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## **NEWSLETTER**

Week ending July 15, 2022

### **From the Desk of President Martin**

On Sunday, I and many other Nebraska State AFL-CIO affiliates, attended a rally in the Lincoln Haymarket in support of our brothers and sisters in railway unions. This was an informational rally to bring public awareness to the fact that rail companies have failed to reach an agreement in collective bargaining with their employees. Rail employees were considered essential throughout the pandemic – they showed up to work and did everything to ensure that rail service, that is so vital to our economy, continued to operate – all while rail companies continued to make huge profits.

A fair contract is in the best interest of the employer – if they want to keep the best skilled labor, they need to step up their game. Raises, better working conditions, healthcare – all are key right now in today's economy. Railroads have slashed 45,000 jobs, almost 30% of their workforce, in the past six years. This results in declining services, but most importantly causes safety issues in the yards and locomotive and car shops. The rail companies are implementing new attendance policies without going through the collective bargaining process. These are working conditions and should be part of bargaining. These new policies have overburdened rail workers who are now moving on to other opportunities, leaving a gap in skilled, highly trained workers. This is actually worsening service and presents safety issues. And speaking of safety, we need to be passing laws to keep the two-person train crew.

President Biden can intervene in the nationwide U.S. railroad labor talks by appointing a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) before 12:01 a.m. EDT on Monday, July 18<sup>th</sup>. If the President declines to intercede and appoint the PEB, the railroads and unions could opt for operational shutdowns or strikes, respectively. If appointed, the board would make recommendations that could be used as a framework for a voluntary settlement.

All rail employees deserve a decent raise and a fair contract. Policies such as the two-person train crew need to be first and foremost to protect the safety of these workers and the public. The Nebraska State AFL-CIO and our affiliates stand with our rail brothers and sisters and will continue to stand up and advocate for a fair and decent contract.

Thank you to everyone that came out last Sunday and stood in solidarity with our Union brothers and sisters. And a huge shout out to Ash Anderson, BMWED for planning and organizing the Lincoln Rail Rally and to Greg Regan, AFL-CIO Transportation and Trades Department for coming to Lincoln to address the rally attendees.







President Martin speaking



Pres. Martin



IBEW Local 1022



State Senator Carol Blood



Railroad Craft Unions T-shirts



Ash Anderson Rally Organizer



Greg Regan, TTD, AFL-CIO Jakob Forsgren SMART



IAMAW Local Lodge 612



Marching



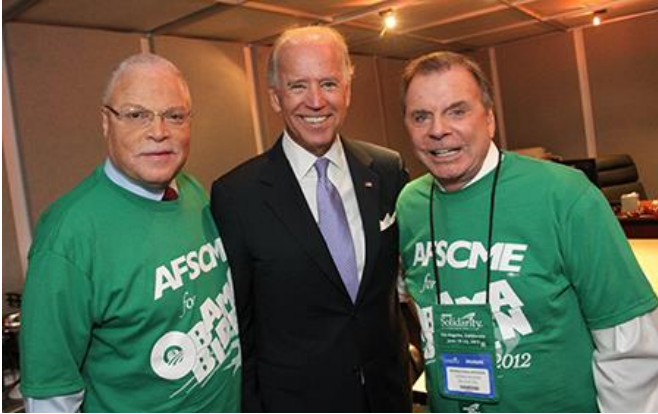
NALC Branch 8



## Messages from AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler

With a heavy heart, we want to share that AFSCME President Emeritus Gerald W. McEntee passed away last weekend. He was a visionary who led with passion, wit and grace.

Jerry was a giant on the national political front. In our campaigns today, we still look to the foundation he built as chair of the AFL-CIO Political Committee and his push to dedicate more resources to mobilizing programs was unmatched.



*Pres. Emeritus McEntee pictured at right*

Jerry always embraced new ideas—co-founding the Economic Policy Institute, throwing his passion into health care reform, fighting attacks on Social Security, and being an early champion of Working America.

He saw our movement through the lens of what was possible, not the enormous challenges we faced.

Rest in power, brother.

Ivan Ocon, a brave Army veteran who was unjustly deported six years ago, has returned home and was sworn in as a U.S. citizen in El Paso, Texas, on Thursday.



This victory was achieved with the support of a powerful network of organizations, including the AFL-CIO; the Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO; the Deported Veterans Support House; and Yale Law School's Veterans Legal Services Clinic. Our federation [reaffirms our commitment](#) to repatriate our deported patriots and prevent a further miscarriage of justice.

Service members must no longer be failed by the country they valiantly served, and we will do everything in our power to help them.

Even as Americans' faith and confidence in other major institutions is at an all-time low, [this new Gallup poll](#) shows trust in organized labor remains strong.

And with just 118 days until the midterm elections, we need to make the most of that trust.

We may be the only institution out there that can get through to people and break through the echo chambers caused by Facebook and cable news that are leaving us more polarized than ever. I know I can count on you to make the most of these next few months and to listen to, talk to and mobilize your fellow members ahead of November.

**AMERICA**

**NEEDS**

**UNIONS**

AFL-CIO

## **SMART-TD's Ferguson to Members: 'We Want and Deserve a Fair Agreement'**



SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson

Railway Age July 11, 2022 By William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief

**The heated rhetoric surrounding the impasse that national rail labor contract negotiations appears to have reached—and the threat of a strike leading to an economy-crippling rail network shutdown—shows little signs of cooling down.**

On July 8, SMART Transportation Division President Jeremy Ferguson sent a letter to all his union members stating that “rail labor is NOT (emphasis his) looking to strike or shut down the nation’s economy at the expense of everyone,” yet is “fully prepared to act if the provisions of the RLA (Railway Labor Act) get to the point of self-help or strike.”

Ferguson’s letter, posted on the SMART-TD website, closely followed a letter from six shipper groups to President Biden and Vice President Harris urging the Administration to appoint a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) to conduct hearings and issue settlement recommendations in a timely fashion.” Ferguson accuses the Association of American Railroads (AAR) of orchestrating the shipper letter. Following is the full SMART-TD communication:

“SMART Transportation Division (SMART-TD) would like to take a few moments to update the thousands of essential rail workers whom we proudly represent, the rail shippers and customers, as well as the public at large on the real status of labor negotiations and about the serious factual misrepresentations that the Association of American Railroads (AAR) and railroad representatives are stating as ‘FACT’ surrounding the ‘railroad labor negotiations and the need to avert a network shutdown.’ Their claims are simply not true.

“Let me be clear, rail labor is NOT looking to strike or shut down the nation’s economy at the expense of everyone. We want and deserve a fair agreement for our members. We strongly believe that a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) will help us to garner that without the necessity of a strike. This does not mean that we will not do what’s necessary to get a fair agreement, but rather we expect the Railway Labor Act (RLA) to do its job as it has in the past so that it does not come to that. We are fully prepared to act if the provisions of the RLA get to the point of self-help or strike.

[To read the full article CLICK HERE](#)

## Violent Threats Have No Place in Our Democracy

7/13/22 *Statement from AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler on the latest threat of violence against a public figure:*

We strongly condemn the extremist, racially charged threats of violence against Rep. Pramila Jayapal at her home in West Seattle this past weekend. We are glad she is safe. Words have consequences, and our labor movement has zero tolerance for threatening language or hate crimes. Peaceful protest is a cornerstone of democracy, but the escalating acts of intimidation against public figures we have seen as of late are unacceptable.

As the 2022 midterm election cycle heats up, we must be vigilant in ensuring that hate speech meant to fire up a base is called out immediately. We know that threatening political rhetoric has the power to incite those with violent tendencies to use hate speech as an invitation for violence. We can disagree with public figures, but we cannot allow fear or intimidation to have any place in our democratic process.

19TH OF JULY  
5:00-7:00

**ANGIE'S  
GENERAL  
ELECTION  
KICKOFF  
EVENT**

**ANGIE LAURITSEN**  
LEGISLATURE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
MACDARO'S

**WE ARE ORGANIZING AND  
PLANNING FOR  
NOVEMBER AND NEED  
YOUR HELP!**

**WE NEED YOUR TIME,  
TALENT AND/OR  
TREASURE NOW MORE  
THAN EVER!**

MacDaro's  
5:00 - 7:00 pm  
10746 South 204th Street,  
Gretna, NE 68028

AngieLauritsen.com  
Paid For By Lauritsen For Nebraska, 2700  
West Angus Road, Gretna, NE 68028



**19<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Branch 5 Golf Tournament  
Supporting MDA**

**Sunday, August 21, 2022  
8:00 am (shotgun start)**

**Tregaron Golf Course  
13909 Glengarry Circle, Bellevue, NE 68123**

Team members 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Station (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

(Non-Union Craft Employees Not Eligible)

**One Golfer will have a chance to sink a 60ft putt for \$2,500.00!  
ALL Golfers have a chance to win \$10,000.00!!!**

**Pin prizes, raffle prizes, steak dinner!  
Let's have fun & raise money for MDA!**

**\$75.00 per person (\$300.00 per team) until 7-29-22**

**\$85.00 per person after 7-29-22**

**Make checks payable to Branch 5 - Limited to first 36 teams**

**Money MUST be received by August 19, 2022**

**Send to Branch 5, 13257 Cottner St, Omaha, NE 68137-1708**

## **IBEW Local 265 Business Manager Chris Callihan Accepts position at the International Office**

IBEW Local 265, Business Manager Chris Callihan accepted a position with the International Office and has moved to Washington DC, we wish him well in his new endeavor and thank him for making a lasting impact in Nebraska's labor movement. Tom Emerson has been sworn in as Local 265's new Business Manager and Justin Petty appointed as Assistant Business Manager.



### **CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS!**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>City</b>
7/16/2022	UA Local 464	Golf Tournament	7:30am	Tara Hills 1410 Western Hills Dr	Papillion
8/28/2022	Lincoln Central Labor Union	Saltdogs Baseball UNION DAY	1:05pm	Hawks Field at Haymarket Park	Lincoln
9/5/2022	SeptemberFest	Salute to Labor Parade	11:00am	Downtown	Omaha
9/10/2022	IBEW Local 265	Golf Tournament	9:00am	6800 Woodland Hills Dr.	Eagle
9/21/2022	NALC Branch 5	MDA Golf Tournament	8:00am	Tregaron Golf Course	Bellevue

*Please share your Local's event highlights with us!*

*If your Local Union or Central Body had an event or upcoming events that you want shared on in our Newsletter and Calendar of Events, please send them to Lori Meyers, Communications Director/Mobization Coordinator at: [comms@neaf-cio.org](mailto:comms@neaf-cio.org) or call 402-310-1952*