

BCTGM

Forum

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Selling out

**MIDDLE
CLASS JOBS**

FOR

**POVERTY
WAGE JOBS**



the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Brothers and Sisters –

For this issue of the BCTGM News, I wanted to share with you the full letter that I sent to President Obama concerning the July 29 announcement by Mondelez International that it intends to move hundreds of union production jobs from the historic

BCTGM-represented Chicago Nabisco Bakery to the company's low-wage facility in Mexico. This contemptible move by this greedy multi-national company epitomizes all that is wrong with corporate America and U.S. trade policy.

— **David B. Durkee**, BCTGM International President

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union

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DAVID B. DURKEE
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

August 5, 2015

The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of great importance to the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM), our Chicago members and the City of Chicago.

BCTGM Local 300 represents nearly 1,000 workers at the Mondelez Chicago Nabisco Bakery located at 7300 S. Kedzie Avenue. This plant currently is Mondelez's largest U.S. bakery.

For more than 50 years, our members at this bakery have been producing high-quality baked goods including some of the world's most iconic brands such as Oreo and Chips Ahoy cookies and Ritz and Premium crackers. Our members are good, hardworking Chicagoans who have loyally devoted much of their working lives to helping make this company, and its predecessor Nabisco, financially successful.

Through the strength of our Union and quality of our collective bargaining agreements, these workers have been able to realize a good, middle-class life for themselves and their families and enjoy dignity, justice and respect on the job.

For most of the time that the BCTGM has represented the workers at the Nabisco Bakery, we have had a productive, positive collective bargaining relationship with the employer. Unfortunately, in recent years, this relationship has deteriorated as the company grapples with an unsustainable debt ratio caused by an ill-conceived company spinoff and pursues a path of relentless outsourcing of U.S. jobs to Mexico and counterproductive cost-cutting measures.

Instead of valuing and investing in the highly-skilled, dedicated workforce that built and sustained the company, current Mondelez management has chosen to break from the past constructive relationship and proceed in an adversarial manner in its relations with the BCTGM.

On May 15, 2015, company officials requested a meeting with BCTGM representatives at the Chicago Bakery. At this meeting, the company informed the Union that Mondelez was preparing to make a \$130 million capital investment in new oven lines. The investment would go to either the Chicago Bakery or the company's bakery in Salinas, Mexico.

We were further informed that in order to secure the investment in the Chicago Bakery, the workers would have to come up with \$46 million in annual savings in perpetuity. And, even if the investment were to be made in the Chicago Bakery, the company stated that 255 BCTGM members would still lose their jobs. If the investment were to go to Salinas, approximately 450 Chicago Bakery jobs would be lost.

At the May 15th meeting, the company provided no legitimate, comprehensive proposal for us to review and no detailed production and financial data for us to analyze. When we did the basic math, however, based on the number of workers involved, our members would have to take a **wage and benefit cut of \$22-29 per hour** in order to meet the company's demand. Certainly, this demand is not one to which our members would, or should, ever agree.

Our experience in these situations told us that Mondelez had no intention of putting the new investment in the Chicago Bakery. The company's disingenuous approach was nothing more than a ploy to reap concessions out of the Chicago workers before the announcement.

On July 29th, our assessment of the May 15th meeting was validated as Mondelez announced that the investment would be going to Mexico. Hundreds of good, skilled middle-class Chicago workers will be losing their jobs because Mondelez has chosen to turn its back on its loyal U.S. employees.

At the same time as Mondelez is demanding outrageous sacrifices and nonsensical wage and benefit cuts from its workers, corporate executives are being asked to make no sacrifices whatsoever. In fact, the polar opposite is taking place as senior management continues to enjoy exorbitant compensation beginning with the corporation's CEO, Irene Rosenfeld, who received total compensation of \$21 million in 2014, an increase of \$6 million from the previous year. Over the past eight years, Ms. Rosenfeld has received approximately \$165 million in total compensation.

Mondelez is a \$35 billion multinational corporation. It may be headquartered thirty miles up the road from Chicago, but it has no loyalty to Illinois workers or to the United States of America.

What Mondelez is doing to the workers at its Chicago Nabisco Bakery is emblematic of the pernicious corporate business model that has taken hold in this country; a business model that is predicated on the maximization of corporate profits and executive compensation through the elimination of good, middle-class jobs in U.S. factories concurrent with the expansion of production in unregulated factories in very low-wage countries around the world; a business model that is battering American workers and middle-class families.

It is this contemptible business model that is helping drive the economically and socially corrosive transfer of wealth from working families to the wealthiest one percent and one-tenth of one percent. It is at the core of the income inequality crisis in our country about which you have spoken so forcefully and eloquently as President.

Further, the untenable situation in which these fine Chicago workers find themselves is a direct result of NAFTA. Without NAFTA, Mondelez would not be able to leverage the \$2.00 per hour wages of the workers in its Salinas plant against the middle-class wages and benefits of bakery workers in Chicago.

It has been the same reality for hundreds of thousands of other American workers who have lost their jobs as companies are incentivized to shift production from the U.S. to Mexico and other very low-wage countries around the world. The loss of irreplaceable, good, middle-class jobs is the legacy of NAFTA and the primary reason why the BCTGM strongly opposes TPP, which we resolutely believe will only exacerbate the job loss and deterioration in our standard of living caused by failed trade agreements.

Mr. President, in July 2013, in a speech in Chattanooga, TN, you said, "So we should be doing everything we can as a country to create more good jobs that pay good wages. Period." The BCTGM wholeheartedly agrees with you!

In that spirit Mr. President, we respectfully call upon you to reach out to the corporate leaders at Mondelez and urge them to rescind their Chicago decision and instead invest in Chicago workers and create, not cut, good, middle-class American jobs.

We ask you, as well, to convey to them that cutting middle-class American jobs, lowering wages and alienating the dedicated men and women who work so hard to produce the quality food products that are essential to this company's success is a business model certain to fail. Mondelez should be reminded that working constructively and in the spirit of mutual respect with its Chicago workforce is in the best interest of the company, the workers and the city about which you care so deeply.

Thank you Mr. President for your consideration of our request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



David B. Durkee
International President



CALM
ACPS

Canadian
Association
of Labour
Media
Association
of the
United States
of America

The BCTGM News

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Mondelēz Chooses to Send American J

On July 29, the BCTGM International was informed by Mondelēz International, Inc. that the company had chosen to spend \$130 million in new capital investment at its Salinas, Mexico plant, rather than at the historic Chicago facility, where workers are represented by BCTGM Local 300.

As part of this investment, Mondelēz has announced it will install four new lines at its Mexico plant, replacing nine production lines in Chicago.

“We are disappointed, angry and frustrated that Mondelēz would abandon its hard working employees in Chicago, who, for more than 60 years, have helped make Nabisco products one of the premier food brands on the market today,” BCTGM International President David Durkee states.

More than 1,000 Local 300 members are employed at the plant. The Chicago bakery, which dates to the 1950s, is the company’s largest U.S. bakery. Union members operate all of the bakery’s 16 lines producing such iconic brands as Oreo, Chips

Ahoy, Nutter Butter, Honey Maid, belVita, Premium, Ritz and Wheat Thins. According to a statement released by Mondelēz, approximately 600 workers will be directly affected by the decision to close lines at the Chicago bakery.

During discussions between the BCTGM and Mondelēz in April, the company essentially told the BCTGM that the workers would have to come up with \$46 million in annual savings at the Chicago facility for the company in perpetuity or it would send the \$130 million planned investment to its Salinas bakery. Even with the \$46 million savings, the company stated that there would still be severe job cuts for workers at the Chicago bakery.

In responding to the company’s announcement, BCTGM International Vice President and lifelong Chicago resident, Jethro Head, states, “The announcement by Mondelēz is not a surprise and validates exactly what the BCTGM said when we met with its representatives – that the company had



Jobs to **Low-Wage Workforce** in Mexico

already decided that it was going to put the new production lines in Mexico.

“We knew this because they came to the table with no legitimate, comprehensive proposal for us to review and no detailed production and financial data for us to analyze, all of which is essential for our Union and members to make a responsible and well-informed assessment and decision,” said Head.

BCTGM International Strategic Campaign Coordinator Ron Baker explains, “When we did the basic math on their demands, it was clear that the company knew full well that the magnitude of the financial sacrifice being asked of the workers was not only unacceptable, but would not even be feasible. The demand for \$46 million in annual savings would continue in perpetuity and require our members to work for almost nothing.”

Baker went on to explain, “The sole purpose of the Mondelēz request to meet with the Union in May was to attempt to reap concessions out of Chicago

workers before they made the announcement. This company wanted the Chicago Bakery workers to pay not only for the full cost of putting new ovens in the Chicago facility, but also for the wages of the entire workforce in Salinas, Mexico.”

The company’s contract with BCTGM Local 300 expires on February 28, 2016. The BCTGM represents approximately 4,000 Mondelēz workers in manufacturing facilities, flour mills and distribution centers across North America.

Mondelēz International, Inc. is a \$35 billion multinational company. Mondelēz International, Inc. CEO Irene Rosenfeld took in more than \$21 million in total compensation in 2014, a nearly \$6 million increase from the previous year. This included a doubling of her annual cash incentive to \$3.6 million and a nearly \$4 million increase in her pension plan and other retirement benefits. In the last eight years, Rosenfeld has received approximately \$165 million in total compensation.

Mondelēz Uses NAFTA to **Flee U.S. Production**

The vehicle allowing Mondelēz International, and dozens of other companies to move production outside the United States is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The largest free trade agreement in North American history was signed into law in 1993, and at the time, was hailed as a milestone for the U.S. economy.

Unfortunately, the reality for North American workers has been the exact opposite.

According to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), the direct effects of NAFTA have been 23 years of stagnant wages, and the upward redistribution of wealth, capital and political power. “By establishing the principle that U.S. corporations could relocate production elsewhere and sell back into the United States, NAFTA undercut the bargaining power of American workers, which had driven the

expansion of the middle class since the end of World War II,” says an EPI report on the trade agreement.

Indeed, according to various reports on the impact of NAFTA on employment, it is indisputable that U.S. workers bore the brunt.

Meanwhile, this is not the first time Mondelēz has taken advantage of NAFTA to flee North American unions, labor and environmental laws, and federal and state standards. In the early 2000’s, Nabisco, then owned by Kraft Foods, moved production of Fig Newtons from its facility in Fair Lawn, N.J., to its plant in Monterrey, Mexico.

Over the last 20 years, Nabisco has closed plants in Pittsburgh, Niagara Falls, N.Y., Buena Park, Calif., St. Elmo, Ill., Houston, Tex., Toronto, and most recently, Philadelphia — with many of those jobs going to Mexico.

BCTGM International Reps. *complete* TEACHING SKILLS PROGRAM



Graduates of the July 26-31 Presentation and Teaching Techniques 1 Bonnie Ladin Union Skills Program course at MITAGS in Baltimore, Md.

International Representatives from four BCTGM Regions completed the Presentation and Teaching Techniques 1 course at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) in Baltimore, Md. July 26-31. The class is part of the Bonnie Ladin Union Skills Program, administered by the AFL-CIO.

Graduates of the class were BCTGM International Representatives David Woods and Jason Davis from the Southern Region; Roger Miller from the East-Central Region; Shad Clark from the Western Region; and Sylvain Gagne from the Canadian Region.

With an ever-present need for renewed activism and broader involvement among the rank-and-file, membership education is a top priority of the

BCTGM. This course, designed specifically for union staff, leaders and activists who want to engage members to take action—covers a broad range of education skills and training techniques for effective presentations at conferences, workshops, union meetings or other settings.

According to BCTGM International Director of Research & Education Matthew Clark, this class stresses the use of participatory techniques to actively engage the union representatives in the learning process. “Practice teaching is a key component of the course with guidance and feedback provided by a skilled labor educator,” says Clark.

Most Bonnie Ladin Union Skills courses are held at the Conference Center of the Maritime Institute, a union facility and home of the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots, AFL-CIO.



Intl. Reps. Roger Miller and Shad Clark (left) listen as Jason Davis (right) engages in a training exercise.



Intl. Rep. Shad Clark (center) explains mock plant diagram during an organizing workshop.

Kellogg BCTGM Members **RATIFY Master Contract**

On July 31, More than 1,300 BCTGM members at four U.S. Kellogg cereal plants ratified a new five-year Master Contract to replace the one set to expire on October 3, 2015.

Union members covered under the new agreement work in cereal plants in Lancaster, Pa., Battle Creek, Mich., Omaha, Neb., and Memphis, Tenn.

The five-year deal between BCTGM Locals 3G (Battle Creek), 50G (Omaha), 252G (Memphis) and 374G (Lancaster), the BCTGM International and the Kellogg Company includes a five-year moratorium on plant closings, solid wage and pension increases and maintenance of health care benefits.

Kellogg approached the Union to conduct the negotiations early in hopes of arriving at an amicable agreement well before the contract expiration. Members of the locals authorized their leadership to engage Kellogg in these early negotiations.

BCTGM International Vice President Midwest Region Jethro Head, who chaired the Union negotiating team together with International Secretary-Treasurer Steven Bertelli, was assisted by representatives of each of the local unions.

“This was as fine a team effort as I’ve been involved with in any negotiations. These negotiations were not easy and the local union leaders worked diligently to address the issues. They made difficult and important decisions on behalf of their respective members. They should be proud of their accomplishments and the solidarity that they showed during the process,” reflects Head.

“The five-year moratorium on plant closings provides our members with a sense of security and hope for the future. Additionally, the moratorium offers the strong likelihood of repatriation of production from non-union facilities in North America to BCTGM-represented factories,” adds Head.

Bertelli echoes the importance of this Master Agreement saying, “These employees and their families will continue to enjoy a premier wage and benefit package and can face their future employment

prospects with renewed confidence in both their active employment and into their retirement years.

“Our members have been dedicated to their work for Kellogg and that dedication will continue to be rewarded under this new Agreement as they produce the quality Kellogg cereal brands that are recognized around the world,” notes Bertelli.

This new five-year Agreement comes on the heels of a nearly 10-month lockout of Memphis Kellogg workers which ended with an injunction by a Federal Judge.

BCTGM International President David Durkee believes that the conclusion of this new Agreement could lead to a “revitalized, constructive and mutually beneficial working partnership between Kellogg, its union workforce and the BCTGM; a relationship that can open the door for new BCTGM jobs at Kellogg and the creation of a dynamic synergy for the company in today’s marketplace,” says Durkee.

“The greatest asset any employer has is a dedicated and skilled workforce. Our members, represented by these four BCTGM local unions, are the hard working men and women who daily build these brands from the bottom up. Their exemplary commitment to their work results in the production of Kellogg’s iconic products that are enjoyed in millions of homes,” Durkee adds.

“I highly commend the BCTGM leadership team that negotiated this Agreement and the membership of our Ready-to-Eat-Cereal locals and Kellogg for arriving at this quality five-year Agreement,” concludes Durkee.



Enjoy a BCTGM Union

Labor Day is the unofficial end of the summer holiday season.

While the day honors the hardworking men and women who make this nation go and grow, the weekend also gives us a chance for one more big backyard barbecue blowout. Here are some BCTGM-made goods to get your barbecue off to a great start.

The products listed on these pages are just some of the BCTGM-made products and is not inclusive of every BCTGM local or union-made product. BCTGM members work for hundreds of North America's best food companies producing thousands of quality goods, too numerous to list. As always, look for the BCTGM Union Label!

ICE CREAM TOPPINGS

The Masterson Company, Milwaukee, Wisc. (Local 244)

SNACKS/CHIPS

Frito-Lay, Inc., Rold Gold Pretzels, Canton, Ohio (Local 19)

UTZ Pretzels/The Bachman Company, Reading, Pa. (Local 6)

Frito-Lay, Topeka, Kan. (Local 218) & Vancouver, Wash. (Local 364)

Pirate Booty, Keystone Foods Products, Inc., Easton, Pa. (Local 6)

Mike-Sell's Potato Chip Co., Dayton, Ohio (Local 57)

Happy's Potato Chips/Old Dutch Foods, St. Paul, Minn. (Local 22)

Bugles, General Mills, West Chicago, Ill. (Local 316G)

PASTA

Ebro Puleva, Fresno, Calif. (Local 85)

Dakota Growers Pasta Co., New Hope, Minn. (Local 22)

Ronzoni Foods Canada (New World Pasta), Montreal, P.Q. (Local 227)

BAKED BEANS

Burnham and Morrill (B&M), Portland, Maine (Local 334)

-Made Labor Day

SWEET GOODS

Safeway Bakery: Local 114 (Portland, Ore.), Local 118 (Washington, D.C.), Local 68 (Baltimore, Md.)

Hostess Brands, LLC, Ding Dongs, Twinkies, SnoBalls - (Only Hostess Brands sweet cake products from Indianapolis (Local 1) and Columbus, Ga. (Local 42) bakeries.)

BREAD & ROLLS

Bimbo Bakeries U.S.A.: Bimbo, SB Thomas, Sara Lee, Nature's Harvest, Earthgrains, Freihofer, Colonial, Metz, Arnold, Brownberry, Oroweat, Entenmann's, Ball Park, Marinela, Maier's, Beefsteak, D'Italiano, J.J. Nissen, Boboli, Mrs. Baird's, Heiner's, Tia Rosa (tortillas), Stroehmann.

UNION-MADE BREWS

Here is a brief list of beers and ales made by union members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), the International Brother of Teamsters (IBT), the United Autoworkers (UAW), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), and IUE-CWA. (For a more extensive list – there are MANY – visit www.unionplus.org/union-made/beers.)

Or if you prefer union-made ROOT beer, chose Barq's, Blumers or Old Philadelphia. For non-alcoholic beer give Sharp's a try!

BEVERAGES

Canada Dry, 7-UP, A&W Root Beer, Orange Crush, and RC Cola, Denver, Colo. (Local 26)

BEER:

- ★ Budweiser/Bud Light
- ★ Leinenkugel's
- ★ Mad River
- ★ Michelob
- ★ Miller
- ★ Rolling Rock
- ★ Alexander Keiths
- ★ Blue Moon
- ★ Coors/Coors Light
- ★ Genesee Cream Ale
- ★ Iron City
- ★ Labatt's Blue
- ★ Moosehead
- ★ Pabst
- ★ Shock Top
- ★ Red Stripe



East-Central Council Holds 2015 Meeting

The 2015 meeting of the East-Central States was held June 9-10 in Atlantic City, N.J. and included 45 delegates from 17 locals. President of the Council, Local 53 President Joyce Alston, led the meeting.

BCTGM International President David Durkee, International Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bertelli, Director of Organization John Price, International Strategic Campaign Coordinator Ron Baker and Assistant to the President Harry Kaiser addressed the Council.

Delegates re-elected Alston to lead the Council for the next year. Other officers who delegates elected include Executive Vice President Paul LaBuda, Local

19 President; Treasurer Gary Oskoian, Local 68 Financial Secretary; Secretary Doug Walters, Local 253 President; Vice President Trevor Bidelman, Local 3G President. Also elected to help lead the Council was Henry McKay, Local 6 President; Tom Bingler, Local 36G Business Agent; Orin Holder, Local 70 Financial Secretary; Dan Bristol, Local 81 President/Business Agent; Raymond Aquilino, Local 102 President/Business Agent; William Andre, Local 116 Financial Secretary/Business Agent; John Jordan Local 334 Business Agent; Fred Boltz, Local 464 Business Agent; and Stan Milewski, Local 719 Financial Secretary.

Pictured above are delegates and guests to the 2015 East-Central Council Meeting.

President Durkee Meets with Tobacco Local Leaders

In early July, International President David Durkee attended the annual Tobacco Presidents and Vice Presidents Conference which brings together the leadership of the BCTGM's U.S. cigarette manufacturing local unions.

The Conference provided President Durkee with the opportunity to update the local union officers on the broad range of very positive developments that had taken place in the Union over the past year in the areas of collective bargaining, organizing, legislative and political action and membership education.

He also provided the delegates with a comprehensive presentation detailing the underlying causes for the enormous economic challenges facing American workers and middle class families, including the severe income inequality crisis.

Delegates from each local reported on the collective bargaining, manufacturing and labor relations situation in their respective factories. Significant time was also spent discussing the major changes that are taking place in the industry.

The NLRA Turns Eighty



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the National Labor Relations Act on July 5, 1935. Looking on, from left, are U.S. Rep. Theodore A. Peyster, U.S. Labor Secretary Frances Perkins and U.S. Sen. Robert F. Wagner.

“Democracy cannot work unless it is honored in the factory as well as the polling booth; men cannot be truly free in body and in spirit unless their freedom extends into the places where they earn their daily bread.”

-Senator Robert F. Wagner



Labor Law REFORM

on Agenda in Ontario

Much needed labour law reform is slated for Canada's largest province.

The Ontario government has appointed two Special Advisors to lead a review of Ontario's labour laws and employment standards. *The Changing Workplaces Review* will focus on how Ontario's Labour Relations Act (1995) could be reformed to "better protect workers while supporting businesses in our changing economy."

When announced early this year, the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) called it a "once in a generation opportunity to modernize Ontario's outdated labour laws."

Ontario has the second lowest level of union density in Canada, followed only by Alberta. Ontario's overall union density is 27 percent, however, when considering only the private sector, the rate falls to 14.4 percent. Since 2000, the union density in the private sector has declined 8.6 percent; much of that decline has been in manufacturing.

The BCTGM's top priorities for reform of Ontario's labour laws are card check recognition, improvements to first contract arbitration, and expedited reinstatement during organizing campaigns.

While surveys show that a majority of working Ontarians would like to join a union, many are afraid of retribution by the employer in the form of losing

hours at work or possibly their jobs if they support an organizing effort.

According to BCTGM International Director of Organization John Price, the fate of the middle class depends on bringing unionization to more workers. "Right now, workers in Ontario who want to join a union commonly suffer employer intimidation and coercion. Until more workers join unions and are protected by a collective bargaining agreement, the middle class will continue to shrink," notes Price.

Indeed, the statistics show just what an advantage union members have over their non-union cohorts.

According to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), unionized men in Ontario earn nearly \$7.00 more per hour than non-union male workers, while unionized women in Ontario earn almost \$8.00 more per hour than non-union female workers.

Unionization not only effects workers' wages, but also the other benefits they receive. Unionized workers typically receive a defined benefit pension plan, supplemental health insurance, dental and optical care, that is protected in the collective bargaining agreement.

But as the union density has

decreased, so too has the number of employees receiving these benefits. According to a report done by the Ontario government, 32 percent of workers in the private sector enjoyed a defined benefit pension plan in 1985. By 2005, that number had dropped to 25 percent.

Card check recognition would allow workplaces that sign 50% plus one authorization cards to automatically be certified

by the Ministry of Labour. This would eliminate the lengthy wait before a secret ballot election and significantly decreases the ability of an employer to wage an anti-union campaign.

According to BCTGM Canadian Region International Vice President Ron Piercey, breaking through that barrier of fear is a struggle when employers are free to wage bitter anti-union campaigns. "Card check recognition would really level the playing field and allow workers to make the decision to join a union without intimidation or threat of reprisals from their employers," said Piercey.

The Special Advisors are holding public meetings to discuss potential reforms and will present a final recommendation in 2016.

"Until more workers join unions and are protected by a collective bargaining agreement, the middle class will continue to shrink."

BCTGM LOBBIES AGAINST Federal Health Care Tax



The BCTGM, together with the AFL-CIO, has gone on the offensive to convince Congress and the Obama Administration, that a 40 percent excise tax on so-called “Cadillac” health care plans will have a detrimental effect on union workers who have sacrificed to maintain quality health care coverage for themselves and their families.

The tax is part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and would force employers to pay a 40 percent tax on health benefits that total more than \$10,200 for individual health plans and family plans above \$27,500. Several surveys suggest that one-third of employers will be hit by the tax in 2018, and possibly growing to 60 percent by 2022.

Taxing health care benefits would represent a major shift in a generations-old tax policy. For more than 50 years, the U.S. government has encouraged companies to offer health insurance by allowing tax deductions in exchange for providing workers with coverage.

Implementation of the 40 percent excise tax will lead employers to erode current health care benefits or shift a greater burden of health care costs onto employees to avoid having to pay the tax.

According to BCTGM

International President David Durkee, those who developed the excise tax do not seem to understand the collective bargaining process. “What the framers of this law did not seem to comprehend is that our local unions negotiate health care benefits as part of a larger compensation package; money is split between wages, pension and health benefits,” notes Durkee. “Our members pay for these benefits at the bargaining table. Often, it comes at the expense of more significant wage or pension increases. This is an attack on their hard-earned benefits.”

The BCTGM has been lobbying members of Congress to repeal, or severely limit the excise tax. There are several bills in Congress to repeal the excise tax. Organized labor, including the BCTGM, supports the “Middle Class Health Benefits Tax Repeal Act of 2015” (H.R. 2050), sponsored by U.S. Representative Joe Courtney (D-Conn.).

While the Union is hopeful that one of these bills will pass, work on curtailing the tax continues on other fronts. The BCTGM recently filed

official “Comments” with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in an attempt to have the food processing industry (including tobacco-related workplaces) and grain milling industries exempt from the tax or to significantly raise the annual limits for those industries. It is our contention that BCTGM industries should be considered “high risk professions.”

Employers in “high risk professions” will not have to pay the tax or pay it on a much smaller scale.

In the BCTGM’s comments to the IRS, Durkee points out that the Food Manufacturing classification actually has higher rates of

injury and illness than other industries on the list. For example, workers in food manufacturing are twice as likely to need days away from work or job restrictions due to injury as workers in the mining industry, which is on the list.

“The ACA should not be funded on the backs of working people. Our members have already paid for these benefits and should not have to pay twice. We will do everything we can to make sure this tax will not be implemented in 2018,” concludes Durkee.

“The ACA should not be funded on the backs of working people. Our members have already paid for these benefits and should not have to pay twice...”

The Union Veterans Council

Amplifies the Voices of America's Veterans

The issues facing U.S. veterans and those facing working families aren't independent of each other — a lack of good jobs, attacks on health care and fading dreams of a better life impact all of us.

The AFL-CIO's Union Veterans Council (UVC) brings together union leaders and union members who are veterans to speak out on veterans' issues and influence public policy to improve the quality of life for U.S. veterans and their families. The two primary areas of focus for the UVC are access to good jobs and access to quality health care for veterans through a strong, fully-funded and staffed U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The BCTGM is a member of the Council's Executive Board.

According to the U.S. Labor Department, the unemployment rate for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans is about two percent higher than the national average. Approximately 185,000 veterans of those wars are unemployed. Many of these unemployed veterans are National Guard or reserve troops who were called to duty but found that their jobs were no longer there when they returned from duty.

Justin Bertelli, the son of BCTGM International Secretary-Treasurer Steve Bertelli, is a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran who served a double tour of duty in Afghanistan and two tours of duty in Iraq. He helped explain some of the frustrations experienced by Veterans.

"Access to good jobs after service depends on individual factors like training and education. Many turn to the Veterans Administration for help but it is a very adversarial process filled with major delays and confusion. A Veteran often has to prove he deserves service, instead of a Veterans Administration that assumes its mission is to aid the Veteran. Many become disenchanted with the VA quickly after leaving service," says Bertelli.

As for access to quality health care, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) runs 153 veterans hospitals nationwide and hundreds of community clinics and Vet Centers. The VHA has nearly 8 million veterans enrolled in its health care system and provides much higher quality care than the private sector, but according to Bertelli, accessing the system can be a big challenge.

"The Veterans Administration overwhelmingly fails in its ability to offer easily accessible, quality health care to all Vets. Only Veterans with a certain level of disability are actually eligible for VA health care benefits, the rest are in the same pool as the average American — dependent on the Affordable Healthcare Act or employer provided benefits. For the Veterans that have a high enough disability to gain VA benefits, they can look forward to wait lists, back

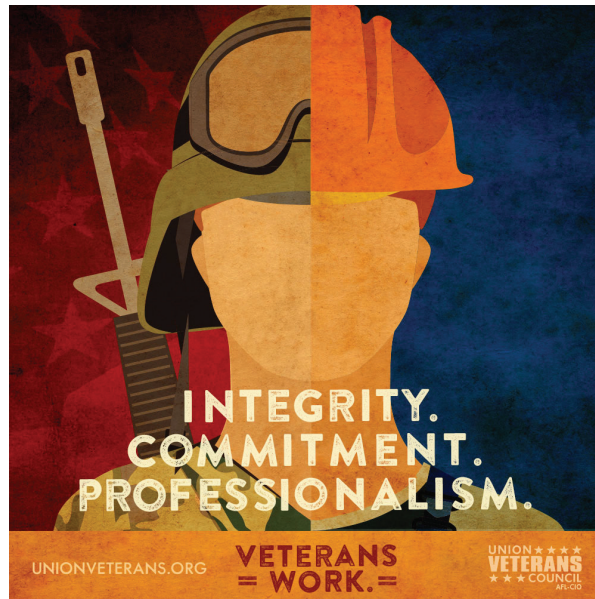
logs, and death lists. The current state of VA healthcare is abysmal at best," adds Bertelli

Individual Veterans support organizations like the Union Veterans Council are key to bringing attention to these issues and shaping public policy to help aid the nation's Veterans.

"The majority of Vets capable of being involved in serving veterans organizations are already doing so with groups like the Union Veterans Council, Wounded Warrior Project and many others. Without a third party such as the VA as it was intended to act, to be our voice in a nation where we have become a tiny minority, veterans will continue to die needlessly and continue to be non-entities in the realm of politics," concludes Bertelli.

The mission of the Union Veterans Council is to hold government officials, candidates and elected officials accountable to the needs of military veterans and their families.

For more information on how to become involved in the Union Veterans Council visit unionveterans.org.



BCTGM *Leadership* SPOTLIGHT



RANDY COOK, President Local 116 (Syracuse, N.Y.)

“Being a member of the BCTGM gives me great peace of mind knowing that everyone from the International Union level to the local union membership is looking out for the best interests of working-class people.”

RANDY KOCHERAN, Financial Secretary Local 57 (Columbus, Ohio)

“The BCTGM helps provide me with job security, great benefits and a feeling like we are all family. There is nothing like having a voice in the workplace and benefits like health care and pension.”



JOSH CAMDEN, Financial Secretary/ Business Agent Local 4 (St. Louis, Mo.)

“Non-union workers in BCTGM industries should join the Union for protection and benefits at work; to be part of something bigger than they are as an individual and to have fair and equal working conditions.”



RODNEY LIGHTFOOT, SR., Vice President Local 68 (Baltimore)

“Being a member of the BCTGM has proven to me that there is strength in numbers. I have become more involved politically and have been motivated to get my members to mobilize both inside the shop and within the local union.”

JASON THOMAS, Financial Secretary/ Business Agent Local 65 (Tulsa, Okla.)

“If we could organize more workers into the BCTGM it would not only strengthen our membership but unite more workers together for the same purpose: dignity and respect on the job.”





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4 Reasons to Thank **LABOR** on Labor Day

Labor Day is a welcome, and well-deserved, day off for millions of American workers and their families. But it's worth remembering that Labor day is more than just a three-day weekend. Labor Day "is a creation of the labor movement and is "dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers."

Here are four important accomplishments of the labor movement that benefit all Americans:

1

Unions Helped End Child Labor.

Union organizing and child labor reform were often intertwined in U.S. history, with organizations like the "National Consumers' League" and the "National Child Labor Committee" working together in the early 20th century to ban child labor. The very first American Federation of Labor (AFL) national convention passed "a resolution calling on states to ban children under 14 from all gainful employment" in 1881, and soon after states across the country adopted similar recommendations, leading to the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act which regulated child labor on the federal level for the first time.

2

Unions Spearheaded The Fight For The Family And Medical Leave Act.

Labor led the fight for the 1993 law, which "requires state agencies and private employers with more than 50 employees to provide up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave annually for workers to care for a newborn, newly adopted child, seriously ill family member or for the worker's own illness."

3

Unions Gave Us The Weekend.

During the relatively labor-free 1870, the average workweek for most Americans was 61 hours — almost double what most Americans work now. Yet in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century, labor unions engaged in massive strikes in order to demand shorter workweeks so that Americans could be home with their loved ones instead of constantly toiling for their employers with no leisure time. By 1937, these labor actions created enough political momentum to pass the Fair Labor Standards Act, which helped create a federal framework for a shorter workweek that included room for leisure time.

4

Unions Won Widespread Employer-Based Health Coverage.

The rise of unions in the 1930's and 1940's led to the first great expansion of health care for all Americans, as labor unions banded workers together to negotiate for health coverage plans from employers. In 1942, the US set up a National War Labor Board. It had the power to set a cap on all wage increases. But it let employers circumvent the cap by offering 'fringe benefits' — notably, health insurance. By 1950, half of all companies with fewer than 250 workers and two-thirds of all companies with more than 250 workers offered health insurance of one kind or another.

So, remind your friends and family to thank a union member! Labor Day celebrates and honors the American worker who fought to give them the benefits they enjoy today!

**The above facts were adapted from published materials from: the U.S. Dept. of Labor, Child Labor Education Project, and the AFL-CIO.*