



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
District Lodge 66
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Union Herald Article from the desk of:



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The war on the ACA

The GOP has a majority in the House of Representatives, a majority in the Senate, and they have Trump in the White House. They have taken this as an opportunity to take a serious look at the Affordable Care Act (ACA) also known for its slang term - Obamacare. The current majorities have made campaign promises to repeal the ACA in its entirety. They are finding out that repealing the ACA isn't as easy as they imagined. There are certain parts of the law that we can all agree are bad, and some aspects of the ACA that are good. I have said over and over again that repealing the ACA is not the way to go. Let's fix what is wrong.

Let's take a look at the good parts of the ACA:

1. Insurance companies cannot deny insurance based on preexisting conditions. The ability of insurance companies to deny insurance based on preexisting conditions has been a death sentence for many Americans who could not get the proper care due to lack of insurance.
2. The ability to carry insurance for your children up to the age of 26 regardless of whether or not they are attending college. Millions of high school graduates can now stay on their parents' family insurance. Let's face it, not everyone can go to

- college. Some of these young adults go straight into the workforce. Some of these young workers don't receive insurance in some of the jobs they begin to work. This part of the ACA is good for young adults who may have otherwise faced bankruptcy due to unfortunate events that would have piled on large hospital bills without insurance.
3. The subsidies provided to enable low income households to buy insurance. These subsidies allowed low income households to buy insurance they would have not been able to afford otherwise.

There are many more good parts, but to me those are the top three. Now let's look at the negatives.

1. The "Cadillac Tax". This tax was assessed by the government for high premium insurance plans. These so called "Cadillac" plans were good insurance plans with low deductibles, low out of pocket maximums, and low co-pays. Just the kind of plan we always look to negotiate for our members and their families. Unfortunately, the tax the ACA was proposing for plans with high premiums caused employers try to lower the cost of these plans. The only way they could do that was to increase deductibles, max out of pockets, and co-pays. This created a lower quality health insurance. What did the companies do with the extra money they saved? They pocketed it.
2. Mandated coverage. The ACA specified that every American must be covered, or they would be assessed additional tax on their income taxes. Americans were supposed to provide proof they were covered all year. The idea behind this was a good one, but it didn't work like it should have. The tax assessed was way cheaper than any insurance would have cost for those who would have had to pay out of pocket. People who still couldn't afford insurance even with a subsidy didn't get insurance at all, and younger Americans who were healthy also didn't get insurance. The idea was simple. Healthy people would get coverage, and this would outweigh the extra cost of Americans getting coverage with preexisting conditions.

There are more problems, but these problems themselves can be fixed through amendments. The GOP is finding out that a full out repeal isn't as easy as they made is sound for the last six years. They don't have a viable option to replace the ACA.

Wisconsin State Council of Machinists

Along with several delegates from Local Lodges 1115, 21 and 2191, I attended the Wisconsin State Council of Machinists in Madison. Plenty of business was conducted between February 12th and 14th. Along with the normal business, we heard from several speakers including Stephanie Bloomingdale and Phil Neuenfeldt from the Wisconsin AFLCIO. Also speaking was Laurie Gruber from American Income Life. American Income Life offers a service to our members including free Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance as well as other services available for purchase.

Along with District Lodge 66 Financial Secretary Dennis Gerke, his wife Pat, and my daughter Isabelle Grubb, we lobbied the offices of Jill Billings, Steve Doyle, and Jennifer Shilling. We discussed numerous issues including Right to Work, Prevailing Wage, Buy Wisconsin legislation, and Infrastructure. We also discussed the fact that this legislature is wasting time on items like Daylight Savings Time instead of taking care of these other important issues.

Over all it was a good conference.

Kevin Murch Appointed to Midwest Territory Special Representative

IAM International President Bob Martinez has announced the appointment of IAM Midwest Territory Educator Kevin Murch to the position of Midwest Territory Special Representative.



Kevin Murch

“On behalf of the IAM, I would like to congratulate Kevin on his advancement,” said IAM Midwest Territory General Vice President Philip J. Gruber. “Kevin’s 23 years of experience as an IAM member, Directing Business Representative and Educator for the territory has been a huge asset for IAM members in the Midwest. I look forward to him building upon that progress in his new post.”

Murch initiated into IAM Local Lodge 2525 in 1994, where he worked at the Case New Holland (CNH) 4 WD Products Plant in Fargo, ND. A second-generation union member, he served in many different capacities from Shop Chairperson, Bargaining Committee member, Recording Secretary, Sentinel-Conductor, Communicator, delegate to the 2004 Grand Lodge Convention in Cincinnati, OH and delegate to both District 5 and the Joint Dakota Council of Machinists. In 1996, Murch was appointed union steward and became Local 2525 Vice President in 1997.

Murch served as Vice President of District 5, President of the Joint Dakota Council of Machinists, and a member of the MNPL Planning Committee. In 2005, he was appointed to the position of District 5 Organizing Coordinator and was successful in organizing groups under the Service Contract Act and within the private sector. Murch also served as the District 5 Arbitration Advocate from November 2013 until his election to District 5 Directing Business Representative on July 1, 2015.

Murch is the founder and former co-host of The Solidarity Effect, a radio show based in Fargo, ND that focuses on working class and labor issues.

Midwest Territory Task Force member Joe Gruber will replace Murch as Territory Educator.

Gruber, a nine-year IAM member, initiated into IAM Local 387 while working as a bonding mechanic at GKN Aerospace in Hazelwood, MO. There he specialized in the fabrication and assembly of parts for the F-18 Hornet and Super Hornet and the V-22 Osprey for the U.S. military.



Joe Gruber

Gruber has served as a delegate to the Missouri State Legislative Conference, where he chaired the Education Committee. He was a member of the New Machinist pilot program and was also a member of the IAM Disaster Relief Task Force, an IAM partnership with the Red Cross. Gruber has attended leadership classes at the William W. Winpisinger Center and has taken part as a volunteer in IAM organizing and political efforts. He was assigned as a task force member to the Midwest Territory in November 2016.

A long-time 16-year member of the labor movement, Gruber is also a former member of the UFCW and Carpenters' Union.

Both appointments are effective March 1, 2017.

Organizing in the IAM and District Lodge 66

On February 15th, the 37 employees of Accent Controls who I wrote about last month voted to become members of the IAM. They work at Fort McCoy. This is a good win for the District. I want to wish them a warm welcome to the IAM.

These new members, the current members at TMP, Linen, Central Vehicle Wash, and the new members from our organizing effort last year will be a part of the same Collective Bargaining Agreement. Just two days after the NLRB election, this entire group voted on their Collective Bargaining Agreement which will be effective April 1. The agreement was ratified with good wage increases for the two new groups, and moderate wage increases for the two groups already represented.

Also within District Lodge 66 we have kicked off an organizing campaign for the employees working at Toro in Tomah. Four Grand Lodge Staff along with 14 members of District Lodge 66 kicked off this campaign on March 2nd by handing information to the employees we could reach. These employees came to us with some concerns about their work environment. We will work with these employees to help them understand the benefits of a union. This campaign is in its infancy. If you know people that work at Toro, please take the time to talk to them and show them the benefits of being in the IAM.

District Lodge 66

The District Delegates gathered for our regular monthly meeting on Monday February 20, 2017. Along with the regular business of the Lodge, the Delegates made motions and passed the expenditure of \$900.00 for placing a half page monthly advertisement in the Union Herald. The delegates also approved an expenditure of \$250.00 for Sister Lisa Jensen (Lodge 1771) whose house was destroyed in a fire. The Local Lodge also approved a similar expenditure at their monthly meeting. The delegates received a thank you from Winona State University for the Scholarship payment for Alisha Pfaff.

The delegates also discussed the Union Sportsmen's Alliance Trap Clay shoot held in Chesterfield, IL, and Scholarship information from the Minnesota State AFL-CIO.

DBR Schedule:

Schedules are subject to change....

This month, I will be traveling again with our members from Crown Cork and Seal for negotiations of their Master Agreement.

Also in March, we will have new Educational Representative Joe Gruber in the District office to conduct Executive Board Training. This will take place on March 10th.

In April, the Midwest Territory will be meeting in Kansas City. One executive board member per local will be in attendance as well as one from the District. I will also be attending.

Also in April, we will be in negotiations with Choctaw Defense Services. They are a new contractor at Fort McCoy. With these negotiations taking precedence, my attendance to class in Placid Harbor needed to be cancelled.

Negotiations with Peerless were moved back to their original week that was planned in April.

In May I will be attending the IAMAW Legislative Conference, and the MNPL Planning Conference in Washington DC.

As I said last month, this schedule is subject to change, but this is a rough overview of my schedule amongst the other duties that my job entails.