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Union Herald Article from the desk of:



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### **Election Watch 2016**

GOTV!!!

The theme for this article is to GET OUT TO VOTE!!! The best thing that we can do as Union Advocates, and Members is to make our voices heard this election. November 8 will be upon us soon. Mark your calendars.

I know we hear this every election – “This is the most important election of our lifetime”. We have become immune to hearing it because we have heard it every election cycle. I will tell you that considering what is at stake this time around, I am going to tell you that in my lifetime, this seems to be one of the most important elections. Here is what is at stake:

- National Right to Work – Donald Trump has made it clear that he is in support of a National Right to Work Law. As you have seen here in Wisconsin, this law has made it more difficult to organize, and has dwindled the numbers of union families. If Trump gets elected to office, this will be a priority to the Koch Brothers to get this pushed through on a national stage rather than state-by-state.
- SCOTUS – There is currently one opening in the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS). As I have talked about before, the current president (Obama) should have the right to appoint for this seat with Senate Confirmation. This should already be done, but it appears that this may wait until the next President is seated. The impact of a far right leaning Supreme Court would be devastating to labor. Take *Freidrichs vs*

California Teachers Association for example. This case if given to a right leaning Supreme Court would have in effect been the beginning of a national right to work fight. The fact that the SCOTUS was one person short, and had, and currently has 4-right leaning, and 4-left leaning justices was a good thing in that the original ruling from California stuck. That original ruling said that if you enjoy the benefits of being in a union, you must pay at least an agency fee.

During the next presidency, this one spot will be filled, and there is a potential for 2 or more spots that will need to be filled. These appointments are life-long appointments. This will have a long lasting impact.

- Tax Laws – This country has a deficit. There is no getting around that fact. If Donald Trump has his way, he will continue the Regan model of Trickle Down Economics. Trump seems to think that taxing the wealthy less allows them to spend more money, thus creating jobs for those in lower brackets of wealth. This model does not work. It has been tried, and all it tends to do is make the rich richer. It has just been recently leaked that Trump himself has had years where he has paid NO TAXES at all.
- US Senate Power – Right now the US Senate has more Republicans than Democrats. Many models show that we have the ability to sway the Senate to the left once again. This would create a balance between the two sides of the Legislative Branch. This election is about more than just the Presidency. There is an impact we can make down the ticket as well. In the time that Republicans have had control of the US Senate, they have done nothing but obstruct.
- US House of Representatives Power – While we have the ability to sway the Senate back to a labor supporting party (in case you've been under a rock, it's the Democrats that tend to support labor), the US House of Representatives will be more difficult to sway all the way left. We can make some ground, but this process may take another election cycle after this one to get there. Most models predict that the Republicans will maintain control of the House. We can however elect a Democrat in the Vice President spot. This will create a left leaning tie breaking vote.
- TPP – Both presidential candidates currently oppose the TPP. Down the ballot, we need to elect candidates that are on that path as well. The TPP is NAFTA on steroids. I can't see this trade "deal" being a good thing for anyone other than big business who will use it to send jobs overseas to cheaper labor markets.
- Minimum Wage – The Republicans have opposed a hike in the minimum wage every chance they get. Minimum wage has been stagnant too long. It is time for a hike. What most people don't realize is that when the minimum wage goes up, so do wages that are already higher than the minimum. In effect, it raises the bar. Take for example a job that currently pays \$15/hour. This job is at that rate because it requires a different skill, or is harder work than a typical job that pays minimum wage. The employer pays this because they want to retain personnel. The employer saves on retraining, and builds a core staff that becomes efficient at what they do. What if minimum wage was raised to \$12/hour? The difference between this job, and a minimum wage job becomes less. An employer may lose employees to a job that pays less, but is less stress, or is less strenuous. Employers historically will increase the wage of the \$15/hour job to continue to retain the employees that they have.
- Affordable Care Act (ACA) – While this law commonly known as Obama Care may have its faults, there is much more good in this law than bad. Let's start with the

bad – The excise tax. This is something we can change with the right people in office. The current law can be altered to repeal the excise tax. Republicans have voted to repeal the entire ACA more times than I can care to count. This has been a huge waste of time and our tax dollars. Instead of voting to repeal the entire law, why not fix it? As I said, there is much more good than bad in this law. Being able to keep you children on your insurance up to the age of 26 allows them to get on their feet easier. Being able to get insurance even though you may have a pre-existing condition is a huge relief for those that may need care, and not be put into bankruptcy for seeking what is a basic human right – healthcare. Millions more can seek medical treatment without being denied insurance.

Above are just a few of the issues that will be impacted by this election.

#### **The Road to 270**

To become president, a candidate must receive 270 Electoral Votes. If this doesn't happen, which is what those who support Gary Johnson seem to hope for, the US House would choose the next president. The House currently has a Republican majority. At the end of the day, this would result in a Trump presidency. My fear is that could happen. I feel that this would be a disaster for this country, Labor, and Unions. As labor advocates, we need to ensure that a left leaning candidate is who we put into the white house. I know there are those out there that still don't support Clinton, but Trump would be a bad thing for all of us from foreign relations to labor.

GET OUT TO VOTE on November 8th.

#### **District Lodge 66**

Out at Fort McCoy we have a new contractor. We are currently working with Kaiyuh Services LLC who will take over the roads and grounds contract at the Fort. The former contractor was Tigua. So far things have been transitioning relatively smooth except for some minor bumps that always come with a change in employer.

Out at Camp Douglas (Volk Field), we also have a new contractor. After all the effort and work it took to get a Collective Bargaining Agreement together with Summit Technologies (who took over for Cubic Worldwide), we are working with Bearing Sea Environmental to complete a bridge agreement, and continue the contract we did with Summit. Summit was the contractor from April 4 through October 4.

Originally as I had written about in my last article, Geny Ulloa was set to come into the office to take care of our members and allow me some time off. The Midwest Territory re-assigned GLR Geny Ulloa to an organizing drive in Kansas City, and assigned GLR Tim Hough to take the helm of District Lodge 66 in my absence. Tim was a DBR in Indiana for a long stretch prior to becoming a GLR. This is the life of a Grand Lodge Rep. Things can change with little notice due to the needs of our members. I am grateful for GLR Hough's dedication to our members and his assistance while I was out of the office.

#### **On a Personal Note:**

I am typing this while on vacation. The Midwest Territory was kind enough to give me a replacement to take care of things while I am getting Married. As I type this, I am now a

married man. The wedding was wonderful, and I couldn't have hoped for a better day to become one with my wonderful wife Tasha. I want to thank the IAM, and GLR Tim Hough for allowing me some time off to have this special time in my life. I also want to thank my wife Tasha for her patience in the planning process of our wedding. Her hard work while I concentrated on doing my best to better the lives of the members of District 66 will not go unnoticed. I love you Tasha, and on behalf of the members, and myself ---  
---- Thank You.