



# Labor Fax

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## LABOR'S UNPRECEDENTED EFFORTS IN 2009

By Charles Wowkanech & Laurel Brennan

In 2009, the labor movement faced what was considered to be an insurmountable challenge. Early polling was not favorable for Governor Corzine's re-election, but union members remained resolute in their support for this proven friend of labor, instituting an ambitious and ground-breaking campaign to prevail on Election Day.

In hindsight, the goal of re-electing the Governor remained elusive. However, the labor movement did claim a clear victory on Election Day. Thanks to the innovation and participation in the Labor 2009 program, union members helped erase the Governor's 16 point polling deficit, turning this improbable race into a dead-heat the week prior to the election. Your efforts, which led to this complete turn of events, are unmistakable and signify an incredible triumph for the labor movement.

Working together, we produced record turnouts which go beyond any past labor campaign, including the 2008 presidential election. We generated an enormous get-out-the-vote effort resulting in 1.5 million phone calls, 390,000 house visits, 1.4 million fliers, 1.5 million pieces of mail. The labor candidates program reached new heights when Steve Sweeney was elected to the Senate Presidency, one of the highest public offices held by any union member in the nation. Additionally, we successfully elected 54 union members to public office this year, including seven to the State Assembly, bringing the total number of labor candidate victories to 592. We continue to make progress in the generation-spanning battle for health care reform. We are fighting to secure jobs and worker justice by passing the Employee Free Choice Act. We have done all of this while confronting an ailing economy, budget deficits, and vehement opposition.

We must continue in our pursuits, using the many successes of 2009 as a foundation for future achievement. We thank each and every one of you for your dedication and hard work. Given the challenges we face, we must continue to move forward together with drive and determination.



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## SPECIAL EDITION

### LABOR LOOKS BACK AT 2009

**January** - An historical month for our country and labor movement during which we:

- Watched the inauguration of the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, and reflected on the labor movement's vital role in achieving this timeless milestone.
- Commenced "Operation Clean Sweep 2009," an effort to ensure the accuracy of union membership files, to provide essential information for voter registration drives, labor walks, phone banks, and Election Day get-out-the-vote.
- Lobbied in support of the "Jobs, Trade & Democracy Act" which establishes a role for the state legislature in approving state and international trade agreements. The bill eventually passed both houses.
- Gained the support of Senators Lautenberg and Menendez and 10 of 13 House members to be co-sponsors of the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Emphasized the importance of a \$750 million dollar utility transmission project in an effort to create jobs, stimulate the regional economy, and prevent costly brownouts and blackouts.
- Conducted the 4th Annual Fire Commissioner Election Training Seminar to educate and assist union members who seek election to their local Board of Fire Commissioners.

**February** - We worked together to advance the interests of working families by:

- Hosting a Congressional breakfast meeting in Washington, DC, attended by both Senators and 10 of 15 House members, to inform them on key working family issues such as health care reform, improving our economy, and the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Holding the 2009 Occupational Safety and Health Education Conference, a call-to-action to increase awareness of environmental, safety, and health issues that face our state and national workforce.
- Thanking members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation that voted for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 which provided 6.5 billion dollars in stimulus funds to New Jersey.

- Held the Labor Employment Action Project (LEAP) Peer Advocate Training Program in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to provide working families with information and strategies to address the serious challenges of layoffs and plant closings.
- Elected three union members to Local Boards of Fire Commissioners bringing the total number of labor candidate victories up to 541.
- Raised funds from Central Labor Councils to donate to the "Turn Around America Media Fund" which was used to bolster favorable media coverage for the Employee Free Choice Act and to counter the business lobbies' attacks.

**March** - The New Jersey labor movement was out in full force as we:

- Forged an alliance with Health Care for America Now (HCAN), the national advocacy campaign, to achieve quality affordable health care for all Americans.
- Facilitated a School Board and Non-partisan election training seminar to educate labor candidates on the essential elements to winning a local election.
- Defeated an amendment in the Congress that would have weakened the Davis-Bacon Act, which provides valuable wage protections for construction workers.
- Held a New Jersey Partnership for Working Families (NJP4WF) organizational meeting to grow support and inform partner organizations on the nature of the health reform campaign.
- Sponsored the 6th Annual Women in Leadership Development (WILD) Conference, which brings together union women, learning from one another, to build leadership skills and the knowledge necessary for success.

**April** - With Winter behind us, labor sprang into action this month:

- Holding a health care press conference with Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. at the State House including a story from a Bally's Casino worker whose family lost their insurance because of skyrocketing costs.
- Partnering with Rutgers University to provide customized safety and health training to Shoprite employees.
- Lobbying the New Jersey Congressional Delegation to support the "Transportation Security and Workforce Enhancement Act", which extends to Travel Security Officers (TSOs) workplace quality standards and the same bargaining rights as federal workers.
- Hosting the 2nd Annual Organizing Institute to teach union members how to effectively run and win an organizing campaign through a series of workshops, group lectures, and multimedia demonstrations.

## Upcoming Events

January 13, 2010	Retirees Committee Meeting Edison, NJ
January 27, 2010	PEC Meeting Trenton, NJ
January 28, 2010	Union Blood Drive North Brunswick, NJ
February 24, 2010	OSHEP Conference East Brunswick, NJ
March 19-20, 2010	7th Annual WILD Conference East Brunswick, NJ
April 9-11, 2010	3rd Annual Organizing Institute New Brunswick, NJ
June 15-16, 2010	Legislative/COPE Conference Atlantic City, NJ

For more information on any events listed, please check our online calendar at [www.njafclcio.org](http://www.njafclcio.org).

- Commemorating Workers' Memorial Day to recognize and remember those people who were injured or died in the workplace and rededicate ourselves to fight for safer workplaces.
- Electing nine union members to Local Boards of Education bringing the total number of labor candidate victories up to 550.
- Partnered with Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. to hold a Subcommittee hearing for the "James Zadroga 9/11 Health & Compensation Act of 2009" with testimony from Eduardo Torres, UA Local 14 to support long-term medical funding for 9/11 first responders.

**May** - Continuing to work diligently we:

- Hosted the 8th Annual New Jersey State AFL-CIO Retirees Legislative Forum which featured Governor Corzine and HCAN Deputy Campaign Manager Ethan Rome to talk about health care reform.
- Lobbied in support of a bill, eventually signed into law, which requires the Board of Public Utilities to provide the prevailing wage to workers under contracts receiving federal assistance from the agency.
- Elected one labor candidate to Non-partisan Municipal office bringing the total number of labor candidate victories to 551.
- Attended meetings for outreach and training with the New Jersey Federal Safety and Health Council.

**June** - Marked the 2009 Legislative/COPE Endorsement Conference and an action-packed month where we:

- Endorsed Governor Jon Corzine for re-election; 68 rank-and-file union members for election to public office, including seven to State Assembly; 64 candidates for State Assembly; and one candidate for State Senate.
- Announced our endorsement, for then national AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, to be the next national AFL-CIO President.
- Honored E. Frank DiAntonio, LIUNA Local 172; Kenneth J. Parker, Atlantic City Electric; and Senator Robert Menendez at the Labor Awards Reception, presenting a labor, business, and legislative award, respectively for their leadership in promoting working family values.
- Kicked-off the Labor 2009 program to educate and mobilize union members through member to member contact and translate union activism into victory on Election Day.
- Launched [www.therealchriscristie.com](http://www.therealchriscristie.com) to provide a clear picture of Chris Christie and his policies towards working families.
- Rallied in Washington, DC with 10,000 union, community, and health care activists, calling on Congress to pass health care reform now.
- Assisted in a series of reorganization meetings for the Passaic Central Labor Council, which increased its total affiliation to 40 local unions and unanimously elected and swore-in a new slate of officers.
- Thanked New Jersey Representatives who voted to pass the “American Clean Energy and Security Act” which seeks to create clean energy jobs and pursue energy independence.
- Conducted a LEAP Refresher course for 24 representatives of eight local unions representing 12 different employers.

**July** - Summer gave us a chance to spend time with our families, but we continued to work hard:

- Providing guidance for utilizing the historic Paid Family Leave program, which went into effect on the first of the month and had over 5,000 beneficiaries two months after being introduced.
- Generating an impressive labor turnout to the first Obama Rally in support of Governor Corzine at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel. At the event, union colors were shown strong throughout the crowd of over 17,000.
- Taking part in the health care reform national call-in day to make our voices heard before the House bill was brought to a final vote.
- Proposing a Latino Occupational Safety and Health Education Program, delivering Spanish language safety training to Hispanic workers who suffer some of the worst rates of workplace injury and death in the nation.

**August** - With the election quickly approaching, we:

- Graduated 27 union members from the 13th Annual Labor Candidates School which provides participants instruction in areas such as fundraising, election law, message development, public speaking, media relations, and volunteer recruitment.
- Launched the New Jersey State AFL-CIO “Facebook” page to provide election updates to the general public.
- Conducted rapid response presentations and distributed the New Jersey Survival Guide to Unemployment to 18 dislocated members from AFSCME and 86 members from IUE-CWA Local 81106.

**September** - During the month which celebrates the labor movement we:

- Observed Labor Day to commemorate the labor movement’s long-held tradition of fighting for all working families.
- Attended the national AFL-CIO 26th Constitutional Convention where delegates elected Richard Trumka as President, Elizabeth Shuler as Secretary-Treasurer, and re-elected Arlene Holt Baker as Executive Vice President.
- Launched the Vote-by-Mail program to increase the number of voting union households, to provide timely information to voters, and to streamline get-out-the-vote efforts for this and future elections.
- Began labor walks throughout the state in partnership with Central Labor Councils.
- Conducted weekly webinars in partnership with the national AFL-CIO to discuss the progress of the Labor 2009 program and campaign strategies.

**October** - In the final stretch before Election Day union activism remained at its peak as we:

- Convened the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Legislative/COPE Conference where we hosted Vice President Joe Biden and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson as well as welcomed and honored the newly elected national AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Shuler.
- Endorsed Southern New Jersey CLC President Donald Norcross for State Assembly, bringing the total number of State Assembly labor candidates this year to eight.
- Recruited record numbers of volunteers for labor walks, phone banks, and worksite flier distribution.
- Launched the “Letters to the Editor” initiative, to publish important working family viewpoints in New Jersey’s over 200 local publications.
- Rallied at the Lieutenant Governor and Governor’s debates to support our candidates.

**November** - Along with an eventful Election Day, this month we:

- Generated a massive get-out-the-vote effort resulting in 1.5 million phone calls, 390,000 house visits, 1.4 million fliers, 1.5 million pieces of mail.
- Traveled across the state on Election Day with eight international union officers using a campaign coach bus provided by IUPAT, OPCMIA, and AWIU.
- Successfully elected 41 labor candidates to public office, including seven out of the eight union members running for State Assembly, marking a total of 592 labor candidate victories to date.
- Elected 52 of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO endorsed candidates to the State Legislature.
- Coordinated the 2009 Voter Protection program to ensure legal protection for voters on Election Day.
- Celebrated Steve Sweeney's election to the Senate Presidency, one of the highest public offices held by any union member in the nation.
- Lobbied and passed a bill through both houses of the State Legislature which seeks to stop the raiding of employee protection funds. The measure will appear on the ballot in 2010.
- Continued aggressively lobbying on several pieces of legislation during the "lame duck" session of the Legislature.

**December** - To bring the year to a close we:

- Partnered with the national AFL-CIO and AFGE to help 41,000 TSOs across the nation, who have been without representation since 2001, secure a union contract
- Lobbied in support of provisions which would require contractors and subcontractors performing on public works projects to participate in a "Class A" apprenticeship program to promote high training and skill levels.
- Lobbied to strengthen and support bargaining rights for family child care providers.
- Distributed a comparison sheet on the House and Senate health care bills following the ongoing debate in Congress.
- Hosted the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Holiday Luncheon to thank affiliates for their efforts and hard work this year.

### Newly Affiliated Unions

- IAM Local 1445

### Organizing Victories

- The IUOE Local 68 successfully organized the maintenance staff at the Heldrich Center and achieved a first contract.
- The hospitality workers at the Heldrich Hotel won representation with Workers United and continue to work towards a first contract.
- Regardless of the company's continued attempts to discourage support for the union, health care workers at the Meadowview Nursing/Respiratory Care Facility succeeded in winning union representation with the UFCW Local 1360 by a vote of 48 to 35.
- A TWU bargaining unit in Brick, New Jersey was successful in an NLRB election, fending off a raid from the Independent Association of Industrial Workers.

### Solidarity Actions

- Stood in solidarity with approximately 80 nurses from AFSCME District 1199C who were on strike against two Inova health facilities.
- Rallied to support our brothers and sisters in RWDSU Local 108 who were locked in a contract dispute with Strauss Autobacs Company.
- Attended an informational picket to support IBEW Local 827 members bargaining for a fair contract with Comcast.
- Rallied with USW Local 4-575 to prevent the loss of union jobs which were threatened by stalled negotiations with the pharmaceutical giant, Merck.
- Fought and sought out support for the AFT organizing drive being conducted at Burlington County College.
- Joined in protest against Harrah's Entertainment Casinos in Atlantic City for their egregious actions to deny the UAW a contract for over two years.
- Marched with JNESO members to preserve St. Mary's Hospital and save jobs.
- Walked the picket line with HPAE nurses when they were locked out from health care facilities in Englewood and Bayonne.
- Supported the Amalgamated Lithographers, GCIU Local 1 picket line to thwart management's attempts to bust the union.

# Happy New Year