



# NWPA ALF News

2021 July Edition

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

The NWPA ALF's jurisdiction covers 19 Pennsylvania Counties: Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Potter, Venango, Warren and Westmoreland. We produce this newsletter for the members of our affiliates.

Any comments or questions about this newsletters or its contents should be sent to the NWPA ALF is located at 1276 Liberty St. Ste. 2 in Franklin, PA 16323.

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## LABOR DAY 2021

You know that many anti-Labor messages wrongly portray Union members as unproductive and overpaid. But the truth is (as JFK commented) that Unions have “raised wages, shortened hours . . . and brought justice and democracy to the shop floor.” As you know, the very concept of weekends, 8-hour work days, 40-hour weeks, and overtime are the fruits of Labor Unions. To help educate the public about the role of Unions in building America’s middle class, we’ve had the privilege of organizing Erie’s Labor Day Parade since 2015.

Without the hardworking members/leaders of organized labor, the revival of the Labor Day Parade in Erie would NEVER have happened. THANK YOU so much for helping us to organize, publicize and fund this incredible community event.

Due to a sudden medical situation, it is impossible for Rosann to continue organizing the 2021 NWPA ALF LABOR DAY PARADE. No one is more heartbroken with this decision than her, but she needs to step back and make her health her priority. We hope you understand. Next week, we’ll mail back your generous donation checks.

Rosann offered to put together a parade timeline and planning checklist for the Labor Day Parade and would be delighted to share it with any group that would like to host the Labor Day Parade this year.

**GREAT NEWS, IBEW 56 will be hosting the 2021 Erie Labor Day Parade!** We have shared information with them and ask everyone to show them the support and participation we have enjoyed. They will be sending out their applications shortly. Terry Baker and Jim Nuber will be the coordinators and need people to serve on a Parade Committee. You can reach Jim at his office 814-825-5505, cell 814-882-5656, email; jnuber@ibew56, or Terry Baker at cell 814-860-0297. The application can be found in page 10.

**This year’s theme for designing your floats is “Working Champions” which was submitted by Zachary Gibson.**

**... MEMBERS OF LABOR IN OTHER CLCS ARE HOLDING/ATTENDING LABOR DAY EVENTS;**

The MERCER CLC is asking all of LABOR to join them for the LABOR DAY PARADE in Hermitage, PA see their flier on page 11,

Greater Westmoreland CLC is working on the Labor United Celebration, a two day event in the Parks and invites everyone to join then, see their flier is on page 13,

and there is always the Pittsburgh Labor Day Parade which is hosted by the Allegheny Central Labor Council located just south of our jurisdiction.

**WE HOPE YOU MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND ONE OR MORE OF THESE EVENTS!**

## NWPA ALF ANNUAL MEETING

Meeting 7 PM on  
Wednesday, September 29th

Our E-Board Meets at 6:00 PM  
via ZOOM  
Special speakers: TBD

RSVP to 814-360-8336 or  
[nwpaalf@gmail.com](mailto:nwpaalf@gmail.com)

### CLC Meetings in NWPA ALF:

Beaver-Lawrence CLC Meeting:  
7:30 PM on Monday, July 19th  
IBEW 712 Hall, 217 Sassafras Lane,  
Beaver 15009  
For more information call 724-971-7473.

Butler County CLC Meeting:  
7:30 PM on Wednesday, Aug 4th  
UAW 3303 Hall 112 Hollywood Rd.,  
Butler, PA 16003  
For more information call 724-285-4883 ext. 233

Clearfield-Elk-Cameron-Jefferson (Potter)  
CLC Meeting  
7:30 PM on Thursday, Aug. 5th  
via ZOOM  
For more information call 814-937-2208.

Erie-Crawford CLC Meeting:  
7:30 PM on Wednesday, Aug. 16th  
USW 3199 Hall, 703 French St.,  
Erie 16501  
For more information call 814-823-9940.

Greater Westmoreland CLC Meeting:  
7:00 PM on Monday, July 19th  
via ZOOM  
For more information call 724-600-6266.

Indiana-Armstrong CLC Meeting:  
7:30 PM on Thursday, July 22nd via ZOOM  
For more information call 724-479-0923.

Mercer County CLC Meeting:  
7:30 PM on Thursday, July 15th  
USW 1660 Hall, 1028 Roemer Blvd.,  
Farrell 16121  
For more information call 724-854-0605.

Venango-Clarion Chapter Meeting:  
6:00 PM on Thursday, July 8th  
IAM 1842 Hall, 24 Front St., Franklin 16323  
For more information call 814-671-4420.

Warren-Forest (McKean) CLC Meeting  
6:00 PM on Thursday, July 1  
via ZOOM  
For more information call 814-730-7558



## 2021-2022 NWPA ALF Scholarship Winners Announced

We thank every student who applied for our scholarships and all of our judges who reviewed the essays to determine our winners. We congratulate the applicants as you have shown your determination to further your education. You have shown more initiative than most of your peers. Our judges commented on the difficulty selecting just one winner. We are proud of all of you!

Below is the list of winners:

The \$500 NWPA ALF Scholarship was won by letter F. That was Marah Rush her dad is from USW 150T.

The \$500 David A Bielski Scholarship winner was letter H. That is Andrew Wentzel his dad is a member of IBEW 712.

We did not have any applicants for the Dr. Ferster Scholarship this year.

The winner of the \$200 Theme Slogan Contest \$200 was Zachary Gibson, he is a senior at New Castle High School. The Slogan he submitted was Working Champions.

Our winners will receive their awards at our 7:00 PM June 30th meeting in the 1st Floor Meeting Room of the AFSCME DC 85 Hall at 1276 Liberty St, Franklin, PA 16323. Remember to enter from the Elk Street side of the building.

We congratulate the winners and wish all of the applicants well as they go forward with their education. Don't forget that you will be able to apply again next year. We have a website (<http://unionhall.aflcio.org/nwpaalf>) in the resource section are articles with other scholarships, grants, and additional ways to obtain funding. Please, take the time to check them out.

### Recent Changes At The NWPA ALF

We have recently experienced changes here are the NWPA ALF. The McKean-Potter CLC (M-P CLC) has been dissolved by the AFL-CIO. In an effort to get them representation at a local CLC requested by the NWPA ALF and discussed at our CLCs, the AFL-CIO changed the jurisdiction of the Warren-Forest CLC to now include McKean County and the Clearfield-Elk-Cameron-Jefferson CLC's jurisdiction to include Potter County.

We have since changed our logo, our documentation, and forms. The changes required great cooperation from our affiliates with membership previously allocated to the M-P CLC, in our LaborKey Per capita financial records. We truly appreciated their help, in getting the count to 0 members to remove that CLC from our LaborKey forms. Our forms and reports are now correct.

If your membership was reallocated to one of these CLC's join the CLC Meeting by ZOOM or in person if applicable and enjoy the Solidarity!



## NEW CASE ON CREDIT FOR SHORT TERM DISABILITY

By Barb Holmes, attorney, Blaufeld, Schiller, and Holmes Attorneys at Law

When an employee is hurt at work, and the claim for workers' compensation benefits is denied, that individual may file for short term disability (STD) benefits to have money coming in until the compensation litigation is complete. A recent Commonwealth Court case held "in a case of first impression" how the receipt of STD benefits is to be credited against an award of total disability workers' compensation benefits.

In *Cochenour*, the employee, injured on the employer's shuttle bus, was ultimately required to have back surgery. While Ms. Cochenour was off work and litigation ongoing, she received both STD and long term disability (LTD) benefits. When her workers' compensation claim was awarded, the Judge allowed a credit for those benefits because they were funded by the employer. The credit permitted was for the net STD and LTD benefits Ms. Cochenour received, that is, after taxes had been deducted from each.

On appeal to the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board, employer argued that it should have been given credit for the amount of benefits it paid, not the amount Ms. Cochenour received.<sup>1</sup> The Board affirmed the net credit for STD, but reversed the LTD net credit, because there was no evidence that taxes were deducted from those payments. The Board relied on Section 204 of the Act that allows credit for benefits paid "in lieu of compensation" but only for the amount "actually paid to the claimant."

Employer appealed to Commonwealth Court. The Court noted at the outset of this part of its opinion that employers are allowed a credit or offset against their workers' compensation liability for amounts paid to employees *not* as wages but because they are unable to work, even if those payments are made while disputing entitlement to workers' compensation benefits. The Court held that the application of Section 204—used by the Appeal Board—was not correct, because that section applies to benefits that an employee receives while also receiving workers' compensation benefits. Section 204 applies to the concurrent receipt of benefits like pension benefits or unemployment and workers' compensation total disability benefits. Ms. Cochenour had not received workers' compensation benefits while receiving STD benefits. Therefore, the employer argued, it should be given credit for the whole amount paid based upon a different section of the Act, Section 319, which concerns subrogation out of an award:

"Relevant to this appeal, the key language in Section 319 is 'the amount so paid' by the employer, which Employer argues allows it to claim a credit on the pre-tax gross amount of payments made, as compared with the inapposite language in Section 204(a) to the effect that credits are based on the amount 'received by the employee,' which indicates allowance of a post-tax net credit based on the amount the claimant actually receives."

Analyzing these sections of the Act, the Court determined that once the employer establishes the amount it paid in non-pension disability benefits, it is entitled to a credit of that whole amount, that is, the gross amount of the STD. The fact that taxes were withheld, and Ms. Cochenour did not *actually receive* that amount did not trouble the Court. Rather, the Court determined that allowing the employer a credit for the gross amount of its STD payments did not create a "loss" for the injured employee, because Ms. Cochenour—or any such employee—could request a refund for the tax amounts withheld. The Court did not consider this to be a "windfall" to the employer, *as that was the amount it paid*. The Court considered the opposite result—allowing employer only a net credit—to create a *loss* to the employer and a *potential windfall to the injured employee*, since the injured worker could recoup the taxes withheld, but the employer cannot.

This holding means there are now extra steps for the injured worker who receives STD and LTD and has taxes deducted, particularly if the taxes are deducted a year (or more) prior to the outcome of the workers' compensation litigation and award. Amended tax returns may need to be filed. If an injured worker's claim is denied and s/he is off work and obtains STD/LTD benefits, it may be appropriate to discuss the receipt of these benefits with a tax professional who could counsel the individual on whether to withhold taxes. That is beyond the scope of this article, but may be worth a discussion with an accountant or tax professional, as the employer will be able to recoup more in STD and perhaps LTD than the injured worker actually gets in hand during a time when s/he may need to maximize what is received in order to meet his/her obligations while off work.

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<sup>1</sup>Employer also argued, of course, that the award of total disability workers' compensation benefits was in error.



## THE PRO ACT MOST IMPORTANT LEGISLATION TODAY

We all need to help promote the Pro Act. It is the most important piece of Legislation today. Below are images of the front and back of pre paid postcards available in our Office, with your CLCs, and many Local Unions. Utilize this information when talking to your members, family, & friends about the Pro Act.

### TOGETHER, WE CAN WIN OUR WORKERS FIRST AGENDA!

Our outdated labor laws no longer protect our right to form and join unions. The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act is how our laws catch up.

The PRO Act is the most significant worker empowerment legislation since the Great Depression. President Biden is ready to sign it. But it's stuck in the U.S. Senate.

Stronger unions mean higher wages, safer working conditions and dignity for all who work. The PRO Act will help our economy build back better:

- ✓ Hold corporations accountable for union-busting.
- ✓ Protect workers' rights to form and join unions.
- ✓ Repeal "right to work" laws.

**MAIL  
BACK  
TODAY**

Tell your Senator how broken labor laws impact workers and how labor law reform can create an economy that works for everyone.

**BUILD BACK  
BETTER WITH  
UNIONS**  
PASS THE PRO ACT  
AFL-CIO

UNION MESSAGE

## TELL YOUR SENATOR TO PASS THE PRO ACT

1. Empower workers to organize, bargain, and reach a first contract after union is recognized.
2. End employers' practice of punishing striking workers by hiring permanent replacements.
3. Hold corporations accountable by penalizing employers who retaliate against pro-union workers.
4. Repeal Jim Crow era "right to work" laws that lead to lower wages, fewer benefits and dangerous workplaces.
5. Create pathways for workers to form unions without fear in newer industries like Big Tech.

## Public Sector Safety & Health Fundamentals Certificate Program

The certificate program in Public Sector Safety & Health Fundamentals supports OSHA's mission by training public sector employees in occupational safety and health to reduce incident rates for workers in state and local governments. Participants have the opportunity to earn certificates for Construction and General Industry training.

Participants can choose from a variety of topics such as occupational safety and health standards for the construction or general industry, safety and health management, accident investigation, fall hazard awareness, and record keeping. Courses are available at OSHA Training Institute (OTI) Education Centers nationwide. Although this program was primarily designed for public sector employees, it is available for anyone interested in furthering their knowledge of occupational safety and health.

### Program Information

All courses required to complete the certificate programs are available through OTI Education Centers. To be awarded a certificate, students must successfully complete a minimum of seven courses, comprised of a minimum of 68 contact hours. Courses are transferable and may be completed at different OTI Education Centers. For locations nationwide, please view the OTI Education Centers map. For additional information, please see the FAQs or contact an OTI Education Center.

### How to Apply

1. Review program requirements to determine the appropriate certificate program (Construction or General Industry).
2. Find and register for courses at an OTI Education Center using the Searchable Course Schedule.
3. Upon completion of required courses, contact the OTI Education Center to request an application form.
4. Submit the completed form and supporting documentation to the OTI Education Center.

AFL2101

## **DO I QUALIFY FOR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS?**

**Prepared by Rudberg Law Offices, LLC**

Often Social Security Disability Benefits are overlooked as an important resource once someone has left the workforce. In order to apply for Social Security Disability benefits, you can apply online at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov> or apply in person at your local Social Security Administration "SSA". When filling out the application, it is important that accurate information concerning the names and addresses of all your treating physicians is provided. Additionally, all medical impairments for which you have sought treatment should be listed, not merely your most severe impairments. SSA must consider ALL of your health conditions in evaluating whether you are entitled to Social Security Disability benefits.

After you file an application for Social Security Disability benefits, SSA will begin contacting your treating physicians in order to obtain medical records. You may want to obtain in writing, to submit to the SSA, the opinion of one of your treating physicians as to the nature and degree of your disability, with that physician clearly stating your course of treatment and any specific limitations you may have. The opinion of a treating physician that you will be disabled for a period of twelve (12) months or longer will greatly increase your chances of being approved for benefits.

I also suggest you make sure the SSA is able to obtain all records pertinent to your medical conditions. Very often, the SSA will either not seek records or not be able to obtain records from all of your medical providers. Therefore, you should inquire as to what records they have received and try to obtain and send to them any other records you feel are important in assessing your disability status.

During the time SSA is in the process of evaluating your claim for benefits, you should be sure to return any phone calls promptly and to attend any appointments for evaluation they schedule for you.

If you are denied benefits, you should immediately contact SSA's office, as you will have only sixty (60) days in which to file an appeal of Social Security's Decision. Failure to file an appeal within that time frame may result in your ability to file an appeal being lost forever. You may wish to have an attorney file the second step appeal for you.

If the SSA grants you benefits, you will receive a Notice of Award letter, thereafter, indicating the amount of monthly benefits you should receive.

If you need assistance with this or any work comp or injury issue, please feel free to contact the Attorneys at RUDBERG LAW OFFICES, LLC toll free at 1-866-306-2667 or email [rudberg@rudberglaw.com](mailto:rudberg@rudberglaw.com)

**Know Your Rights!**

**Protect Your Rights!**



Main Office: 2107 Sidney Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203  
Branch Office: 215 S. Main Street, Suite 1, Zelienople, PA 16063

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**FRIDAY AUGUST 20, 2021**

**12pm REGISTRATION**

**1pm SHOTGUN START**



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GOLFERS \_\_\_\_\_

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## Parking lot injuries and injuries that occur while walking or traveling between your parked vehicle and your workplace

by Rhett Cherkin

Are injuries compensable under the Workers' Compensation Act when they occur after you have parked your vehicle and you are walking to your employer's workplace? These injuries which most often involve tripping or slipping and falling but could also involve being hit by another vehicle or sustaining an injury on an employer run shuttle service from the parking lot, are often compensable injuries. The rules covering whether such injuries will be compensable involve consideration of several factors.

First, for any injury to be compensable as a workers' compensation injury, the employee must be within the "course of employment" when the injury occurs - whether that injury occurs on or off the employer's premises. Injuries in the "course of employment" will be covered if:

1. The injury occurred on the employer's premises;
2. The employee's presence was required by the nature of the employment; and
3. The injury was caused by the condition of the premises or by operation of the employer's business thereon.

With injuries sustained while walking from your vehicle to the workplace or when leaving your workplace and walking to your vehicle, the focus is more often than not on the first prong of this test -- will the parking lot or area be considered the employer's premise?

A parking lot that is owned or controlled by the employer will most certainly be considered the employer's premises. However, the employer's ownership or control of the area is not the only determining factor in deciding if the area will be deemed the employer's premises. Generally, the most important factor to consider is whether the employer has caused the area to be used by its employees.

### **Premises and Parking Areas**

As noted, when the employer owns the parking lot where the injury occurs, it will be considered the employer's premises. Generally, when the employee parks in a private parking lot and the injury occurs in that parking lot, the injury will not be compensable unless the area is considered "integral" to the employer's workplace.

Establishing a private parking lot is integral to the employer's workplace can be difficult. Even when an employer subsidizes the cost of parking in the private lot or offers a discounted parking rate as a payroll deduction, the private parking lot may not always be deemed part of the employer's premises. Factors that favor a determination that the private lot is integral to the employer's workplace include its proximity to the workplace, whether there are other employer-paid or employer-provided parking alternatives and whether the employer requires the employee to use the parking lot. The determination of whether the parking area qualifies as the employer's premises is a fact-driven determination.

### **Pathways and Worksite Access**

When the injury occurs on the route from the parking lot to the workplace or from the workplace to the parking lot but not in the parking lot itself, the focus will be on whether the route is considered a reasonable means of ingress and egress from the workplace. Getting into and leaving a workplace has been found to be a necessary part of an employee's job. Unlike parking lot cases, with injuries that occur on the route to and from the parking, the focus is not on whether the employer requires the use of the parking lot. The focus instead will be on whether the employer has "caused" an employee to be in the location of the accident. For instance, if an employer leases parking spaces in a private lot for employees, then the route the employee must take to get to the

workplace from the parking lot will most likely be found to be part of the employer's premises. When an employee must ride an employer's shuttle from a parking lot to a workplace, this is generally considered a customary means of egress to the worksite.

If other employees customarily used the route that the employee was injured on, this will favor a finding that the area is considered part of the employer's premises. The route taken from the parking lot to the workplace must be reasonable. When an employee chooses to climb a guard rail rather than use a pathway through a cut-away in the guardrail, the route was not found to be a reasonable means of access to the workplace. Generally, when an injury occurs between the parking area and the worksite, and the route is a reasonable means of access to the worksite, the location of the injury will most likely be considered part of the employer's premises.

Whether an injury occurs in a parking lot or enroute to or from the parking lot to the worksite, there are multiple factors that may be relevant in proving the injury should be compensable and, therefore, it is important to consult an experienced workers' compensation attorney. The attorneys at Caroselli Beachler & Coleman have decades of experience addressing complex workers' compensation issues, including cases involving injuries occurring in parking lots and enroute to and from the workplace. To discuss any work-related injury you may have, please call us at 1-800-222-8816.

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## HOW HAS COVID IMPACTED YOUR EDUCATION AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

BY MARAH RUSH, WHOSE FATHER IS A MEMBER OF USW 150T

COVID-19 has impacted my education and plans for the future in both positive and negative ways. March 13, 2020 was the day that changed high school forever. I had to adjust to on-line learning, for the rest of my junior year after spending 10 years of my life in a classroom. Nothing compares to in person hands on learning, especially while attending a public school all of my life. This pandemic showed me to expect the unexpected and do not take any day for granted. My bad day is always going to be someone's good day.

In my school, job shadowing is done throughout your junior year, which helps a student decide if the career they are choosing is the best fit for them. I was given the opportunity to job shadow one time in an operating room but was never able to observe other departments in the medical environment. This definitely impacted my decision when choosing a degree. I will be attending Gannon University to obtain my Bachelors in Nursing and continue my education one more step further to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist. I am currently a nursing aide at a long term care facility which is providing me the opportunity to gain experience in the field of nursing.

During this pandemic the number of jobs that were lost was astronomical, but the field that needed the most help was the medical field. There was a shortage of nurses to care for the patients. They were looking for nurses to travel to highly penetrated cities to assist in care-giving and treatment and everyone who went realized the risk they were putting themselves in as well as their families. This helped me decide my field of study was even more important and was something I wanted to do. I will always find a job and I can live wherever I want in the world while earning a good living. This was a positive that far outweighed the negative.

Being a registered nurse (RN) means you've earned a license to practice nursing in the state where you live after completing a bachelor's degree and passing the NCLEX. The NCLEX is an exam that is nationwide and you are required to pass it in order to practice nursing. An RN administers hands-on patient care in a variety of settings including hospitals, medical offices, nursing homes, and other facilities. An RN works with a health care team with different focuses to provide the best course of treatment possible. A major role in a nurse's job is to understand what the diagnosis or problem is, and relay that information to the patient and family. Nurses are remembered as, 'the backbone to any hospital.' Nurses are in every single part of the hospital, such as the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), pediatrics, emergency room, operating room and so many more areas.

Obtaining my bachelor's in nursing (BSN) is just the first step to my long-term career goal. I will work as an RN for around two years to gain experience while I am getting my master's degree. Throughout those two years is the time to figure out whether I want to continue on in anesthesia or find a different specialty. Not only are you learning the ins and outs, but you are also gaining experience to provide the best possible care for a patient. Every program you apply to has different requirements. Some schools require intensive care unit (ICU) experience and a minimum of two years. Other schools require emergency room (ER) experience with anywhere from a year and a half to two years.

A certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) is a nurse who has obtained a doctorate degree in nurse anesthesia. A CRNA is an advanced practice nurse who administers anesthesia for surgery or other medical procedures. CRNAs work under the supervision of an anesthesiologist, although some states have opted out of this requirement. Due to the number of states that do not require supervision, the requirements are changing. Starting in 2022, CRNAs are required to graduate with a doctorate degree and not just a master's degree. This increases college debt but will increase your salary when finished. CRNAs are the highest paid nurses, but first and foremost they are nurses who have worked through different stages to get to this level.

COVID-19 showed me first hand that what I am going to do for the rest of my life will help a lot of people and bring me a lot of satisfaction. I am extremely thankful that I am fully aware of what could happen when working as a nurse. I have had several family members that were in the hospital with the virus. Thanks to the nurse that put in the time and hours to save their lives. I wish to spend the rest of my life giving back to those that have helped me and my family.



David A. Bielski Educational Scholarship (Post-Secondary Student)

## DO YOU BELIEVE ALL ESSENTIAL WORKERS SHOULD RECEIVE ADDITIONAL PAY FOR ADDITIONAL RISKS,” WHY OR WHY NOT?

by Andrew Wentzel, his father is a member of IBEW 712

According to Version 4.0 of the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency’s Guidance on Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers, “The industries that essential workers support represent, but are not limited to, medical and healthcare, telecommunications, information technology systems, defense, food and agriculture, transportation and logistics, energy, water and wastewater, and law enforcement.” With this understanding of exactly who is an essential worker, I believe essential workers that directly combat and prevent the spread of Covid-19, as well as treat patients who have Covid-19, should receive additional pay.

Essential industries hold our infrastructure together. These industries require constant work and maintenance. The essential workers who do that work and maintenance have to show up to work each day, in spite of any risk of exposure to Covid-19. If they did not, our infrastructure would collapse. Essential jobs are jobs that cannot be done remotely. Just as grocery store stockers cannot fill shelves from the comfort of their home office, nurses treating patients cannot fully do so over a Zoom meeting.

Based on The American Journal of Managed Care’s Covid-19 timeline, the United States declared a public health emergency due to the coronavirus outbreak on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. By March 13<sup>th</sup> of 2020, Covid-19’s presence in the United States was considered a pandemic and the Covid-19 outbreak in the United States was declared a national emergency. While many workers took their laptops home and continued work remotely, essential workers remain in their workplaces out of national necessity. Essential workers are at a greater risk of exposure to Covid-19 than those working from home. Customers, co-workers, clients, and patients all represent potential exposure to Covid-19. Not all workplaces are equally risk filled though. My personal belief is that essential workers that work in direct contact with Covid-19 deserve increased pay for the additional risk of working in their industry as long as Covid-19 is considered a pandemic in the United States.

All essential workers are exposed to the risk of contracting Covid-19 but the majority of essential jobs did not change as Covid-19 made its way to America. A grocery store worker goes into work with the understanding and awareness that a co-worker or customer could expose them to Covid-19. A nurse treating patients with Covid-19 goes into work with the understanding that they will be directly exposed to Covid-19. While there is risk in either situation, I believe those working in direct and guaranteed contact to Covid-19 should receive additional pay. There is inherently less risk in stocking shelves in the same store as a Covid-19 carrying customer than in testing or treating patients experiencing symptoms of Covid-19.

While it is the job of a nurse or doctor to work with sick patients regardless of what ails the patient, Covid-19 presents a danger not only to the healthcare workers directly exposed to the virus but also those who come in contact with the exposed healthcare workers. This means any healthcare worker working in direct contact with Covid-19 could expose their housemates to Covid-19 as well.

No one, outside of our military, is obligated to risk their life, health or family for their country. As those in our military serve and protect Americans at the risk of their lives, our essential workers who are testing for, vaccinating against, treating and combating Covid-19 risk their health, as well as the health of their housemates, in an attempt to return American life to normal and prevent further death and illness in our country. This is a noble cause and a truly essential job that deserves additional pay for the additional risks of going into work each day.



# You are invited to join us for the 2021 ERIE LABOR DAY PARADE

Hosted by IBEW Local 56

**When: Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Where: 11<sup>th</sup> & State St., Erie, PA**

**Time: 10:00 AM Parade Begins**

*Line-up begins at 8:30 AM for Vehicles and 9:30 AM for Marchers*

Who can apply? All of organized LABOR, their supporters, and community groups/organizations that want to travel to join us from anywhere.

**Entries Close: Monday August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**Complete and return this form to: IBEW 56 at 185 Pennbriar Dr., Erie, PA 16509.**

Name of Union/organization \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Full Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**We wish to enter the following in the Labor Day Parade (please circle and complete)**

**A Float or decorated Vehicle:**

( Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Feet Wide, \_\_\_\_\_ Feet Long, and overall height including decorations \_\_\_\_\_ Feet.)

Note: The theme of the parade this year is "Working Champions" which was submitted by Zachary Gibson.

**Local Union      District Council      Marching Band      Color Guard**

**Motorcycle Unit      Community Group      Other \_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_**

**For more information contact Jim Nuber at IBEW 56 Office 814-825-5505, on his cell at 814-882-5656, by email at [jnuber@ibew56.org](mailto:jnuber@ibew56.org), or Terry Baker on his cell at 814-860-0297**



**Join the Mercer County CLC  
at the Labor Day Parade  
(Buhl Day Parade) in Hermitage, PA  
Monday, September 6th  
Line-up at 8:30 am  
step off at 930 am.**

Walk with Organized Labor, our staging area will be at Flynn's Funeral Home (2630 East State Street, Hermitage, Pa 16148) across from Kranyak's.

Donuts and water will be provided at the start. The parade will end at Buhl park and you can get on the float for a ride back to the staging area.



# Hundreds of PA Nursing Home Workers Vote to Strike

Posted by James Myers on [June 24, 2021](#)



Nearly 1,000 nursing home workers across the Commonwealth vote to authorize a strike to demand life-saving reform.

**PENNSYLVANIA** — Nursing home workers at 12 different homes across the Commonwealth have voted to authorize strikes to demand life-saving changes needed for our seniors and other nursing home residents. Caregivers were driven to the decision by the growing crisis in PA's nursing homes and lack of action to address the perfect storm of unsafe staffing, a global pandemic, and outdated nursing home regulations.



"This was a hard decision because nobody ever *wants* to go on strike," said Liz Empson, an LPN at Blue Ridge in Harrisburg. "Yet

every day we see our residents suffering. We've seen staffing dwindle down to less and less to the point we aren't able to give residents proper baths every day or change them out of soiled briefs in a timely manner. We've sounded the alarm with employers. We've spoken out publicly. We've met with legislators. We've testified. Still, change isn't coming. This is our last resort to get the change our residents need."

Pennsylvania's nursing homes are in crisis — the workforce has been stretched to the breaking point after decades of understaffing, lack of investment in a workforce that makes poverty wages, and a pandemic that took an unimaginable physical, mental, emotional, and financial toll on

caregivers who have dedicated their lives to our most vulnerable. The 13,000 COVID deaths in PA nursing homes — one of the highest rates in the nation — are the result of a broken system that does not prioritize care or caregivers.

"We need higher wages so we can get more permanent staff in to care for our residents," said Shelley Robinson, a certified nursing assistant at Rose City in Lancaster. "Residents need to know their caregivers and trust us. We just need more help so we can do what's best for our residents. How can you get permanent staff if they can make more money down the street at a convenience store?"

The 800 workers — representing nurses, nurses aides, and other caregiver positions — at the 12 nursing homes are currently negotiating separate union contracts alongside thousands of other PA nursing home workers. Almost all have identified safe staffing and living wages, and affordable high-quality healthcare as key priorities that need to be addressed if this care crisis is going to be resolved.

In a cyclical nightmare, caregivers say working double and triple shifts just to cover the schedule, but still knowing residents aren't getting the level of care they need, is causing burnout that further fuels the staffing crisis. Turnover in nursing homes is now 128%.

As state legislators continue to discuss the state budget, caregivers have been clear that a solution is close at hand — designate federal COVID relief funds directly to long-term care while building the reform the industry needs, and ensure transparency and accountability to make sure the funds



go directly to better staffing and bedside care.

"Our legislators need to step up and protect those who live in nursing homes and the workers who care for them," said Matthew Yarnell, President, SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania. "With over 13,000 nursing home residents lost to this pandemic, the public needs to know that not only will COVID relief money be used for nursing home care, but that money actually gets where it's supposed to go — for more staffing, and to the bedside to protect residents.

The votes authorize each nursing homes' negotiation committee (the group of workers who sits down at the bargaining table to negotiate the union contract with management) to issue a 10-day strike notice at any time. 10-day notices are legally required for healthcare worker strikes.

Nursing homes that have voted to authorize strikes are:

- Saunders House, Wynnwood
- Powerback, Philadelphia
- Riverside Rehab and Nursing Center, Taylor
- The Gardens At East Mountain, Wilkes-Barre
- Oil City Health and Rehab, Oil City
- The Gardens at Wyoming Valley, Wilkes-Barre
- Rose City Health and Rehab, Lancaster
- Gardens at Blue Ridge, Harrisburg
- Uniontown Health and Rehab, Uniontown
- Beaver Valley Health and Rehab, Beaver
- Beaver Elder Care, Aliquippa
- The Grove at Washington, Washington

Contact: Karen Gownley, [karen.gownley@seiuhcpa.org](mailto:karen.gownley@seiuhcpa.org) or 717-805-6070

# September 5th & 6th Labor United Celebration

Source: Westmoreland County Website

Labor United Celebration is a proud tradition of labor in Western Pennsylvania, this two day extravaganza will be held at Northmoreland Park over the Labor Day weekend, on September 5 & 6, 2021. The event will be from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm Sunday, and 10:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday, with both admission and parking free of charge to the public! The event includes a giant flea market, great food, an arts and crafts show, and a variety of musical performances. For only \$4 children may purchase an “All Day Activity Pass” and receive unlimited access to carnival rides, a petting zoo, horse drawn trolley rides, circus shows, bounce houses, and more!



Live Musical Performances  
on Sunday and Monday!



Entertainment for the whole family!

All-Day Activity Pass for only \$4!

Includes unlimited access to carnival amusement rides, petting zoo, horse drawn trolley rides, Circus, kiddie train rides, bounce houses, and many more activities!

\*You must purchase an Activity Pass wrist band to attend the Circus\*



Zerbini Family Circus  
An old-fashioned, family-owned Circus  
under the Big Top!

\*Activity Pass Wristband required!\*

Giant Bingo Pavilion

Arts and Crafts Marketplace

Giant Flea Market with over 150 vendors



If you are a performer or entertainer that is interested in performing at the Labor United Celebration, please fill out the Performance Application which is found on the Westmoreland County website.

Applications are considered year-round and until spots are filled.

This event is subject to change. Please check back often for the most up to date information.

# Pre-Registration

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Foursome (if known):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

RSVP by July 21, 2021

## Reservations

\_\_\_\_\_ GOLD PACKAGE - \$850.00 per pkg.

\_\_\_\_\_ SILVER PACKAGE - \$450.00 per pkg.

\_\_\_\_\_ BRONZE PACKAGE - \$200.00 per pkg.

\_\_\_\_\_ INDIVIDUAL GOLFER - \$100.00 per golfer

\_\_\_\_\_ TAILGATE DINNER - \$35.00 per dinner

\_\_\_\_\_ TEE SIGN ONLY - \$150.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to*

**Butler County Labor Council**

# Schedule

**Saturday, August 7, 2021**

**Registration Opens**

at 8:00 a.m.

**Shotgun Start**

at 9:00 a.m.

**Tailgate Party**

immediately following your

Charity Open Golf Game

## Four Person

## Scramble Format

**\$100.00 per Golfer**

*Includes:*

18 Holes of Golf, Cart &

Steeler Tailgate Party Dinner

or

**\$35.00 per Non-Golfer**

*Includes:*

Dinner, Beer and Pop

- Cash Bar Available -

# 15TH ANNUAL Tailgate Charity Open

sponsored by



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PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT  
BUTLER HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATION &  
JUVENILE DIABETES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

**August 7, 2021**

at the

**Oakview Golf Club**

106 Ralston Road  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057





## Why Higher Prices (think Buy American) are Good for the U.S. Economy

By Roger Simmermaker  
June 22, 2021

Studies have repeatedly shown that most U.S. consumers would rather buy American even when the cost is higher than imported goods. It is not a given that buying American will automatically cost more, but it's good for the U.S. economy and economic growth even when it does. Even more, it's also good when prices rise due to higher U.S. wages.

Most economists say that the U.S. consumer has rarely been stronger. Some of that strength results from higher wages, some from increased savings, and some from government payouts (unemployment compensation, stimulus checks, etc.) during the pandemic. But, the simple fact is that our economy does better when U.S. consumers have more money in their pockets and are ready to spend it, and that isn't likely to happen if workers' wages are stagnant or falling. We can only be as affluent as consumers as we are wage earners.

We shouldn't focus on whether we have the lowest prices in the world, as we did for decades while advocating free trade and free markets when wage gains (when we actually experienced them) often didn't keep up with inflation. Instead, we should focus on protecting our manufacturing jobs to keep Americans employed in this sector so we can stop depending on China for our wants and needs. After all, Americans don't care about low prices if they don't have jobs because jobless Americans can't buy much anyway.

Alexander Hamilton believed that Americans would choose secure, higher-paying jobs even if prices were slightly higher, rather than insecure jobs with lower pay and lower prices. If prices in

America rise due to higher-cost domestic manufacturing or other increased wages, workers who are secure in their jobs may simply cut back on spending a bit or be more selective in their purchases. The key term here is 'secure.' Manufacturing jobs can only be secure when worldwide trade and competition are on a level playing field, thereby eliminating the fear that one's job will likely be outsourced to another country.

Higher wages, even when accompanied by higher prices, are key to a higher standard of living. Seventy percent of our country's economic activity is due to consumer spending. If consumers don't have more money in their pockets, they cannot spend more and contribute more to economic activity and growth.

American workers are not labor cost problems to be dealt with; they are contributors to our prosperous first-world economy and a high standard of living. So when it costs us more to buy American, we should not look at it as an extra *cost* but as an *investment* in our economy.

We cannot have a high standard of living with cheap prices. President William McKinley had a few things to say about the word 'cheap' that we should heed today. He said *I do not prize the word cheap. It is not a badge of honor. It is a symbol of despair. Cheap prices make for cheap goods; cheap goods make for cheap men; and cheap men make for a cheap country.*

Our current prosperous economy can afford a higher minimum wage and higher wages in general. The average wage rate rose 4.4% in the U.S. in 2020. Moreover, corporate profits are on their way to resuming record high levels after increasing 15% and reaching an all-time high in the third quarter of 2020.

Many American companies have committed to doing whatever it takes – costs be damned – to keep up with U.S. consumer demand as our economy

recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Home Depot, one of America's largest importers, has secured its own vessel to go back and forth between China and the United States to avoid issues with a recent COVID-19 outbreak in Southern China.

Home Depot, of course, was one of the companies that warned excessively about the 25% import tariffs on Chinese goods and their potential costs in 2019 (note that Home Depot still reported quarterly profits that beat estimates, and the stock continued to surge).

In February of 2021, Black & Decker CEO James Loree said, *You do whatever you could do to keep the plants running.* In May of 2021, the National Owners Association, a group representing U.S. franchisees, said that solid sales should allow operators to make up for higher spending on worker pay and benefits.

An August 2018 article in the *Wall Street Journal* reported that labor's share of national income declined from 64 percent during much of the postwar period to 58 percent today (half of the decline occurred between 2001 and 2007). This equates to an annual salary loss of more than \$7,500 for each U.S. worker. With their record profits, corporate America has the financial resources to easily allow for a return of labor's share of national income back to 64% and even higher.

The bottom line: regardless of increased company or corporate input costs like import tariffs, higher wage rates, and unprecedented U.S. government outlays to deal with a once-in-a-lifetime (hopefully) pandemic, if Americans have enough money to spend to keep the economy growing and prospering, these input costs can be easily dealt with, especially if we buy American with our consumer dollars and keep jobs, profits, and tax revenues here at home.

NWPA Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO  
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 Franklin, PA 16323

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vchair	Julie	Barnett
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Director NWPA ALF	Rosann	Barker



If we all get vaccinated and continue wearing masks and social distancing, we can slow the spread. Together, we can end this pandemic.

Two Stickers on a sheet of paper, one is being placed and the contents of the sticker are hidden, both stickers say

Working people also need strong health and safety protections in the workplace to prevent exposure to COVID-19. The workplace is a high-risk setting because we're breathing the same air for long periods of time. That's why vaccines for workers are even more important.

[Add your name saying you got vaccinated and get your sticker.](#) Show that you're a proud union member who is doing your part to end this pandemic.

If your CLC or Local Union has an event planned you could improve the safety of your event by coordinating or helping publicize a vaccine drive and encouraging your members and the members of your community to get vaccinated, too.

Getting vaccinated is the safest way to build protection for you, your loved ones and your entire community. Add your name and get your sticker saying you're a proud union member who got the vaccine.

Get vaccinated for yourself, your friends and your family. [Add your name saying you got vaccinated, and we'll send you a sticker. Union-made, obviously!](#)

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Clinical trials show that the vaccines are safe and help protect people from COVID-19.