in the current legislation. They include:

- Adoption of fee schedules tied to the Medicare Fee Schedule which the legislature has already confronted in the past in both workers compensation and auto insurance rates.
- Mandate a single claims form that can be filed electronically. One standard claims form used by all insurers will reduce administrative costs by 10–20 percent, money that could go into providing patient care
- Adopt modern health care information technologies across the board, including: electronic billing and claims submission; medical information systems for physicians; automated patient error reporting systems; and provide interventions for those with chronic illnesses.
- Mandate, instead of market driven, "pay for performance" pay system, which will no longer reimburse hospitals for expenses associated with hospital acquired infections, as part of the

basic standard package. Medicare will begin mandating "pay for performance in 2008.

- Require hospitals to use MedMined's Data Mining Surveillance service which will improve quality of care, reduce infection rates and lower non-reimbursed costs.
- Make the chronic care management model available to all health insurance purchasers to guarantee cost savings in the private sector not just the public sector. In addition insurers must be prohibited from requiring co-payments or deductibles for chronic disease management so that patients do participate in the chronic care disease management program.
- Require all employers with part-time workers to provide health care to prevent these employers from gaming the system and preventing any potential disincentives to provide full time employment.
- Re-introduce Certificate of Need or a Public Utility Commission – style regulatory process in the health care system to improve quality and control costs.

The State House Insurance Committee, Chaired by State Rep.'s Tony DeLuca and Nick Micozzie will be holding additional hearings on the Governor's Health Reform plan "Prescription for Pennsylvania" in Secane, Delaware County; Wilkes-Barre; and Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania AFL-CIO President is scheduled to testify on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:45 PM at the Primos-Secane Fire Company, Delaware County and tentatively in Pittsburgh on either May 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Armstrong County Commissioners Approve Resolution Against Unfair Trade Agreements**

On March 15<sup>th</sup> the Armstrong County Commissioners, with full support of unions affiliated with the Indiana, Armstrong, Clarion Central Labor Council, and the Northeast PA Area Labor Federation (ALF), went on the public record against unfair trade agreements that are detrimental to the jobs living standards of workers and communities in Armstrong County.

The resolution urges members of Congress and the President to put a moratorium on all new trade agreements; investigate and review all current trade agreements as well as membership in international trade organizations; and ensure that these agreements and policies are in the best interests of the citizens of Armstrong County, Pennsylvania and the United States.

Copies of the resolution have been transmitted to the President of the United States, Congress, State Legislature and area State Legislators. Armstrong Commissioners: Pat Kirkland, Rich Fink and James Scahill also want the County Commissioners Association and the National Association of Counties to adopt the resolution.

The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO congratulates affiliated unions and CLC President Ron Airhart for their successful results and encourages all Central Labor Councils and Area Labor Federations to educate and mobilize public support by having local elected officials at the county and municipal level approve similar resolutions.

The Bush administration is pushing for renewal of Fast Track Trade Authority which expires in June if Congress doesn't approve re-authorization. Passage of the resolutions tells members of Congress to say no to any extension of Fast Track or other unfair trade policies that do not contain enforceable protections for workers and the environment.

Sample resolutions are available by contacting Bethany Bobb (717) 231-2852 in the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO's Legislative Dept. The Pennsylvania AFL-CIO is also working with allies in the State Legislature to have resolutions approved by the State House and Senate.

Area members of Congress, Jack Murtha and Phil English, in a news report on passage of the resolution expressed their support for fair trade policies. Eljer a plumbing products manufacturer in Ford City, Armstrong County, recently outsourced jobs to China, causing many of the companies' employees to lose their jobs. Armstrong County Commissioner Rick Fink stated that

he sat across the table from the CEO of Eljer who said the competition is outsourcing, so they have to avail the company to it too. Foreign nations, such as China, have engaged in a wide range of unfair trade practices, including currency manipulation, subsidizing industries and illegal dumping products in the United States market.

**In related news on Unfair Trade:** This week the members of Hershey Chocolate Workers Local 464 are holding meetings to vote on a tentative agreement that provides a voluntary early retirement package and voluntary severance to union workers at two plants in Hershey, (Dauphin County), PA to cushion the blow from the outsourcing of approximately 600 to 650 jobs by Hershey Co. to a plant in Monterrey, Mexico. Local 464's negotiating committee has recommended that the agreement be approved. If it is not approved, the union's negotiating committee believes the alternative is even worse. Hershey Co. recently purchased a 200,000 square foot building in Monterrey, Mexico where it expects to begin making candy later this year. The plan calls for as many as 500 employees to work at the plant initially according to a news report in the Harrisburg Patriot News.

### **Friendship and Solidarity Grow Thanks to Popular Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Working Family Trap Shoots**

#### *Schedule for Fourth Annual Trap Shoots*

Thousands of union members have participated in the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO's Working Families Trap Shoots over the past three years, giving union members, their families, and their friends the opportunity to participate in a day of fun, good food and a friendly competition that is open to all ages and skill levels.

Each event features five classes which are based upon age and skill level to assure that the competition is fair and everyone has the chance to win prizes and become qualifiers for the Statewide Final. Seven top finalists from each class at the Regional Shoots qualify for the 100 bird Statewide Final.

Volunteers from local unions, Central Labor Councils and Area Labor Federations provide much of the assistance in organizing and promoting these events which are coordinated statewide by Carl Dillinger at the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO and Rosann Barker, of the Northwestern Area Labor Federation.

The prizes awarded at the Regional Shoots include: a Remington 870 Express shotgun for the "High Gun of the Day" and an "American Times Clock" for the "High Union Gun of the Day". There are other prizes awarded in each class: including \$50 and \$25 Gift Certificates to Sporting Goods Stores as well as sporting goods items.

Prizes awarded at the Statewide Finals include: A hand crafted Remington 870 Express Trap Shoot Shot gun, as well as other shot guns and rifles, sporting goods gift certificates and items for each class.

The entry fee is \$30.00 per person for the Regional Trap Shoots and \$35.00 per person for the statewide finals and includes food, refreshments and a chance on a Remington 870 Express Shot gun raffled at the State Finals (you do not have to be present to win). Pre-paid squads of five for regional shoots can save \$5 per person on the entry fee.

For more information on how to enter or on how to organize a Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Trap Shoot in your area call Carl Dillinger at (717) 231-9351, or Rosann Barker at (814) 455-4192.

### **Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Fourth Annual Working Families Trap Shoots**

*(see schedule below, additional events may be added)*

#### **Harrisburg Regional Shoot**

Sunday, May, 20<sup>th</sup> 10 AM – 1 PM

Palmyra Sportsman Assoc.

End of Sportsman Rd.

Palmyra, PA 17078

#### **Lehigh Valley Regional Shoot**

Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 10 AM – 1 PM

Rural Sportsman Assoc.

St. Hwy. Rt 100

Trexlerstown, PA 18106

#### **Zone 6 Regional Shoot**

Sunday, June 24<sup>th</sup> 10 AM – 1 PM

Muddy Creek Rod & Gun

Minersville, PA

#### **Erie County Regional Shoot**

Sunday, July 8<sup>th</sup> 10 AM – 1 PM

Bay City Gun Club

11667 N Route 97

Waterford, PA 16441

#### **Westmoreland Regional Shoot**

Sunday, TBD 10 AM – 1 PM

TBD

#### **Clearfield County Regional Shoot**

Sunday, TBD 10 AM – 1 PM

TBD

#### **Statewide Finals**

Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> 10 AM – 1 PM

Bay City Gun Club

11667 N Route 97

Waterford, PA 16441

### **HOLD THESE DATES**

#### **Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4)**

**April 18, 2007**

Hilton, Harrisburg, PA

#### **2007 Bureau of Workers' Compensation Conference**

**May 30 – June 1, 2007**

Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, Hershey, PA

#### **Keystone Research Center's 6<sup>th</sup> Sol Hoffman Awards Dinner**

**June 7, 2007**

Hilton, Harrisburg, PA

#### **PA AFL-CIO Conference on Workforce Development**

**June 12, 2007**

Dixon University Center, Harrisburg, PA

#### **PA AFL-CIO Community Services Institute**

**July 22 – 27, 2007**

Crown Plaza Hotel, Pittsburgh, PA

#### **PA AFL-CIO Cope Golf Outing**

**September 20, 2007**

Westmoreland County, Madison Club, Madison, PA

#### **PA AFL-CIO COPE Institute**

**October 1-3, 2007**

Harrisburg East Holiday Inn, Harrisburg, PA

### **PENNSYLVANIA AFL-CIO LOBBYISTS' MEETING**

**Meetings are held Mondays at 10:30 a.m.**

**At the PA AFL-CIO Headquarters**

Apr: 16, 23, 30; May: 7, 21; June 4, 11, 18, 25

#### **Session Days:**

##### **PA House**

April 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30(NV)

May 7, 8, 21, 22, 23

June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

##### **PA Senate**

April 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30

May 1, 2, 7, 8, 21, 22

June 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

**\*The Legislative Session schedule is subject to change without notice.**

### **WORLD WIDE WEB**

Visit the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO home page at: <http://www.paafclcio.org>

Visit the PA Legislative Website at: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us>