



# Labor Fax

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## **BUILDING NEVER STOPS**

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

A recent report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that union membership grew by 46,000 members in 2006 making New Jersey the fourth most densely organized state in the nation. This statistic is a clear indication that even with the current disagreement about the future of the AFL-CIO in Washington D.C., the labor movement remains stronger than ever in New Jersey.

With the first quarter of the year just coming to a close, we already have several great victories from which we can build on during the remainder of 2006. Governor Jon Corzine acted earlier this month to reform and refinance the Transportation Trust Fund and used his first Gubernatorial Proclamation to endorse the NJ PLACE program, both major initiatives supported by the New Jersey State AFL-CIO. Additionally, three rank-and-file union members who recently ran were successfully elected to Fire Commissions in their municipalities, and many more running in the upcoming school board and non-partisan elections across the state, the labor candidates program is once again in full swing.

There is no doubt that the past nine months have been difficult for the labor movement across the nation. While our mission remains the same, to improve the lives of all working families, great differences of opinion exist as to how we can reach our goals. We remain hopeful that while these differences remain, lines of communication will stay open and that the labor movement will emerge from this stronger than ever.

We also recognize that many of labor's opponents will see this division as an opportunity to break the Movement and effectively silence the voices of workers. Let them be put on notice that in New Jersey, we will not let this happen! As has been the case throughout our history, unions across this state will maintain their united voice and will remain steadfastly joined together in support of organizing drives, legislative initiatives and political campaigns which matter to the working families of our state.



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- NJ State AFL-CIO: The Voice for Working Families in New Jersey -

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## **Labor Fax Co-Editors:**

Charles Wowkanech

President

Laurel Brennan

Secretary-Treasurer

**Associate Editor:**

Steve Lenox

(609) 989-8730 • [www.njafclcio.org](http://www.njafclcio.org)

## **BREAKING NEWS!**

### **NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO SECURITY AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM SET TO MOVE FORWARD**

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO has entered the final stage of curriculum review for the Security Awareness and Preparedness Program. In conjunction with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and a grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the grant program will provide training to workers in the New Jersey Chemical and Petroleum Sectors. In the coming months, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO's OSHEP trainers will conduct pilot trainings and prepare the program for delivery to employees at more than 100 workplaces throughout the state.

The curriculum review committee included representatives of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO, the New Jersey Departments of Environmental Protection, and Labor and Workforce Development, the Attorney General's Domestic Security Preparedness Planning Group, the New Jersey Office of Counter-Terrorism, New Jersey Institute of Technology, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Chemistry Council of New Jersey, the New Jersey Petroleum Council, Conoco Phillips Bayway Refinery, United Steel Workers of America and the George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

As the representative of over a million workers in the State of New Jersey, with a well-established record of providing quality safety education programs for employers in the State, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO looks forward to providing a well-defined, comprehensive and standardized curriculum for Plant Security in the Chemical and Petroleum industries. The training will be conducted as a Train-The-Trainer program utilizing the "Small Group Activity Method" which involves discussion, workbook activities and real incident scenarios for the trainees. With over 75,000 workers in the Chemical and Petroleum industries, there exists a strong need to provide basic security awareness training for all employees in New Jersey.

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO would like to extend its sincere gratitude to all who contributed to the development of this important program. We are proud of the collective effort of academia, labor, industry and government to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of New Jersey.

For more information about this program contact Christine Rampolla, OSHEP Coordinator, at 609-989-8289.

## Upcoming Events

April 28, 2006	Workers' Memorial Day
May 2-4, 2006	LEAP Worker Peer Counselor Training Program Rutgers Labor Education Center
June 13-14, 2006	Legislative/COPE Endorsement Conference Caesar's Atlantic City
June 25-30, 2006	Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Conference Atlantic City
July 30-August 4	Northeast Union Women's Summer School Rutgers Labor Education Center
August 4-6, 2006	Labor Candidates School Rutgers Labor Education Center

### NJ PLACE RECEIVES GOVERNOR'S ENDORSEMENT

At a press conference held earlier this month, Governor Jon Corzine signed his first Gubernatorial Proclamation declaring his support for the New Jersey Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (NJ PLACE). NJ PLACE partners several building and construction trade unions with New Jersey's 19 community colleges in a program that will allow union apprentices to obtain college credits for their work within their respective training programs. This initiative, the first of its kind in the nation, was originally announced at the New Jersey State AFL-CIO's Convention in June 2004.

### BACKGROUND CHECK LEGISLATION DISCUSSED

The New Jersey State AFL-CIO hosted a meeting in our office with Senator John Adler (D-6) on Tuesday, March 21, 2006 to discuss several pieces of legislation which would require employees in several sectors to undergo background checks to be eligible for employment, retention and promotion.

These bills have been developed in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks and once again reveal the disturbing reality that our nation is still at risk of future deadly actions. While we remain steadfastly in support of efforts to protect our state's residents, businesses and infrastructure from future terrorist attacks, several aspects of these bills are troublesome.

Worker-friendly changes suggested by meeting participants include extending the amount of time workers have to appeal false or misleading information revealed in a background check, restricting access to these files to only designated individuals and limiting the definition of disqualifying convictions to include only those crimes which may show an increased tendency to commit a terrorist act.

As the state's voice for worker and workplace safety, and in our continued efforts to provide strong and effective leadership in efforts to minimize the risk of terrorist actions, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO will continue to track this legislation. For more information on this issue please contact Steve Lenox, Legislative Affairs Coordinator, at 609-989-8730.

### WORKER TRAINING AVAILABLE

The NJ State AFL-CIO Labor Employment Action Project Train-the-Trainer Course in partnership with the NJ Dept of Labor and Workforce Development is being held May 2-4 at Rutgers Labor Education Center. All aspects of job retention, job transition, layoffs and plant closings are addressed in this free, interactive course. Monies are available for reimbursement for lost time for attendees. Please contact Nancy Miller, LEAP Coordinator, at 973-614-0049 or [nmiller@njafclcio.org](mailto:nmiller@njafclcio.org) for more information.

### CORZINE UNVEILS BUDGET

Governor Corzine announced his fiscal blueprint for New Jersey on March 21, 2006. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO is working in conjunction with the NJEA and the FOP through the New Jersey Public Employee Coalition to lobby on the measure. For more information about our position on the Governor's proposals visit [www.njafclcio.org](http://www.njafclcio.org).

### TRANSPORTATION TRUST FUND ACT SIGNED

On March 23, 2006 Governor Corzine signed the Transportation Trust Fund Act into law. The New Jersey State AFL-CIO lobbied aggressively to reform and refinance this fund and encourages all members to visit [www.njafclcio.org](http://www.njafclcio.org) to find out how their legislators voted on this legislation which was sponsored by Assemblyman John Wisniewski (D-19) and Senator Ray Lesniak (D-20).

This plan places New Jersey on track toward solving New Jersey's transportation problem because it increases the level of capital spending to \$1.6 billion annually, dedicates the full 10.5 cents from the motor fuels tax toward the TTF, and increases by \$25 million the amount of local aid, and provides the necessary funding required to receive federal matching funds. The legislation will help improve the states deteriorating infrastructure, improve resident's quality of life and provide employment to thousands of construction workers statewide.

With this understanding, we must stress the importance of having business, labor and transportation advocates working together in a bi-partisan manner with Governor Corzine and the Legislature to ensure that the reforms contained in this legislation are only the first step in addressing the long term solvency of the TTF. The next step, identifying and implementing an adequate permanent source of revenue, needs to be acted on in the near future, not five years from now when the current plan ends, in order to ensure that we do not find ourselves in a similar crisis situation as we are currently in; which of course will be exacerbated by even higher levels of debt. In order to avoid this painful situation, we must put politics aside and promote a bi-partisan plan to provide sufficient new revenues.