



IBEW Local 1245 Candidate Survey

Which candidates for Congress would stand up for working people? Which candidates would sell us down the river? And which ones are too chicken to even take a stand?

The fun begins on Page 11



Utility Reporter

IBEW LOCAL 1245 • AFL - CIO

Vol. 53 • No. 9 September 2004
Unity Is Strength



Randy Osborn

Sierra Pacific crews respond to 'Waterfall Fire'

By Eric Wolfe

Sierra Pacific Power crews mobilized in late July to restore service in the wake of a wildfire that burned through 8,700 acres on the west edge of Carson City.

The Waterfall Fire, apparently ignited in the early hours of July 14 by a smoldering campfire near a small waterfall in Kings Canyon, damaged or destroyed 31 homes, three businesses, 32 outbuildings and 51 vehicles.

Sierra Pacific Troublemaker Scott Downs spotted the fire in the dis-

A Sierra Pacific Power line crew consisting of Doug McGilvray, Steve Hubbard, and Jimmy Walker restores power in wake of Nevada's devastating Waterfall Fire. **More photos, page 24.**

tance in the pre-dawn hours of July 14 while responding to an unrelated underground blow-up in Carson. He finished up the job he was working on, caught a few hours sleep, then woke at 2 p.m. to find the sky full of smoke.

"All hell had broken loose," said Downs, who immediately reported back to work.

"The wind shifted and the fire went up South Curry St.," said Pat Lantis, a General Foreman and IBEW member. "It got down into the houses off King's Canyon."

The Sierra crews responded immediately. In the beginning the smoke was so intense the crews had to work with masks.

"We got right in there with those

fire guys," said Lantis. "We got water pumpers out and tried to salvage some poles."

In the early stages of the fire, first responders were rebuffed by wind-whipped flames that changed directions—at one point sending a TV anchorman scurrying out of the canyon and burning the vehicle he was driving.

The fire's rapid movement meant that Sierra crews had to assess where it was going and try to de-energize threatened areas.

"We didn't want poles going down and starting more fires," said Downs.

After night set in, even as the fire

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Bush guts overtime protections; workers take to streets in protest

Thousands of workers rallied in Florida, Missouri, Ohio and the nation's capital last month to protest new overtime rules implemented by the Bush Administration that will cost as many as six million workers their overtime pay.

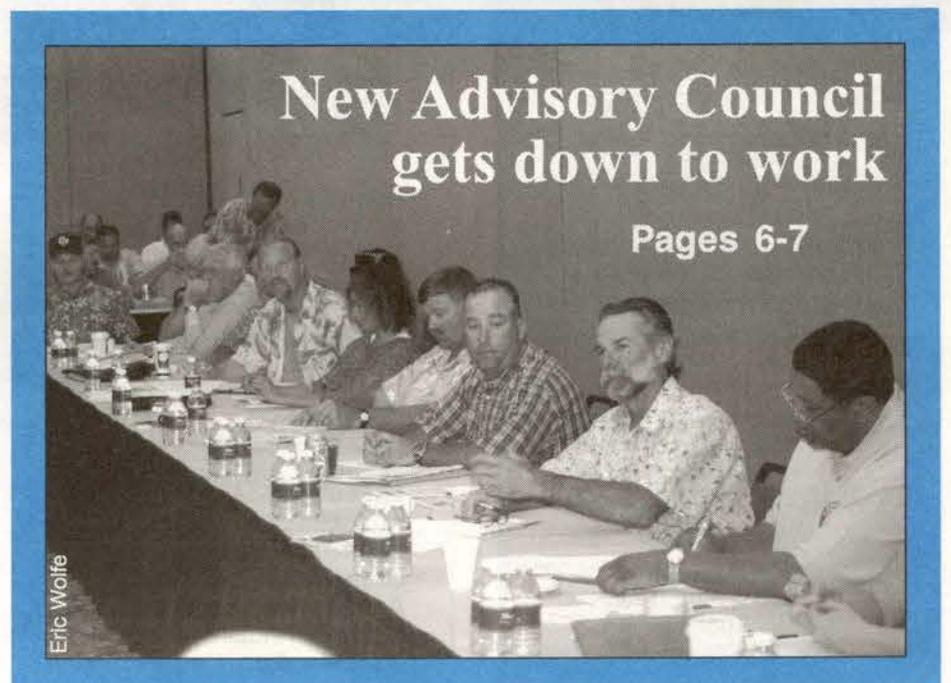
Local 1245 members, protected by their labor agreements, were in no immediate danger of losing their overtime pay, but had plenty to say about Bush's overtime policy.

"Why were these rules put in

place, and who do they help," asked PG&E Troublemaker Vince Zinkl of San Rafael. "Follow the money—do they help the worker? No f---ing way," said Zinkl, adding, "And you can quote me."

The Bush Administration initially claimed its new rules would expand overtime eligibility. But it abandoned that argument after numerous studies concluded that the rules would

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New Advisory Council gets down to work

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Eric Wolfe

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SEPTEMBER 25

Unit Officer Training
Vacaville, CA

OCTOBER 18

Deadline for Registering
To Vote in California for
Nov. 2 General Election

APPOINTMENTS

MODESTO IRRIGATION DISTRICT**Negotiating Committee**

Steve Aldridge
Kurt Celli
Karri Daves
Forrest (Woody) Mouw
Mike Stout
Ed Cox
Forest Davisson
Denise Miller
Mike Quigley

CENTRIC OPERATING SERVICES**Committee to Establish a Collective Bargaining Agreement**

Brian Ludwick

CITY OF UKIAH**Bargaining Committee**

Phil Hyre

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC**Building Department Labor Management**

Gloria Flores

Central Inspection Program Committee (C.I.P.)

Dan Kerwin
Sean Folkes

Building Department Automatic Progression Committee

Alton Halvorsan
Gary Maschio
Terry Kingsley

FRONTIER**2004 Negotiating Committee**

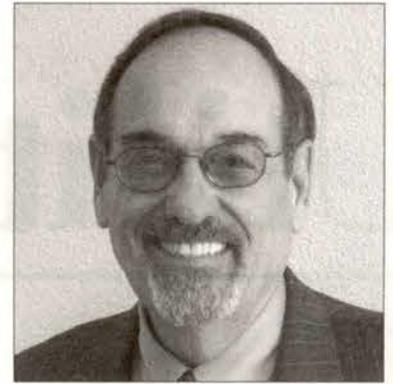
Thomas Greer
Sheila Lawton
Larry Martin
Monte "Toot" Nelson
Eric Tanka

CONFERENCES, COUNCILS & CONVENTIONS**APRI 35th Annual Education Conference**

Norma Ricker
Donna Ambeau

Union representation & politics

By Perry Zimmerman, Business Manager



Last month, I asked for input from Local 1245 member on ways to improve the job that we are doing for you. I received dozens of letters and e-mails, and next month I will summarize the suggestions. This month, I want to talk about politics.

Several members wrote me, complaining in general about organized labor's support of Democrats and to a lesser extent about the \$5 per year that is placed in the political donation fund for each Local 1245 member (subject to automatic refund upon request).

I expected, and respect, these letters. I know how divisive politics are, and I recognize that there are Local 1245 members who support Republican, Green, and Libertarian candidates. I know that there are

Local 1245 members who advocate fiscal responsibility in government above all else, or who want to pay less taxes above all else, or who oppose gun control above all else. I also respect the difficult position that these members find themselves in this year, given the record of President Bush on fiscal responsibility (largest deficits in history), taxes (a far heavier burden on the middle class than ever in history), and gun control (supporting extension of the federal ban on assault rifles).

But these aren't the issues that guide organized labor, or Local 1245, in politics. We focus on issues that have a direct impact on the workplace, especially the union workplace. We leave other issues to other groups, believing that our mission

has to do mainly with protecting and improving your wages, hours, and working conditions.

Wages were at the center of one of the biggest fights in Washington this past year. President Bush's Labor Department wrote new rules about who is eligible to receive overtime pay premiums. A relatively small number of low-wage workers might benefit from these new rules. But some six million American workers could—and probably will—become ineligible for overtime pay premiums under Bush's rules.

This is a direct attack on the paychecks of working people. Yes, our labor agreements will continue to protect overtime pay for our members. But the weakened federal standards give employers an excuse to make serious mischief for us at the bargaining table.

Our members don't want or need legislation that attacks the wages we've won at the bargaining table. It is our responsibility as a union to identify legislators and candidates who attack our wages and benefits.

There is a reason our union by-laws require the Executive Board "to recommend and support candidates for public office who in the opinion of the Executive Board will assist the objectives of this Union or of working men in general." Here is the reason: you can't separate union representation from politics. Elected officials can find ways to destroy everything we've won at the bargaining table.

Republicans in Congress, with only a few brave exceptions, have done everything in their power to take away overtime pay. The union has a responsibility to inform our members of the threat. What you decide to do with this information is strictly up to you.



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Members speak out on candidates



Outsourcing Could Happen To Us

To the Editor:

I saw yet another program last night on TV about jobs being outsourced to other countries. If anyone thinks this can't happen to us, think again. We're only a step away from computerized meter reading being done from India or China. Customer service for PG&E, SBC and numerous other companies could well be based in South America within a couple of years and many more thousands of US workers will be unemployed.

President Bush supported NAFTA, he now supports CAFTA for Central America, and who knows what will follow after that.

In November we can show what we feel about Bush's plans for more outsourcing. Let's vote for Kerry—while we still have jobs.

Glynis Davey
Oakland

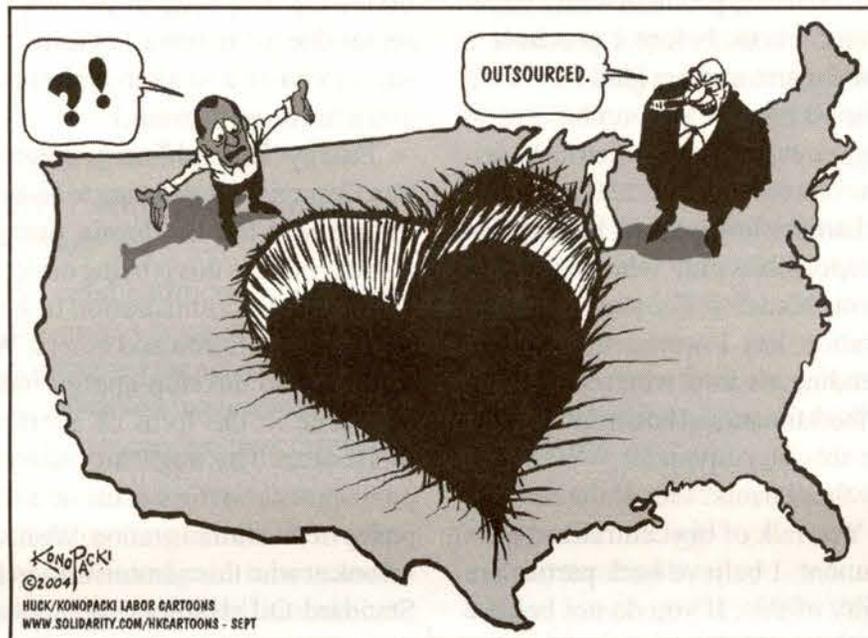
Reject Elitist Gigolo

To the Editor:

I am an intelligent, knowledgeable, informed, hard-working union member and I resent that the union spends part of my union dues to influence less-informed members in how to vote.

Today's Democratic Party is not the same Democratic Party of the past. It has allowed itself to be taken over by the extremely left liberals. The leaders of today's Democratic Party are an embarrassment. Bernie Franks, John Conyers, Charles Rangle, Sheila Jackson Lee, Maxine Waters do not represent mainstream America.

I am not a Kool Aid drinking Republican and I have serious issues with the current administration, but I will never believe that it is in the best interests of this country to elect an elitist gigolo and a extremely wealthy



trial lawyer to the two highest offices.

Barbara Dyer
Petaluma, Ca.

Support John Kerry

To the Editor:

I appreciate our union supporting John Kerry for president. As a Customer Service Representative, I feel it is important to keep jobs in our country.

Through the Bush presidency many phone/customer service centers have been out-sourced to India and other countries. The people working in these centers have minimal wages and benefits.

John Kerry demonstrates his support for working people by his voting record. I raised children as a single working parent. I know how important it is to have good-paying jobs and health care benefits.

Anna Bayless-Martinez
Manteca, Ca.

Think For Ourselves

To the Editor:

For the life of me I cannot understand how any bargaining unit employee could support an administra-

tion that would dearly love to strip away every hard won benefit we have. I believe the facts are clear, but the fear of terror attack is clouding people's perspective. Perhaps it is because the so-called liberal media is in fact churning out right-wing rhetoric so ferociously. Even degenerate youth programs are decidedly pro-Bush.

Let's think for ourselves!

We are protected by our contract, others are not. Manufacturing, the bedrock of any economy, is going overseas at an alarming rate. Overtime is being taken away. The deficit is a burden that ultimately the working person will have to repay. Corporate special interests have grown while union interests are being assaulted in the legislature.

A vote for Bush is a little bit like saying, "Gee, I don't really need my livelihood all that much." I personally depend on the union benefits that have been won over the years. Our current contract will expire shortly before I retire and I know that with current labor trends we will be facing a very difficult battle.

It's time to turn the tide and preserve a decent living.

Karen Russell
San Jose, Ca.

Register to Vote

It's Easy!

For application, call:

(800) 345-8683

On-line, go to:

www.ss.ca.gov/elections/votereg1.html

Deadline: October 18th

Don't sacrifice ideology

Editor's Note: This letter is excerpted from an e-mail circulated by John Diamond, an IBEW member in Ohio, and is reprinted with permission.

One day, when I was about 30, I was out on a job site and was sitting in my work truck eating lunch and listening to a popular conservative talk radio program. My foreman, (who was a 50-year-old diehard union worker) approached me and asked if I was done with lunch.

While we were working, he asked me why I was listening to "that guy" on the radio. I told him because we share a lot of the same views on the issues. He said, "You know he's a Republican don't you?" To which I responded, "So am I."

I turned the question back on him and asked him why he votes Democrat. He said, "Because they are pro-union." I said, "OK, what about the other issues?"

Since it was obvious by his reaction that he had no idea what the other issues were, I said, "I will tell you what the main political issues of the day are and you can tell me where you stand on them." He agreed. Here is our conversation:

► From Page 3

Me: Do you support or are you opposed to gun control?

Bob: Opposed.

Me: Are you for higher taxes or lower taxes?

Bob: Lower.

Me: Are you an advocate of a big centralized government or do you think that the local people can effectively govern themselves?

Bob: Small government. The Feds already got their noses in too much of our business.

Me: Are you for or against the death penalty?

Bob: For.

Me: Are you for or against a welfare system that pays generation after generation of families not to work and still receive money that is generated by your tax dollars?

Bob: Against.

Me: Are you for or against abortion?

Bob: Against.

After all these questions were answered I said to him, "The real question should be why you are voting Democrat? Every position that you have just taken on all the main issues of the day are conservative views supported by the Republican Party. By voting Democrat simply based on their "pro-union stance," you are practically sacrificing everything else you believe for the sake of this one issue."

Yes we need candidates that are pro-union, but that cannot be the only measuring stick we use. We must support candidates that line up with all of our other ideological beliefs or we will give up everything else we believe in for the sake of this one issue.

John D. Diamond

Let's Look At Issues

Editor's Note: This e-mail by Local 1245 Business Rep. Randy Osborn was written in response to the preceding letter.

My personal beliefs are that we as free Americans *must* chose the candidates we support on the merit of their performance on the issues that are important to us. To choose how

we vote by what party the candidate belongs to is as to follow as lambs to slaughter.

As to gun rights and gun control, I am an avid hunter and sportsman who owns many guns both long and short. I also agree with the Brady Bill. I have no problem with a background check before I purchase a new firearm and am glad it is being done to restrict the purchase of at least new firearms to restricted felons.

I am for lower taxes, but am also a responsible adult who believes in paying his debts. The present administration has lowered taxes while spending us into what can be described as national bankruptcy. How can this be responsible? Who will pay these debts? Our children!

You talk of big centralized government. I believe both parties are guilty of this. If you do not believe that this is the Republican Party belief then explain to me why the National Republican Party is in every state legislature trying to push anti-labor issues, such as Right to Work, "Paycheck Protection", Voluntary Contribution Act, outlawing job site agreements, opposing state minimum wage legislation, and many others.

As for welfare, I believe we do need a safety net, not a right or a generation after generation system.

As for abortion I would defend the right of a woman to choose and would believe it has a relation to the last issue we discussed.

Now let's take a look at some of my issues.

Jobs: millions gone, none replaced. Corporate tax incentives to take these jobs out of the US.

Healthcare: 15-20% inflation rate pricing the average American out of the market.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan:

A theft of the American people's money and a gift to big drug companies.

Labor Issues: A National Labor Relations Board that has stalled the hearing of many very just cases as directed by this Administration. The outlawing of unions in the Federal sector due to "national security" issues. (You're a union member—are you a terrorist? I'm not.)

Energy: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, refusing to do anything about the California Energy Crisis. I believe this is being directed by the Bush administration to help his friends at Enron and others. We also need to develop energy independence in the form of alternate fuel sources. This might hurt oil company profits and as such is not a policy of the administration. We need to look at who this administration is: Standard Oil, Halliburton, and on and on.

Now what is probably my largest issue as of today: The war in Iraq. *I am 100% behind the War on Terror, and 110% in support of our troops.* (I happen to have a nephew in Faluja as we speak). My question is, What the *hell* are we doing in Iraq? There are no WMD's. There were no terrorists there until we went in and drew them into the country and into the fight. And our own military has agreed that most of the damage we are receiving is coming from Iraqis and not foreign fighters. Is this about profit? I believe so. Is this about oil? I believe so. What gives us the right to invade another country to take their resources? This is exactly what Japan did to us in WWII and it did not set well with us.

I am very active in state and local politics and have been involved in the process of endorsing both Republican and Democratic candidates

for this fall's election. Will I vote for some Republicans in the upcoming election? Yes. Will I vote for some Democrats in the upcoming election? Yes. Will I vote for Bush/Cheney? *Not even with a gun to my head!*

Randy Osborn
Washoe Valley, Nev.

I'm Afraid

I'm afraid the terror alert will be raised to Red. Therefore, I am willing to give up all my civil liberties in order to secure the homeland. (Anybody remember Nazi Germany).

I'm afraid that the gay marriage constitutional amendment didn't pass. Now my marriage might be in jeopardy. OOPS, I'm divorced. Must have been because I watched too many Rock Hudson movies with my mother when I was a kid and having to listen to Liberace.

I'm afraid if I don't vote the right way I might not be able to take my AK-47 to work or to school.

I'm afraid I might not get the death penalty for killing a doctor at the abortion clinic.

I'm afraid that if we don't get rid of Labor Unions everybody in America might actually be able to support themselves and their families.

I'm afraid that I can't control the viewing of offensive movies or books. There should only be two books allowed in this country: The Bible and "Why Corporate America needs to be Unregulated." The only movie allowed should be the Ten Commandments starring Charlton Heston. Please ban Fahrenheit 911.

I'm afraid that Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, Bill O'Reilly, Ann Coulter, Michael Savage, and the rest might actually be wrong.

Get Your Union News On-Line

On the Internet:

www.ibew1245.com

On PG&E Intranet:

From Page One, Select "Employee Services", then select "IBEW site"

I'm afraid that if I don't agree with the war in Iraq I will be branded unpatriotic when we send our soldiers to die in Iran and North Korea. That is if we have any soldiers left.

I'm afraid my Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and Irish background might brand me undeserving of being an American.

I'm afraid my children might have to go to public schools. They should all be subsidized to go to religious schools.

I'm afraid of environmentalists who might prevent the raping of our national forests, rivers and streams, mountain topping for coal in West Virginia, oil drilling off the coast and in Alaska. Thank God for Iraqi and Saudi Oil.

I'm afraid and that's why I believe that anything George W. Bush decides to do is in the best interest of our great country.

I'm afraid of being branded a liberal and that's why I'm a compassionate conservative!

Actually, the only thing I am really afraid of is that this Bible-banging, arrogant, macho, warmongering, corporate pandering, silver spoon raised aristocrat might be our president for another four years.

P.S. My father was at Pearl Harbor, is still alive, and we agree on most political things. Including, that this is still the greatest country on the face of the earth.

Mike Haentjens
Pismo Beach, Ca.

China-Made Award? No Thanks!

To the Editor:

At the July unit meeting in San Jose a new-hire General Construction Apprentice Lineman from Campbell brought up an issue that reminded all of us that we can never let our guard down.

This young man, Andrew J. West, brought to our attention that PG&E is handing out recognition awards (Sibley Area 3 Safety) that are made in China!

His awareness of the non-USA made/non-union made award trinkets shows that the union spirit is alive and well, even in the less sea-

soned union members.

He explained to us that his union principles would not allow him to keep that award and that he chose to give it back.

As a result of the discussion following his explanation a unit proposal was made to request that in the future the company use "Made in the USA" products for their recognition awards.

At the end of the meeting, I just had to go over to Andrew and shake his hand. This courageous youth showed union spirit and awareness far beyond his years.

Brian F. Kapaun
San Jose, Ca.

Get Involved!

To the Editor:

As I finish my 37-year career at PG&E, I'm very proud to have been on the union's 1999 and 2003 Bargaining Committees, and to have been elected by the membership of General Construction to represent them as their Local 1245 Advisory Council Member. It gets me thinking about all the old timers over the decades who went to unit meetings once a month, and those who served on negotiating committees through the years. If it wasn't for them, our contract book—with all that language for better working conditions, vacation, holidays with pay, benefits, etc.—would be much smaller and thinner. Take it out, look at it, read it. It's a major accomplishment.

Since I first served on the Bargaining Committee six years ago, I've had many people at unit meetings ask me how we can get more member involved in our union. There are plenty of ways for members to get involved. We have union Business Representatives who show up on the company's property, where members can talk to them. You all know who they are.

We also have a unit meeting once a month in the town where you work, or nearby. For those who live away from their job headquarters, there's a good chance we have a unit meeting in the town where you live. Local 1245 has around 100 unit meetings a month, and you can go to any of

them. We sure can use you there.

A few months ago our Business Manager, Perry Zimmerman, asked me if I would be interested in being on the Local 1245 Election Committee. I agreed to serve and I'm glad I did. The Election Committee had members from Davey Tree, Frontier, Sierra Pacific, SMUD, Outside Construction and PG&E. The committee members respected each other and got along well. The committee came out to Vacaville to work hard, and ran an election that was fair and efficient. It was a great pleasure to serve with the other members of this committee. I appreciated their knowledge, their past experience, and how great they were to work with.

To cast your vote, all you had to do was punch out a hole in the ballot card and put it in an envelope and mail it back at no cost. We received back 4,852, which is only about a quarter of the total membership.

I don't have to worry about these numbers anymore. But those who are still working ought to think about the amount of participation in this election, about attendance at unit meetings, and how we can keep members involved in the union. It takes people to make a union strong.

I want to give my special thanks to a great Business Manager, Perry Zimmerman, and his staff. I also want to give my thanks to all who made me feel welcome when I attended your unit meetings. You gave me your respect and you got mine in return. Your new GC Advisory Council member, Mike Saner, is one heck of a good replacement.

Larry Darby
Fremont, Ca.

Don't leave the
decision to others.

Register
To Vote!

(800) 345-8683

Speak Out!

Got something to share with your fellow Local 1245 members? Send letters (with name and phone number) to:

Utility Reporter Letters
IBEW 1245
PO Box 2547
Vacaville, CA 95696

Note: We can't print personal attacks on members or letters dealing with union politics. Opinions expressed in Speak Out are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IBEW Local 1245.



New assignments

Several changes to the territorial assignments of Local 1245 business representatives took effect over the summer. They are:

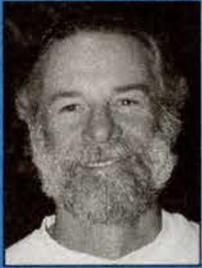
Business Rep. Sam Glero will serve the membership at South San Joaquin Irrigation District.

Business Rep. Darryl Norris will serve the members at Sacramento Regional Transit.

Business Rep. Phil Carter will serve members working for PG&E in the Placerville area.

A complete listing of business representative assignments can be found on-line at:

www.ibew1245.com/busreps.html



Terry Andreucci



Tom Cornell



Peggy Daniel



Grover Day



John Felts



Gloria Flores



Jim Findley



Business Manager Perry Zimmerman.

Staffing levels spark lively discussion at Advisory Council

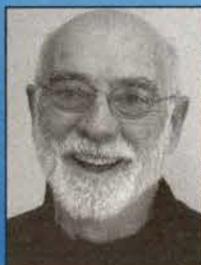
Newly-elected Council members take oath of office at Reno meeting

Staffing levels at Local 1245 employers sparked a lively discussion at the first meeting of the newly-elected Advisory Council, held July 24 in Reno, Nev. While some Advisory Council members voiced deep concern that Pacific Gas & Electric did not have enough people to carry the current workload, Business Manager Perry Zimmerman said the larger issue was to make sure that the union's employers were capturing all the available work.

"We need to get new business back at PG&E. We need to get new business back at Sierra Pacific Power. We need to get new business back at SMUD," said Zimmerman, referring to the tendency of new housing and business developments to



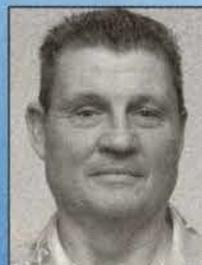
President Ed Mallory, at the head of the table, administers the oath of office to Advisory Council members on July 24 in Reno, Nev. as union staff and guests look on.



Leroy Foster



William Gilliam



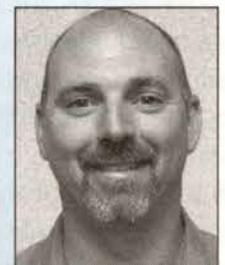
John Harper



Mike Jessen



Dan Mayo



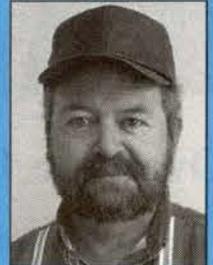
Lou Mennel



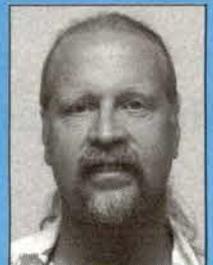
OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD
 The newly-elected Local 1245 Officers and Executive Board gathered for their official photo in Reno. New faces included Cecelia De La Torre, Treasurer, and Art Freitas, Vice President. Seated, from left, are: Vice President Freitas, Business Manager Perry Zimmerman, President Ed Mallory, and Recording Secretary Chris Habecker. Standing, from left, are: Executive Board Members Anna Bayless-Martinez, Kathy Tindall, and John Mendoza, Treasurer De La Torre, and Executive Board Member Dave Scott.



Todd Wooten



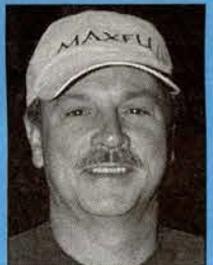
Art Torres



Dennis Thompson



Lee Thomas



Mark Taylor



Gil Suarez

not have the utilities perform the electric and gas construction.

"You have a great idea," responded John Harper, the newly-elected representative for Shasta Division, "but my question is – how are we going to do it?" Noting that his area had five contract crews replacing poles in his area, Harper said: "We need to have a plan where (utilities) have to increase the workforce."

Art Torres, just re-elected as the SMUD representative on the Advisory Council, echoed the concern about contractors.

Because of a shortage of in-house line crews, SMUD electricians were picking up some of the work, Torres said. "But line complained, then the work went to contractors. First it was union contractors, then non-union contractors."

"Whenever we get new business back, some will be done in-house, some will be done by contractors," said Zimmerman, noting that there were less than 50 contract crews on PG&E property and only 67 in all of northern California. "But the first thing we have to do is get the work and then we can figure out how we're going to split it up."

AB 2006

One obstacle to new hiring by utilities is the precarious investment climate in the wake of the energy crisis and the continuing debate over how electric service should be regulated in the state. Utilities will feel more comfortable about stepping up their hiring if the legislature passes AB 2006, said former Business Manager Jack McNally, who now advises the union on regulatory matters.

AB 2006, an electric restructuring bill supported by the Local 1245-backed Coalition of Utility Employees (CUE), would allow the utilities to get the cost of their investments into their rate base, said McNally.

Zimmerman said it was essential to get the legislation passed so that utilities will make the needed investments. "I think this will increase staffing," he said.

(AB 2006 passed the Legislature in August and is now awaiting action from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.)

The meeting, which featured area reports from each Advisory Council member, began with all members taking the oath for their new term of office. Newly-elected members were John Harper (PG&E Shasta), Michael Saner (PG&E GC), Mike Jessen (PG&E De Sabla), Gil Suarez (Tree Trimming Contractors), Lou Mennel (PG&E Sacramento), Tom Cornell (Sierra Pacific Power), Dennis Thompson (City of Santa Clara and PG&E San Jose), and Gloria Flores (PG&E Clerical at Large).



Dave Morrison



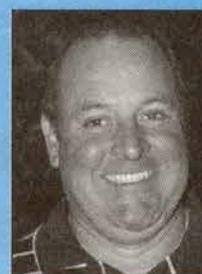
Jeff Pederson



Richard Perry



Bob Quinn



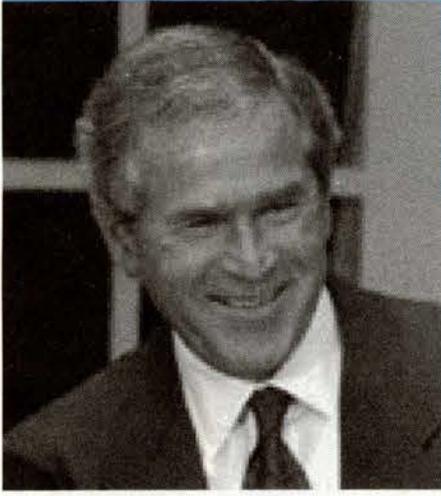
Larry Rodriguez



Michael Saner



Mike Stout



George W. Bush

The Record

Overtime Pay

The Bush Administration instituted new rules, effective August 23rd, that prohibit some 6 million workers from receiving overtime pay. In a separate attack on overtime, George Bush on August 5th said he would change the Fair Labor Standards Act to allow employers to replace paid overtime with unpaid "comp" time, which would result in longer hours, lower incomes and less predictable workweeks for US workers.

Federal Register, vol. 68, no. 61, 3/31/03; Bush speech, Minnesota, 8/5/04; "The Naked Truth About Comp Time", Economic Policy Institute, 2003

Health Care

As part of the health plan in his 2005 budget, Bush proposes that individuals pay the first \$1,000 of annual health care costs, making health care more expensive for families. Bush's plan would extend coverage to 2.4 million uninsured over a ten-year period. 45 million now lack coverage.

Kenneth Thorpe, chair of Emory University's Health Policy and Management Department, 5/5/04

Bush opposes a strong patients' bill of rights. When HMOs sought to overturn state laws that hold HMOs accountable, the Bush administration supported the HMOs when the case went to the US Supreme Court.

New York Times, 3/22/02; Washington Post, 6/18/04

National Budget Priorities

Bush's 2001-2003 tax cuts benefit mostly the wealthiest. Over the next 10 years, 50% of the tax cuts will go to those making more than \$1 million, the nation's richest 1%. Bush's tax cuts for the wealthy and economic policies have contributed to the largest federal budget deficit in the nation's history, even though Bush inherited a budget surplus of more than \$230 billion when he took office in 2001.

Citizens for Tax Justice, 1/8/03; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2/1/04

Bush's economic policies, budget choices and massive tax cuts have fueled the worst state fiscal crises since World War II. Many states and cities have been forced to slash services, close offices and lay off workers.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities; National Conference of State Legislatures

Homeland Security Jobs

Bush's fiscal year 2005 budget makes major cuts in first-responder grant funding at the Department of Homeland Security, reducing funding for firefighters by 33% from the fiscal year 2004 level.

Bush administration fiscal year 2005 budget

Bush's fiscal year 2005 budget cuts funding for COPS program by 90% of its congressionally authorized level, putting far fewer police officers into communities.

Bush administration fiscal year 2005 budget

Exporting Jobs

Bush supports giving \$60 billion in tax breaks to companies that lay off workers and move overseas. Since taking office, each of Bush's federal budget proposals included tax breaks for companies that export jobs overseas.

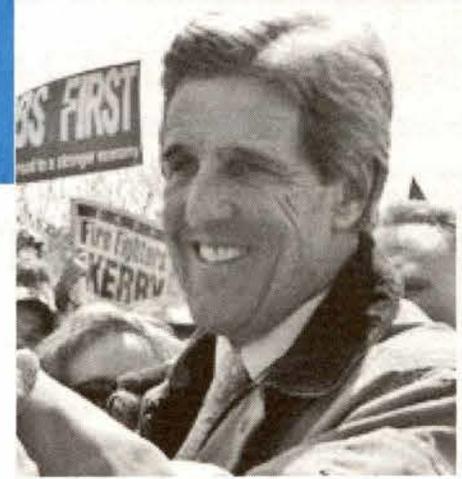
H.R. 2896, 2004; The Washington Post, 10/23/03; Bush fiscal years 2002-2005 budget proposals

Bush believes exporting jobs is good for America, and says: "When a good or service is produced more cheaply abroad, it makes more sense to import it than to provide it domestically."

Economic Report of the President, 2004



John F. Kerry



The Record

John Kerry supports workers' right to overtime pay protection and co-sponsored legislation to stop Bush's overtime takeaway. Kerry has opposed efforts to water down the Fair Labor Standards Act. Kerry has said: "How can an Administration hand out tax cuts to millionaires on the one hand and effectively reduce compensation for workers on the other? It is wrong and I will fight against it. We need to give American workers more protections, not fewer."

AFL-CIO Candidate Survey, 2003; S. Amendment 1580, 2003

Overtime Pay

Kerry calls for extending affordable health care coverage to 95% of Americans so they get the same health coverage as members of Congress. Kerry's plan is designed to lower private health insurance costs and expand the number of people with health insurance.

Reuters Health, 5/16/03; Kenneth Thorpe, chair of Emory University's Health Policy and Management Department, June 2004

Health Care

Kerry supports a strong patients' bill of rights that allows patients to visit the specialists they need and choose their own doctors, while holding HMOs accountable when they make mistakes that hurt patients.

S. 1052, R.C. 220, 6/29/01

Kerry supports tax breaks for the middle class. He proposes new health care and college tuition tax credits for working families funded by rolling back Bush's tax cuts for the nation's wealthiest 1%. Rolling back tax cuts for the wealthy, coupled with ending corporate welfare and restoring fiscal discipline, will enable Kerry to fulfill his pledge to cut the federal deficit in half in four years

www.johnkerry.com

National Budget Priorities

Kerry advocates helping states end their fiscal crises by investing \$25 billion a year in vital programs such as education, public safety and health services—creating jobs and strengthening services to working families.

www.johnkerry.com

Kerry pledges to provide funds to hire up to 100,000 firefighters and provide them the equipment needed as key first responders.

www.johnkerry.com

Homeland Security Jobs

Kerry will restore full funding for the COPS program, which provides funding for state and local law enforcement agencies to hire officers, acquire new technology and develop new policing strategies.

www.johnkerry.com

Kerry pledges to end all of the tax breaks that encourage companies to move jobs overseas. Kerry will eliminate the ability of companies to defer paying U.S. taxes on foreign income and will close international tax loopholes. He will use the savings to encourage companies to create jobs in America.

Associated Press 3/25/04; www.johnkerry.com

Exporting Jobs

Kerry will put teeth into U.S. efforts to protect jobs by making sure that companies who move offshore do not receive government contracts.

www.johnkerry.com



Workers protest Bush's overtime pay takeaway

► From Page 1

actually hurt millions of workers.

"It's horrible," said PG&E Operating Clerk Kathy Hughes, who works in Auburn. "Bush is just trying to help out some of his big money buddies. He's just helping out big business—the rich."

Three former Labor Department officials from the administrations of President Clinton and the first President Bush, released a report in July that said the new rules would weaken workers' overtime protections.

The "murkier and less stringent

rules," the report said, would encourage employers to push the boundaries of the new standards "in order to reduce labor costs by avoiding overtime pay." Bush's new rules give employers "great license and latitude to do so..." the report concludes.

Another analysis, released by the Economic Policy Institute in July, said workers who earn as little as \$23,660 per year could see their jobs reclassified as ineligible for overtime pay.

As many as 2 million administrative workers will lose their overtime

rights under a rule change that makes "team leaders" ineligible for overtime pay, even when they do not supervise others on the team, according to the report. It predicts that over 6 million workers in all will lose eligibility for overtime pay.

"It opens the system up to abuse," said PG&E Measurement and Control Mechanic Jim Findley. "If you're salaried, there's no stipulation on how many hours you can be made to work (at straight time)."

Findley, who is a Local 1245 Advisory Council member, said that Bush was trying to distract the elec-

torate from his wage policies by "sending up emotionally confusing signals."

"They talk about gay marriage so you don't see what they're doing about wages," he said.

Sen. Tom Harkin authored three measures to block Bush's new overtime rules, but in each case the Administration succeeded in blocking the measures through parliamentary maneuvers.

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry vowed to overturn the new rules if he wins the Nov. 2 general election.

PG&E retirement advice now available on-line

Beginning Sept. 1, all participants in the Pacific Gas & Electric Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) will have access to online, personalized investment advisory services from Financial Engines, Inc., a federally registered investment adviser.

PG&E provides the Financial Engines service at no cost to RSP participants. Financial Engines helps employees calculate how much they

should be saving for retirement, and offers advice on investment strategy.

Financial Engines preloads RSP balances and available investment fund options, provides a link to an online calculator that helps estimate the employee's projected PG&E Retirement Plan benefit, and consolidates all investment information in one place, including 401(k) plan balances, pension, projected Social Security benefit, spouse or partner financial information, and other savings and investment sources.

Financial Engines offers confidential, password-protected access via the Internet, 24 hours a day via

the Fidelity Investments site, www.401k.com.

According to PG&E, a brochure explaining how Financial Engines works and how to sign up for the service will be sent to all RSP participants at their home address by the first week of September.

As an added incentive to try the new service, Financial Engines is giving away a pre-paid \$500 Visa Gift Card. Anyone who logs on to the service through September 30, 2004 will automatically be entered to win. For complete rules, go to www.FinancialEngines.com/welcome/misc/drawing.html

Unit changes

Unit 2516, City of Lodi has changed its unit meeting location effective immediately to: Mountain Mike's Pizza, 550 South Cherokee Lane, Suite "E" in Lodi. Meeting dates and time remain unchanged.

Sam Glero
Business Rep.

Unit 3311, Reno, has a new meeting time: 5 pm. The dates and location of the meeting have not changed.

Unit 3320, N. Lake Tahoe, now meets on the third Wednesday. The time and location of the meeting have not changed.

Randy Osborn
Business Rep.

Job openings at City of Redding

The City of Redding Electric Department seeks candidates for Utility Arborist. Wages are \$21.22/hr, plus a City-paid benefits package, including 2% @ 55 PERS retirement. Eighteen months line clearance tree-trimming experience, Class B Driver's License and ISA Arborist certification required.

The City of Redding is also looking for journey-level line personnel to perform all classes of electrical power transmission and distribution system construction, maintenance and operations work. Salary is \$32.39/hour plus paid benefits package, including 2% at 55 CalPERS retirement package. Three-years approved apprenticeship training and California Class A drivers license required.

For application and flyer, call 530-225-4069, or download from www.ci.redding.ca.us, or go to 777 Cypress Ave., Redding, CA.

Utility Reporter takes top award

The Utility Reporter took top honors in the labor journalism contest sponsored by the Western Labor Communications Association.

Competing with other labor newspapers in the western United States for best performance during calendar year 2003, the Utility Reporter won first place for Best Overall Newspaper with more than eight pages.

Other awards received by the Utility Reporter were:

First Place, Best News Story, for Eric Wolfe's story about members' negative reaction to a PG&E proposal to hold a second vote on its first contract offer rather than return to the bargaining table.

Second Place, Best In-Depth Analysis, for Wolfe's story about shoddy work practices by non-union tree trimming contractors.

Third Place, Best Column, for a Perry Zimmerman column on PG&E negotiations.

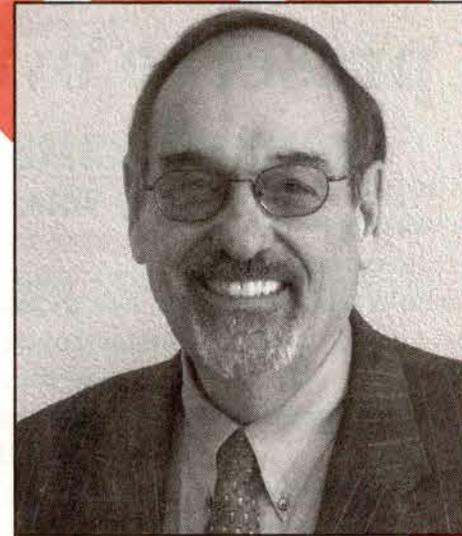
Honorable Mention, Best Feature Story, for Wolfe's story on union steward's Richard Leonardo's act of heroism.

Zimmerman is the paper's Executive Editor. Wolfe serves as Manager Editor.

IBEW

LOCAL 1245

CANDIDATE SURVEY: U.S. CONGRESS



Dear Member,

Democracy means government by the people. But for democracy to work, people have to participate.

To make an informed choice, I know you will seek out many sources of information, as you should. Our union's area of expertise is the pocketbook. Part of our job is to determine how your financial security is affected by the decisions made by elected officials in Sacramento and Washington DC.

Over the past two years, Congress has voted on many issues that are relevant to your financial security. Among other things, Congress voted on bills to:

- Curb the electric market manipulation that sent PG&E into bankruptcy, threatened our job security, and cost California consumers some \$70 billion.
- Block President Bush's attempt to take away overtime premium pay from some 6 million American workers.
- Extend unemployment insurance benefits for those who exhausted their benefits during this nation's prolonged economic slump.
- Revamp Medicare in a way that diverted billions in taxpayer dollars to HMOs and pharmaceutical companies, while doing relatively little to help our retirees with ever-increasing drug prices.

The following pages provide an objective record of how your member of Congress voted on these issues. They also show where the challengers say they stand on these same issues, based on a questionnaire sent to the candidates by Local 1245.

Evaluate the evidence, then exercise your rights. Register to vote in California by October 18th and VOTE on November 2nd.

Perry Zimmerman
Business Manager

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Next month: the Utility Reporter profiles candidates for California Senate and Assembly.

Bill to preserve overtime pay for 6 million workers

Overtime pay is an issue of great importance to working people. Overtime pay requirements help restrain employers from working their employees into the ground. At the same time, the extra pay is vitally important to many workers who need the cash to make ends meet.

Overtime pay accounts for up to one-quarter of the weekly earnings of workers eligible for overtime, an average \$161 a week, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

The Bush administration in April of 2002 published new rules to deny overtime pay protections to millions of US workers. These rules allow employers to reclassify many workers currently eligible for overtime pay as managers or administrative or professional employees who are exempt from overtime pay premiums.

At the same time, the new rules provide a powerful incentive to employers to assign overtime work to

Key Vote: Roll Call #531 – Overtime Pay Protection

the newly-exempt employees and eliminate overtime work opportunities for overtime-eligible workers.

A study by the Economic Policy Institute found that Bush's plan will cause up to 6 million workers to lose eligibility for overtime pay.

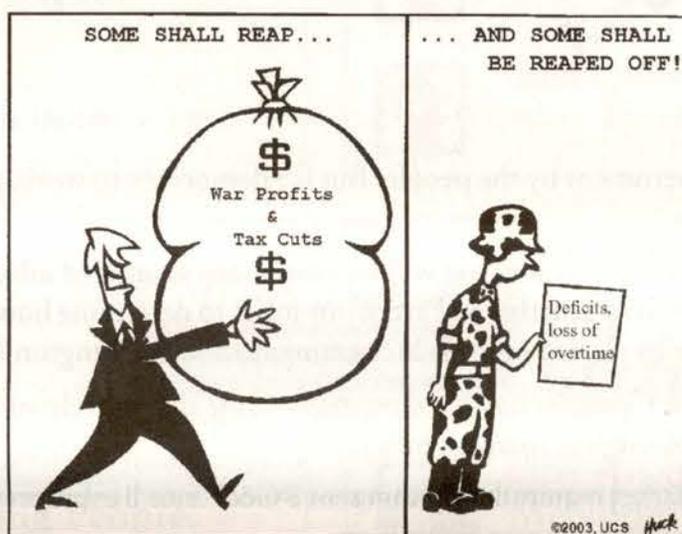
Among those directly hurt by Bush's overtime takeaway are America's veterans. If an employer determines that the training veterans received in the military is equivalent to a four-year professional degree, the new Bush policy allows that

employer to deny those veterans overtime eligibility and refuse to pay them anything for overtime work.

The Bush administration maintained that the new overtime rules would increase, not decrease, the number of workers eligible for overtime pay. Congress gave Bush an opportunity to stand by this claim. An amendment by Senator Tom Harkin would have allowed Bush's policy to go forward, but with a guarantee that no worker would lose overtime eligibility as a result.

The Bush administration showed its true colors when it went all-out to defeat Harkin's amendment.

The vote on this legislation gives Local 1245 members a clear picture of where their representatives stood on overtime pay protection. In the following pages, you can compare your representative's vote with the position taken by his/her challenger in the upcoming election.



Amendment to extend unemployment benefits

You can't blame President Bush for everything that has gone wrong with the US economy. But at nearly every opportunity, the President has acted to make things worse for working people. And Congress has gone along with him.

Key Vote: Roll Call 18 – Unemployment Benefits

His budgets have given massive tax cuts for the very wealthy and for corporations, but starved the economy of infrastructure investments and other programs that could have stimulated the creation of millions of good-paying jobs.

The result has been the first presidency since World War II to actually produce a net loss of jobs.

The Bush administration could have extended a helping hand to workers hit hard by the prolonged economic slump. Instead, he has kicked workers while they were down.

With Bush's backing, Congress eliminated \$259 million from dislocated worker programs, with another \$100 million taken from adult job training programs.

In the upcoming 2005 budget, Bush seeks to permanently lock in

multitrillion-dollar tax breaks that give millionaires an average tax break of \$123,600, an amount 191 times greater than the modest \$647 benefit for America's typical household.

At the same time, Bush continues to oppose an extension of the emergency federal unemployment benefits program for long-term laid-off workers. The program expired at the end of December 2003.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reports 1.4 million unemployed workers ran out of regular unemployment benefits during the first quarter of 2004. They were unable to find jobs and had no federal unemployment insurance to fall back on.

On Feb. 4 of this year, Congress voted on an amendment that would have authorized funds necessary to extend unemployment benefits by

an additional 13 weeks for people who have exhausted their state jobless benefits and who are no longer eligible for temporary federal unemployment benefits. The amendment passed 227-179, although the benefits were later blocked.

The vote in Congress on extending unemployment insurance benefits doesn't tell you everything about your representative's stand on the economy, fair taxes and job creation. But it tells you a lot about how they treat working people who have been stranded by Bush's job-losing policies.

Check elsewhere in this issue of the Utility Reporter to find out how your representative voted on extending unemployment insurance benefits, then check out where his/her challenger stands on the issue.

ECONOMIC GLASS
HALF EMPTY - HALF FULL



Vote November 2!

Reining in electric market manipulation

Federal energy legislation in 1992 laid the foundation for national electricity markets, inviting states to deregulate their utilities. In California, we were promised cheaper prices, and assured that federal regulators would prevent market abuses.

But when "the market" turned out to be a sham, federal regulators refused to step in. The cost of this

fiasco was a bankrupt utility, high anxiety for utility employees, disruption of service, and a \$70 billion charge to consumers.

Despite this economic catastrophe, many members of Congress last year were eager to promote further electric deregulation.

Congressman Dingell of Michigan offered an amendment that would

strike the bill's electricity deregulation provisions and insert language that would give the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission sweeping anti-fraud authority for electricity and natural gas markets. The amendment would require the reporting of price quotes and

Key Vote: Roll Call 133 Market Manipulation

transactions involving electricity and natural gas sales, increase civil and criminal penalties for abuses, and authorize FERC to retroactively refund electricity overcharges.

Dingell's amendment attempted to give consumers some measure of protection against fraud and abuse. But many members of Congress continued to put their faith in electric deregulation, despite growing evidence that electric markets pose great risks for consumers and utility workers.

Dingell's amendment was defeated 193-237 on April 10, 2003.

Where do the candidates in your Congressional district stand on this issue of critical importance for utility workers?



Did Your Representative Vote
FOR
Working People
or
AGAINST
Working People
on These Key Issues?

Use the Map on Page 14 to Identify Your Congressional District. Find Your Rep's Voting Record on Pages 15-22. Then Check Out Where the Challenger Stands on These Same Issues.

Note: Incumbents' positions based on their voting records. Challengers' positions based on response to the Local 1245 Candidate Survey.

Phony Medicare drug bill did little to help retirees

As the cost of drugs has soared, many retired workers find they must choose between medications and other necessities.

Adding a prescription drug benefit to the Medicare program could have been a way to address this urgent problem. But the Bush administration and its allies in Congress instead found a way to turn Medicare reform into a bonanza for drug companies and HMOs.

Congressional Republicans insisted on having Medicare HMOs and private insurance companies provide the drug coverage, rather than make it available under the existing Medicare program. As a result, a big chunk of the \$534 billion in the bill will go to special interests, not to seniors—and many beneficiaries will be forced into HMOs and PPOs.

Draft regulations estimate that between 2004 and 2009 the law will pay Medicare HMOs \$23.4 billion more than what they would receive

Key Vote: Roll Call 669 – Medicare Drug Bill

without the law. In contrast to this huge gift to corporations, the value to beneficiaries will be just \$1.4 billion, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Seniors will pay a \$420 annual premium, absorb a yearly deductible of \$250, and be saddled with co-payments on drug purchases. Beneficiaries will pay 25% of the first \$2,250 in expenses, but 100% of drug costs from \$2,251 to \$5,100—the so-called "doughnut hole."

In a huge gift to drug companies, Bush's program prohibits Medicare from using its bargaining clout to directly negotiate deep discounts in drug prices. It also effectively bans the re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada, which cost about 50% less than in the US.

Bush's failure to tackle drug prices head on has left seniors with

no protections as drug prices continue to skyrocket, rapidly eating up the benefit that the new law was supposed to provide.

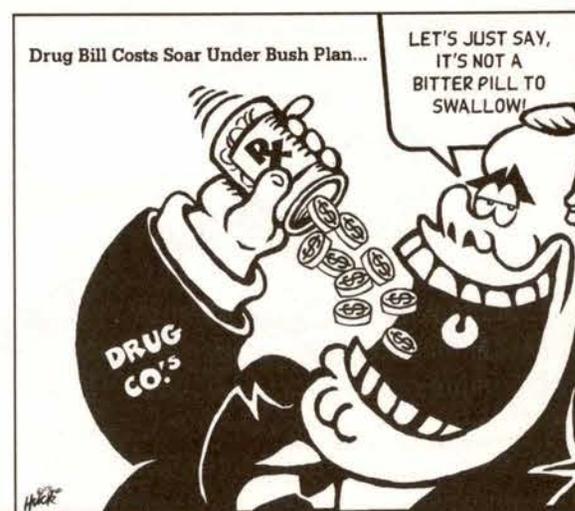
In a study tracking the prices of 197 of the most widely used brand-named drugs from 2000 to 2003, the group AARP found a cumulative increase of 27.6%, compared with a general inflation increase of 10.4%.

Analyzing the prices of the top 30 name-brand drugs prescribed for seniors, Families USA found an increase on average 4.3 times greater than inflation between January 2003 and January 2004.

Medicare "reform" provided Bush with some good campaign rhetoric.

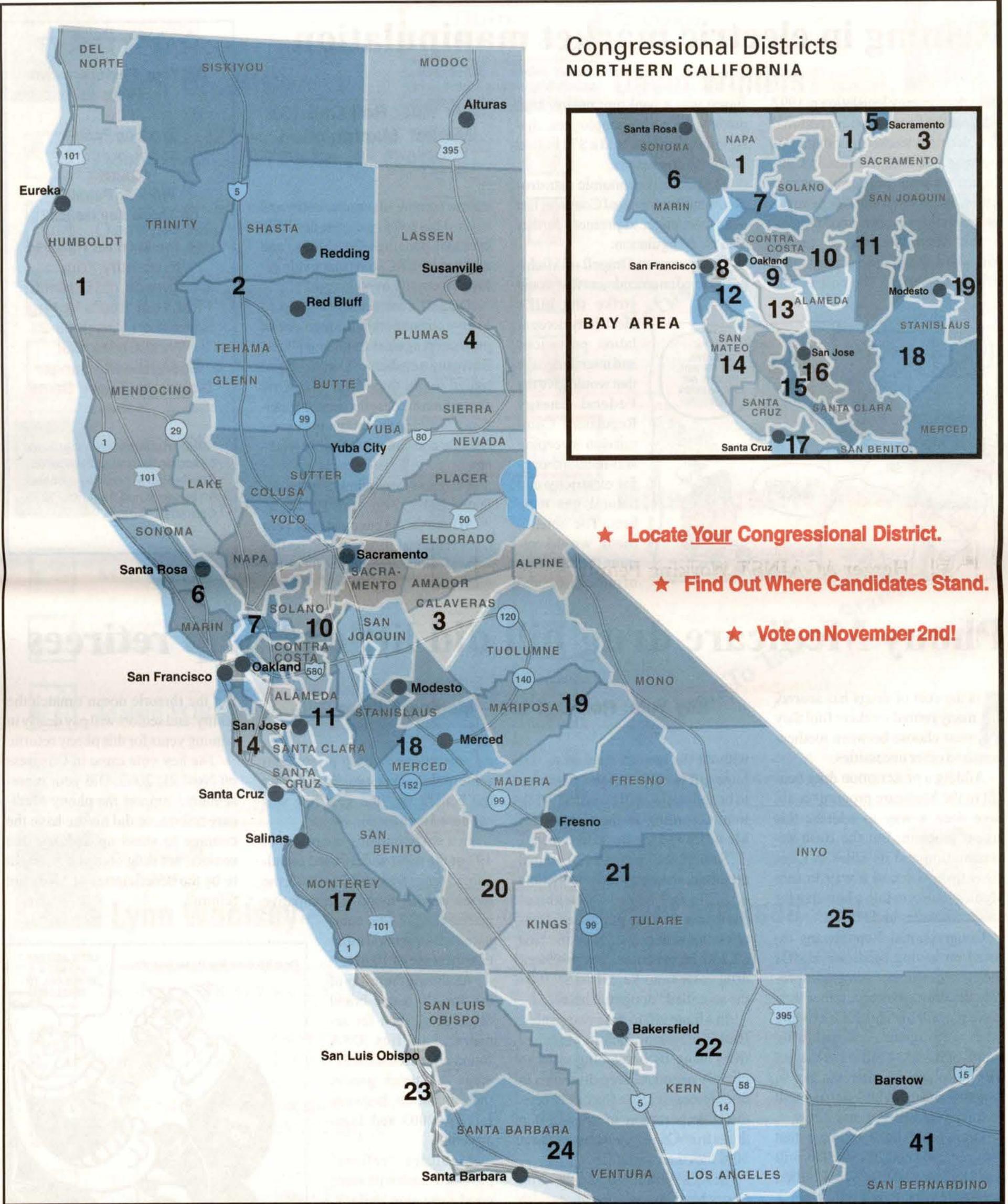
But the rhetoric doesn't match the reality, and seniors will pay dearly in coming years for this phony reform.

The key vote came in Congress on Nov. 21, 2003. Did your representative support the phony Medicare reform, or did he/she have the courage to stand up and say that seniors, not drug companies, ought to be the beneficiaries of Medicare reform?



Hold Your Elected Representatives Accountable!

Congressional Districts NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



- ★ **Locate Your Congressional District.**
- ★ **Find Out Where Candidates Stand.**
- ★ **Vote on November 2nd!**

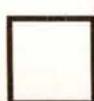
Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?

 <p>Incumbent</p> <p>Mike Thompson</p> <p>Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Thompson FOR Working People</p> <p>Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Thompson FOR Working People</p> <p>Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Thompson FOR Working People</p> <p>Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Thompson FOR Working People</p>	<p>District 1 U.S. Congress</p> <p>Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, Napa & parts of Sonoma & Yola Counties (See page 14)</p>	<p>Challenger</p>  <p>Lawrence Wiesner</p> <p>Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Refused To Take A Stand</p> <p>Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Refused To Take A Stand</p> <p>Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Refused To Take A Stand</p> <p>Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Refused To Take A Stand</p>
 <p>Incumbent</p> <p>Wally Herger</p> <p>Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Herger AGAINST Working People</p> <p>Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Herger AGAINST Working People</p> <p>Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Herger AGAINST Working People</p> <p>Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Herger AGAINST Working People</p>	<p>District 2 U.S. Congress</p> <p>Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity & part of Butte, Yolo & Yuba Counties (See page 14)</p>	<p>Challenger</p> <p>No Photo Available</p> <p>Michael Johnson</p> <p>Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Johnson FOR Working People</p> <p>Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Johnson FOR Working People</p> <p>Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Johnson FOR Working People</p> <p>Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Johnson FOR Working People</p>
 <p>(Open Seat)</p> <p>Gabe Castillo</p> <p>Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Castillo FOR Working People</p> <p>Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Castillo FOR Working People</p> <p>Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Castillo FOR Working People</p> <p>Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Castillo FOR Working People</p>	<p>District 3 U.S. Congress</p> <p>Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, & parts of Butte, Sacramento & Solano Counties (See page 14)</p>	<p>(Open Seat)</p>  <p>Dan Lungren</p> <p>Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Refused To Take A Stand</p> <p>Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Refused To Take A Stand</p> <p>Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Refused To Take A Stand</p> <p>Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Refused To Take A Stand</p>

Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?

Incumbent	District 4 U.S. Congress El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas & parts of Butte and Sacramento Counties (See page 14)	Challenger
 <p>John Doolittle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Doolittle AGAINST Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Doolittle AGAINST Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Doolittle AGAINST Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Doolittle Did Not Vote 		 <p>David Winters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) <p>Refused To Take A Stand</p>
 <p>Robert Matsui</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Matsui FOR Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Matsui FOR Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Matsui FOR Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Matsui FOR Working People 	<p>District 5 U.S. Congress Part of Sacramento County (See page 14)</p>	 <p>Mike Dugas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) <p>Refused To Take A Stand</p>
 <p>Lynn Woolsey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Woolsey FOR Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Woolsey FOR Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Woolsey FOR Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Woolsey FOR Working People 	<p>District 6 U.S. Congress Marin and parts of Sonoma Counties (See page 14)</p>	 <p>Paul Erickson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) <p>Refused To Take A Stand</p>

Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?



Incumbent

George Miller

**District 7
U.S. Congress**

Parts of Contra Costa and Solano Counties
(See page 14)

Challenger

Charles Hargrave



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Miller FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Miller FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Miller FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Miller FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Hargrave AGAINST Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Hargrave FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Hargrave AGAINST Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Hargrave FOR Working People



Incumbent

Nancy Pelosi

**District 8
U.S. Congress**

Part of San Francisco County (See page 14)

Challenger

Jennifer Depalma



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Pelosi FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Pelosi FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Pelosi FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Pelosi FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Refused To Take A Stand



Incumbent

Barbara Lee

**District 9
U.S. Congress**

Parts of Alameda County (See page 14)

Challenger

Claudia Bermudez



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Lee FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Lee FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Lee FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Lee FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Refused To Take A Stand

Issues Where Do the Candidates Stand?

 Incumbent <h2 style="margin: 0;">Ellen Tauscher</h2>	<h3 style="margin: 0; color: blue;">District 10 U.S. Congress</h3> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Parts of Alameda, Contra Costa, Sacramento & Solano Counties (See page 14)</p>	Challenger  <h2 style="margin: 0;">Jeff Ketelson Sr.</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Tauscher FOR Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Tauscher FOR Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Tauscher FOR Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Tauscher FOR Working People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) 	Refused To Take A Stand

 Incumbent <h2 style="margin: 0;">Richard Pombo</h2>	<h3 style="margin: 0; color: blue;">District 11 U.S. Congress</h3> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Parts of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin & Santa Clara Counties (See page 14)</p>	Challenger  <h2 style="margin: 0;">Gerald McNerney</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Pombo AGAINST Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Pombo AGAINST Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Pombo AGAINST Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Pombo AGAINST Working People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) McNerney FOR Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) McNerney FOR Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) McNerney FOR Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) McNerney FOR Working People 	

 Incumbent <h2 style="margin: 0;">Tom Lantos</h2>	<h3 style="margin: 0; color: blue;">District 12 U.S. Congress</h3> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">Parts of San Francisco & San Mateo Counties (See page 14)</p>	Challenger <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> No Photo Available </div> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Mike Garza</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Lantos FOR Working People  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Lantos FOR Working People  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Lantos FOR Working People  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Lantos FOR Working People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)  Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)  Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)  Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) 	Refused To Take A Stand

Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?

 Incumbent	District 13 U.S. Congress Parts of Alameda County (See page 14)	Challenger 
Pete Stark		George Bruno
 Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Stark FOR Working People		 Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) No Position
 Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Stark FOR Working People		 Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Bruno FOR Working People
 Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Stark FOR Working People		 Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Bruno AGAINST Working People
 Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Stark FOR Working People		 Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Bruno FOR Working People
 Incumbent	District 14 U.S. Congress Parts of San Mateo, Santa Clara & Santa Cruz Counties (See page 14)	Challenger 
Anna Eshoo		Chris Haugen
 Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Eshoo FOR Working People		 Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)
 Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Eshoo Did Not Vote*		 Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)
 Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Eshoo FOR Working People		 Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)
 Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Eshoo FOR Working People		 Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)
Refused To Take A Stand		
 Incumbent	District 15 U.S. Congress Parts of Santa Clara County (See page 14)	Challenger 
Mike Honda		Raymond Chukwa
 Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Honda FOR Working People		 Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133) Chukwa AGAINST Working People
 Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Honda FOR Working People		 Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531) Chukwa FOR Working People
 Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Honda FOR Working People		 Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669) Chukwa AGAINST Working People
 Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Honda FOR Working People		 Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18) Chukwa FOR Working People

*Eshoo voted with working people on similar overtime votes in 2003, but missed this vote.

Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?



Incumbent

Zoe Lofgren

**District 16
U.S. Congress**

Parts of Santa Clara County (See page 14)

Challenger

Douglas McNea



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Lofgren FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Lofgren FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Lofgren FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Lofgren FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Refused To Take A Stand



Incumbent

Sam Farr

**District 17
U.S. Congress**

Monterey, San Benito & parts of Santa Cruz Counties (See page 14)

Challenger

Mark Risley



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Farr FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Farr FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Farr FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Farr FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Risley FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Risley FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Risley FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Risley FOR Working People



Incumbent

Dennis Cardoza

**District 18
U.S. Congress**

Merced & parts of Fresno, Madera, San Joaquin & Stanislaus Counties (See page 14)

Challenger

Charles Pringle



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Cardoza FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Cardoza FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Cardoza FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Cardoza FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Refused To Take A Stand

Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?



Incumbent

George Radanovich

**District 19
U.S. Congress**

Mariposa & parts of Fresno, Madera, Stanislaus & Tuolumne Counties (See page 14)

Challenger

James Bufford



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Radanovich AGAINST Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Radanovich AGAINST Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Radanovich AGAINST Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Radanovich AGAINST Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Bufford FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Bufford FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Bufford FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Bufford FOR Working People



(Open Seat)

Jim Costa

**District 20
U.S. Congress**

Kings & parts of Fresno & Kern Counties (See page 14)

(Open Seat)

Roy Ashburn



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Costa FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Costa FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Costa FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Costa FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Refused To Take A Stand



Incumbent

Devin Nunes

**District 21
U.S. Congress**

Tulare & parts of Fresno County (See page 14)

Challenger

Fred Davis



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Nunes AGAINST Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Nunes AGAINST Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Nunes AGAINST Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Nunes AGAINST Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Davis FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Davis FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Davis FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Davis FOR Working People

Issues

Where Do the Candidates Stand?



Incumbent

Bill Thomas

**District 22
U.S. Congress**

Parts of Kern, San Luis Obispo & Los Angeles Counties (See page 14)

Challenger

No Challenger



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Thomas AGAINST Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Thomas AGAINST Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Thomas AGAINST Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Thomas AGAINST Working People



Incumbent

Lois Capps

**District 23
U.S. Congress**

Parts of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties (See page 14)

Challenger

Donald Regan



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)

Capps FOR Working People



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)

Capps FOR Working People



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)

Capps FOR Working People



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Capps FOR Working People



Electric Market Regulation (Roll Call 133)



Overtime Pay Protection (Roll Call 531)



Medicare Prescription Benefit (Roll Call 669)



Unemployment Benefits (Roll Call 18)

Refused To Take A Stand

How the Local 1245 Candidate Survey was conducted

IBEW Local 1245 created the Candidate Survey to show where candidates for the US House stand on issues important to working families. We want to provide our members a way to evaluate the candidates based on facts. Facts are available in the form of voting records.

The issues we selected were all voted on during the current (2003-2004) session of the United States House of Representatives. The survey shows how the incumbents actually voted on bills important to working people. Where the incumbent was absent or abstained, we list them as "Did Not Vote."

Non-incumbent candidates (challengers or candidates in districts where there is no incumbent

running) were sent a survey asking them to declare whether they were generally for or against these same selected bills. We also sent the candidates a summary of the bills' general content. All surveyed candidates received a follow-up letter reminding them of the deadline for returning the survey.

If a candidate refused to respond to our survey, they were awarded a "chicken." This seems an appropriate symbol for candidates who don't have the courage to say where they stand, nor the courtesy to respond to a legitimate request for information. If a candidate had the courage to respond to the survey, but chose not to take a position on a particular issue, their position on that issue is listed as "No Position."

In past years we have found that the challengers in some races indicated a greater degree of support for working people than they actually exhibited once they got into office. We cannot attest to a challenger's truthfulness in this survey; we can only report what they say.

We have made every effort to include all major party candidates within Local 1245's geographical jurisdiction. If a candidate failed to participate, it was by his or her own choice. Local 1245's list of endorsements can be found in next month's Utility Reporter, along with a survey of candidates for California Assembly and California Senate. We hope the surveys assist you in evaluating the candidates.

Action **How You Can Make a Difference!**

Union members have made the difference in many recent elections because we have turned out in larger numbers than the general voting public.

We can make the difference in several key races in November. Your local Central Labor Council can show you how. Volunteer now!

Alameda County CLC

Judy Goff, Exec. Secy.
7992 Capwell Drive
Oakland, CA 94621
Phone: (510) 632-4242
FAX: (510) 632-3993
www.alamedalabor.org
mail@alamedalabor.org

Butte - Glenn Counties CLC

Mickey Harrington, President
1009 Sycamore Street, Suite B
Chico, CA 95928
Phone: (530) 343-9474
FAX: (530) 342-9414
http://now2000.com/bgclc/
bgclc@chico.com

Contra Costa County CLC

John Dalrymple, Exec. Secy-Treas.
1333 East Pine St., #E
Martinez, CA 94553
Phone: (925) 228-0161
FAX: (925) 228-0224

Five Counties CLC

Gary Sharette, Secy-Treas.
900 Locust St., Room 7
Redding, CA 96001
Phone: (530) 241-0319
FAX: (530) 221-0964

Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings CLC

Randy Ghan, Secy-Treas.
3485 West Shaw Avenue,
Suite 103
Fresno, CA 93711
Phone: (559) 275-1151
FAX: (559) 275-1331
www.valleylaborcitizen.com/

Humboldt and Del Norte Counties CLC

Jim Smith, President
840 E St Suite 9
Eureka, CA 95501
Phone: (707) 443-7371
FAX: (707) 443-0819

Kern, Inyo and Mono Counties CLC

Ward Wollensen
200 W. Jeffrey Street
Bakersfield, CA 93305
Phone: (661) 324-6451
FAX: (661) 327-8379
kernbtc@lightspeed.net
www.kernlabor.org/

Merced-Mariposa Counties CLC

Jerry Martin, President
625 W. Oliver Avenue, Suite 103
Merced, CA 95348
Phone: (209) 722-3636
FAX: (209) 722-9640

Monterey Bay CLC

(Monterey and Santa Cruz have merged)
Paul Johnston, Secy-Treas.
10353 Merritt Street
Castroville, CA 95012-3306
Phone: (831) 633-1869
FAX: (831) 633-1859
laborcouncil@igc.org
www.montereybaylabor.org

Napa-Solano Counties CLC

Anes Lewis-Partridge
945 Empire St
Fairfield CA 94533
Phone: (707) 428-1055
FAX: (707) 428-1393

North Bay Labor Council

Alec Mallonee, Secy-Treas.
1700-C Corby Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
Phone: (707) 545-6970
FAX: (707) 544-6336
http://northbayclc.home.mindspring.com
northbayclc@mindspring.com

Sacramento Central Labor Council

Bill Camp, Exec. Secy.
2840 El Centro Rd., Suite 111
Sacramento, CA 95833
Phone: (916) 927-9772
FAX: (916) 927-1643
www.sacramentolabor.org/

San Francisco Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Walter Johnson, Secy-Treas.
1188 Franklin Street, Suite 203
San Francisco, CA 94109
Phone: (415) 440-4809
FAX: (415) 440-9297
sflc@sbcglobal.net
www.sflaborcouncil.org

San Joaquin-Calaveras Counties CLC

Ray Recinos, Secy-Treas.
1045 N. El Dorado Suite 8
Stockton, CA 95202
Phone: (209) 948-5526
FAX: (209) 948-2652

San Mateo County CLC

Shelley Kessler, Exec. Secretary-Agitator
1153 Chess Drive, Suite 200
Foster City, CA 94404
Phone: (650) 572-8848
FAX: (650) 572-2481

South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council

Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins, Business Manager/
Chief Executive Officer
2102 Almaden Road, Room 100
San Jose, CA 95125-2190
Phone: (408) 266-3790
FAX: (408) 266-2653
southbayafclcio@atwork.org
www.atwork.org/atwork/clc/

Stanislaus and Tuolumne Counties CLC

Lucille Palmer Byrd, Secy-Treas.
1125 Kansas Ave
Modesto CA 95351
Phone: (209) 523-8079
FAX: (209) 523-2619

Tri-Counties Central Labor Council

Marilyn Wollard Valenzuela, Exec. Secy-Treas.
21 South Dos Caminos Avenue
Ventura, CA 93003
Phone: (805) 641-3712
FAX: (805) 643-9426

Invest three hours of your time this fall to defend
your livelihood against legislative attack.

It will be one of the most important investments you make this year.

Sierra crews respond to Waterfall Fire



Working in King's Canyon in the wake of Nevada's Waterfall Fire are, from left: Lineman Aaron Coulson, Apprentice Randy Menesini, Upgraded-to-Foreman Charlie Appleton, and Apprentice Brad Shell.

► From Page 1

continued to spread, the crews began reconstruction.

"That first night we put up nine poles, changed some transformers and put wire back up," said Lantis. "I got off 10 a.m. Friday and I was back at 3 or 4" that afternoon.

Crews worked around the clock for the first two days of the fire. Reno employees made sure they had ample supplies by bringing in the warehouse trailer with its stock of bolts, cross-arms, and braces. The crews worked extended days until all service was restored to homes which had not been damaged by the fire.

Although adrenalin helped keep the Sierra crews in high gear, there were sobering moments as well. The crews worked

in a charred landscape littered with lizards, rabbits, snakes and other critters who didn't survive the disaster, according to Downs.

In the four weeks following the fire's outbreak, crews replaced 41 primary distribution poles, four secondary poles, and eleven 60 kv poles, according to Sierra Pacific.

But most of that work was done in the first four days, according to Lantis, who clearly took pride in the performance of the crews.

"We got about everything put back up by Saturday. Those guys did an exemplary job. It was phenomenal," Lantis said.

In all, 52 IBEW-represented Sierra Pacific employees mobilized to combat the blaze and restore power in its aftermath, including four Carson City crews, one Yerington crew, one South Lake Tahoe crew, one Transmission crew, five employees from the Construction Department and five Warehouse personnel, as well as one Truckee Meadows crew. They were assisted by many others working behind the scenes to take phone calls, input time sheets, and other support functions.

At the peak of the fire danger, 1,900 firefighters and 123 fire engines were camped around homes and extinguishing flames, aided by at least 26 aircraft, including air tankers and helicopters.

Those who were there know that IBEW members at Sierra Pacific Power were a vital part of the emergency response effort.



Sierra Pacific Power Lineman Charlie Appleton, upgraded to foreman (in bucket), Apprentice Randy Menesini (on pole), and Lineman Aaron Coulson (on ground) work amidst burnt structures and charred vegetation while restoring service in King's Canyon following the Waterfall Fire.



Let's help Local 1245 retirees feel like they belong

By Orville Owen

We can do a better job in providing a place for retirees to express their concerns as well as their support for the union they helped forge.

I recently received a letter from Ken Rawles, who worked at a Santa Rosa substation and spent 31 years as a steward. Ken joined our Retirees Club after his retirement in 2001. Ken traveled to the retirees meeting at the Walnut Creek union headquarters until the union changed its office to Vacaville. Now he attends the San Jose chapter.

Ken has expressed the view that there should be meeting places for all retirees and that there should certainly

be one at local union headquarters in Vacaville. The current policies of notification in the Utility Reporter and verbal support by the leadership are not getting the job done.

May I respectfully suggest the following:

We need additional support by the Business Manager and his staff in coordinating the activities of retirees and establishing meeting places for retirees to conduct their business.

Business Representatives should be available to organize retiree meetings in their assigned service area. Business Rep. Bill Brill already has set the example by attending monthly San Jose Retirees meetings and pro-

viding updates on union activities.

Business Representatives could be instrumental in contacting union halls in their assigned areas that could be used for retiree meetings.

Finally, retirees should be allowed to attend monthly unit meetings without having their attendance challenged. Unfortunately this is not always the case.

We may retire from the job, but we never retire from our union. Let's help retirees continue to share the spirit of the brotherhood and the feeling of belonging.

Keep the faith!

Former Assistant Business Manager Orv Owen attends the San Jose Chapter of the Retirees Club.



Make a Date...

The Local 1245 Retiree Club invites you to join us for companionship, discussion and projects. Current meeting locations are:

East Bay Chapter:

Meets 2nd Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 595, 6250 Village Parkway, Dublin, CA.

San Jose Chapter:

Meets 1st Thursday each month, 10 a.m., at IBEW Local 332, 2125 Canoas Garden, San Jose.

Canadian drugs? Why not Canadian drug policy?

Wildly-escalated drug costs have squeezed seniors and others who require medications. So it is no surprise that more than a dozen bills to lower prescription drug costs were introduced in the California legislature, including bills to remove barriers to importing less-costly prescription drugs from Canada.

The run-up in prices has also pinched local governments like Alameda County, where some 15% of the county's \$50 million health care budget goes to pay for prescription drugs.

But as Robert Kuttner recently noted in the New York Times, "there is something quite lunatic about the entire debate" on whether to permit imports of drugs from Canada.

"It's not as if Canada manufactures drugs more cheaply," says Kuttner. The drugs are the same as those sold in the US. They are cheaper up north for one simple reason: Canada regulates drug prices.

It's not the drugs we should be importing, it's the policy, says Deborah Stone, a health policy ex-

pert at Dartmouth.

But cheaper drug prices are barely an issue in the current election season. Bush has already made his stand—his Medicare reform enacted last year explicitly *prohibits* Medicare, the largest bulk purchaser of pharmaceutical drugs, from negotiating discounted prices. As a result, the puny benefits in Bush's plan are already being swamped by the galloping inflation in prescription costs.

Senator Kerry has said he wants to let the government negotiate discount prices for drugs, and also supports the re-importation of cheaper drugs from Canada.

Swept Under The Rug

But the larger issue is swept under the rug: why should Americans have to go to Canada to buy cheaper drugs? If we're so fond of Canada's approach to controlling drug prices, why don't we just adopt it here and stop forcing seniors to bus up to Canada to obtain affordable drugs?

The drug industry argues that there are safety concerns about drugs from



"Caution... a common side effect of the drug I'm prescribing is 'poverty'."

Canada. But in reality, Canadian safety standards are at least as strict as our own.

Here's the real reason drug companies don't want seniors going to Canada for drugs: If drug imports became widespread, the domestic structure of drug overpricing would collapse. Everyone, says Kuttner, would buy from Canada.

Congratulations!

The Local 1245 Retirees Club congratulates these recently-retired members of the union. We invite you to participate in – or start! – a Retirees Club chapter in your area.

Robert Bamford, 39 years
Sacramento, CA

Frederick Bell, 22
Concord, CA

Robert Holmes, 28
Napa, CA

Morris Schoonover, 46
San Pablo, CA

Donald Anderson, 37
Hayward, CA

Barry Ballew, 36
Salinas, CA

Bobby Blakeley, 36
Georgetown, TX

John Cornelius, 34
Novato, CA

Judith Heyfron, 29
Fremont, CA

Elvin Jackson, 31
Fresno, CA



Dismantling information on women's issues

'Paid leave' gets off to slow start

Only 13,400 people applied for California's paid family leave during the first month the program was in effect.

But even with the lower-than-expected demand, the state's employment development department, which oversees the program, had a three-week backlog in processing claims, according to a report in the San Jose Mercury News.

Suzanne Schroeder, a spokeswoman with the Employment Development Department, attributed the backlog to typical start-up complications, including computer system failures.

But it's hardly an auspicious beginning for the ground-breaking program of paid family leave, which started July 1, as some new parents were left waiting for the promised assistance.

The new benefit, called the Paid Family Leave Insurance Program, is funded by employees through the state's disability insurance program. It is supposed to pay workers 55% of their salary for up to six weeks to take care of a new child or a severely ill relative. The state has estimated that 300,000 people would take advantage of the benefit in the first year.

That should have worked out to 25,000 applicants during the first month, but applications fell far short of that number.

Advocates for the new law, which was heavily backed by labor unions, say that many people still don't know about the law or don't understand how it works.

Information about the law is available in the News Archives section of the Local 1245 website at www.ibew1245.com.

If you'd logged onto the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau Web site in 1999, you would have found a list of more than 25 fact sheets and statistical reports on topics on subjects like "Women's Earnings as Percent of Men's 1979-1997."

But things have changed since George W. Bush gave the Labor Department new marching orders when he took office in 2001.

Those fact sheets no longer exist on the Women's Bureau Web site, and have instead been replaced with a handful of titles that sound more promotional than informational, like "Hot Jobs for the 21st Century."

The missing fact sheets are one example of the ways in which the Bush administration is dismantling or distorting information on women's issues, from pay equity to reproductive healthcare, according to "Missing: Information About Women's Lives," a recent report by the National Council for Research on Women.

"Missing" catalogs ways in which government information about women's health, labor and education has been altered or removed during the Bush administration, undermining what has been a traditional and nonpartisan function of government: making data available to the citizenry. The NCRW researchers worry that this absence of information will hurt future researchers, policymakers and citizens in their advocacy for women's equality.

"This report outlines a disturbing pattern of decisions by federal agencies to close down, delay, alter, or spin data about what is happening to American women and girls. Science must not be sacrificed and silenced like this," Congresswoman Barbara Lee of California told Salon.

In 1999, according to the report, the Women's Bureau described how it "Alerts women about their rights in the workplace, proposes policies and legislation that benefit working women, researches and analyzes in-

formation about women and work, [and] makes appropriate reports on its findings." By February 2002, the Bureau's asserted goal was "To promote profitable employment opportunities for women, to empower them by enhancing their skills and improving their working conditions, and to provide employers with more alternatives to meet their labor needs."

The Women's Bureau under Bush appears more concerned about helping women make more money for their employer, and less concerned about providing objective information women can use to advance their own interests.

Besides the missing fact sheets, the site also no longer features the popular handbook on the rights of women in the workplace, called "Don't Work in the Dark — Know Your Rights."

Irasema Garza, the director of the women's rights department for the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, and the former director of the Women's Bureau from 1999 to 2000, had seen parts of the "Missing" report that pertained to her former department.

"As soon as I saw the report, I went to my old Web site and found that the majority of all of our fact sheets were gone," Garza told Salon.

"In my old job, I traveled all

around the country giving speeches — but all the women wanted were these fact sheets. Women really used this information to protect themselves in the workplace," Garza said.

Disappearing Agencies

"Missing" doesn't concern itself only with absent online information. It also lists some of the actual governmental bodies that have disappeared or been threatened during the Bush administration. In 2001, Bush disbanded the President's Interagency Council on Women, a group appointed in 1995 by Bill Clinton.

Among the first actions taken by Mr. Bush after his inauguration was to shut down the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach, thus removing the Presidential imprimatur from its mission of addressing women's problems in federal agencies. When this backward step was criticized, the excuse offered by the Bush Administration was that the office had "expired at the end of President Clinton's term." They promised that its expiration wouldn't affect the new administration's "outreach" on behalf of women.

Bush budget managers then quietly moved to abolish the 10 regional offices of the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau, crippling the department's capacity to enforce female-friendly laws and regulations.

The Women's Bureau under Bush appears more concerned about helping women make more money for their employer, and less concerned about providing objective information women can use to advance their own interests.

Six Bush betrayals on health & safety



The health and safety of the nation's workers and the American public have taken a back seat to corporate interests and profits under the Bush administration.

In one of his earliest actions as president, Bush repealed the nation's first workplace ergonomics rule. The Bush administration has gone on to suppress vital information about the toxic fallout and air quality following the World Trade Center attacks, killed a rule to protect health care workers and patients from contracting tuberculosis and blocked funds to monitor the health of Sept. 11, 2001, rescue and recovery workers.

Repealed the Nation's First Ergonomic Standard

In March 2001, President Bush killed the nation's first standard addressing carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive stress injuries. His Resolution of Disapproval repealed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) ergonomics standard issued during the Clinton administration. Some 1.8 million workers suffer such injuries annually, and workplace safety experts estimated the standard would have prevented hundreds of thousands of workplace injuries each year.

Pressured EPA to Downplay Toxic Threat in World Trade Center Disaster Report

In the days immediately following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center, the Bush White House pressured the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to tone down potential health hazards resulting from the buildings' collapse, according to an Aug. 18, 2003, report by the EPA's inspector general, which has been removed from EPA's website. Thousands of emergency workers and construction workers toiled months at the site, and residents and workers returned to their homes and jobs believing it was safe to do so. The report says EPA was pressured by the White House to omit warnings about hazards from air pollutants such as asbestos and smoke from fires, some of which burned for four months.

Shut Out Workers, Unions from Safety Studies

The Bush administration in December 2002 formed a national advisory committee on ergonomics to study causes and methods to prevent workplace repetitive stress injuries.

But for the first time in the OSHA's history, a workplace safety advisory committee did not include an equal number of union and management representatives—seven management representatives (including those who opposed an ergonomics standard) and only two union safety experts were appointed. Prior to this action, the Bush administration also formed several "alliances" in specific industries, such as meatpacking, airlines, printing and others, to study workplace safety—but none include union or workers' representatives.

Blocked Funds to Monitor Health of Sept. 11 Rescue and Recovery Workers

In August 2002, Bush refused to release the \$5.1 billion Congress approved for supplemental homeland security programs. Those funds included \$90 million to monitor the health of workers who cleaned up the rubble at Ground Zero, as well as \$150 million for equipment and training grants requested by some of the nation's 18,000 fire departments and \$100 million to improve the communications systems for firefighters, police officers and other emergency personnel. The administration's fiscal year 2005 budget proposes major cuts in first-responder grant funding at the Department of Homeland Security.

Proposed Allowing Private Nuclear Weapons Plant Contractors to Write Own Safety Rules

The Bush administration in January 2004 proposed shielding private contractors that operate about two dozen federal nuclear weapons plants and nuclear research facilities from government safety standards by allowing them to write their own safety rules. Department of Energy con-

tractor facilities are exempt from OSHA workplace health and safety standards and fall under Energy Department oversight. The proposed rule by the Bush administration's Energy Department calls for contractors to develop their own safety and health standards and allows them to decide on a case-by-case basis which rules should be followed. Following public outcry, the Energy Department on Feb. 23, 2004, announced it was suspending action on the proposed rule.

Withdrew Proposed Tuberculosis Exposure Rule

The Bush administration withdrew in May 2003 a proposed rule that would have established protections against workplace exposure to tuberculosis. The move to establish a tuberculosis rule began in 1993, and OSHA proposed one in 1997 under the Clinton administration. The proposed exposure standard would have protected workers from tuberculosis by requiring airborne disease control measures. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization recommend many of the precautions included in the proposed tuberculosis rule to protect against severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

Register to Vote It's Easy!

For application, call:

(800) 345-8683

On-line, go to:

www.ss.ca.gov/elections/votereg1.html

Deadline: October 18th

Health care insurance costs are spiraling out of control. One in six Americans are without health care coverage, including over 6 million Californians. Premium cost increases are undermining unions' strength at the bargaining table; many employers are insisting on reductions or outright elimination of health coverage.

Last year, California's unions sponsored the **Health Insurance Act** of 2003. It required large businesses to provide health insurance for their workers and protects workers from steep increases in premiums and out-of-pocket costs. It extended health care coverage to one million Californians through their workplaces.

The **Health Insurance Act** is a powerful tool for dealing with the problems of employer cost shifting and the uninsured—both of which affect *everyone's* health care coverage.

Corporations are contributing millions to a November referendum that aims to overturn the law. In order to keep the Health Insurance Act, voters must vote YES on Proposition 72.

The opponents of the Health Insurance Act are expected to raise upwards of \$15 million dollars for their media campaign.

By going to the ballot, the opposition has now made this a high-profile, high-stakes battle. If the opponents win, it will stifle attempts at health care reform in other states. If our health care law is re-affirmed, it will send a major signal nationally that voters are demanding solutions to the health care crisis.

IBEW Local 1245 is a strong supporter of the Health Insurance Act because it helps us defend our health care benefits at the bargaining table.

**Local 1245 urges you
to
VOTE YES
on
PROP. 72!**

Defend employer-paid health care

YES on 72

Save Your Healthcare

We're facing a healthcare crisis

It's Coming Out of Your Pocket

Workers throughout California are paying more and getting less for their family's healthcare.

Many profitable employers are:

- Cutting workers' healthcare benefits.
- Making their employees pay more for health insurance.
- Dropping coverage benefits entirely.
- Not offering health insurance.



Your Healthcare is Threatened

Large, profitable companies like McDonald's and other fast food chains as well as retailers like Macy's have put a referendum on the November ballot to overturn a law that protects your healthcare.

**Important
UNION
Message**

Save Your Healthcare Vote YES on Prop. 72

The Health Insurance Act protects workers. By voting "YES" on November 2nd you will:

- ▶ Stop companies from making us pay for increases in healthcare costs.
- ▶ Stop management from using increased costs as a hammer at the bargaining table.
- ▶ Stop subsidizing cheap corporations like Wal-Mart who don't buy health insurance for their workers and push them into government programs for healthcare.*

Supported by:

IBEW Local 1245
California Labor Federation
California Medical Association
Consumers Union
Calif. Alliance for Retired Americans

Join the Fight!

Save Your Healthcare

Yes!
on Prop. 72

* The families of Wal-Mart employees in California use an estimated 40% more in taxpayer-funded health care than the average for families of all large retail employees.

U.C. Berkeley Labor Research Center

www.SaveYourHealthcare.com