



the **BOILERMAKER** **Activist**

POWERING AMERICA'S FUTURE

For leaders within the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers Vol. 1 No. 2 April 2004

Bush's overtime takeaway is official

Don't be deceived by the spin doctors — new rules may cause all workers to lose time-and-a-half for overtime

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has a Labor Day present for America's workers: no more overtime pay.

Bush's Department of Labor has finalized regulations that allow employers to take away overtime pay from millions of America's workers. Unless Congress acts to stop the new rules, they will take effect on August 20, 2004 — just in time for Labor Day.

George W. Bush is now the first president in U.S. history to rewrite the overtime eligibility rules so that workers lose the guarantee of time-and-a-half for working more than 40 hours in a week.

Congress has already voiced their disapproval. The U.S. Senate voted to block any changes that reduce overtime eligibility. So Bush used the federal regulatory process, which does not require

congressional approval, to make it easier for employers to avoid paying overtime.

The White House's move in April came as Democratic senators again prepared to vote to stop Bush from taking away overtime pay. Republican leaders rearranged the Senate schedule several times to avoid the vote.

What do the new rules mean?

- **MILLIONS OF WORKERS** making between \$23,660 and \$100,000 who now qualify for overtime pay could be reclassified by their employers as executives or administrative employees so they would no longer qualify.

- **RELATIVELY LOW-WAGE** earners who have supervisory or management-related responsibilities would be penalized, as would workers with advanced education or specialized training.

- **EMPLOYEES NOT COVERED** by the new rules also may be hurt. After reclassifying their workers as exempt from overtime pay, employers could assign overtime only to the reclassified workers and eliminate overtime for others.

- **UNION MEMBERS**, who negotiate overtime pay into their collective bargaining agreements, will have more difficulty keeping it in future contracts.

The full impact of these complex changes will require significant review and thorough analysis that may take weeks. In the meantime, working families must let the White House know that we are watching.

Visit the Boilermakers' Web site at <http://www.boilermakers.org> and click on **LEAP** to e-mail President Bush and your congressional representatives.

When is FAIR not fair?

When it hurts workers exposed to asbestos

DANGER

ASBESTOS

For decades, asbestos victims have waited for justice. Now, some in the Senate are acting hastily in crafting F.A.I.R., the Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act, legislation that favors manufacturers, employers, and insurers while keeping victims from the relief they deserve.

CALL YOUR SENATORS TODAY. REMIND THEM:

27.5 million workers have been exposed to asbestos on the job

10,000 victims die each year from asbestos-related diseases

TELL THEM TO DO WHAT IS REALLY FAIR.

Vote NO on Senate Bill 1125

the so-called "Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act"

Are You About to Lose Your Collective Bargaining Rights?

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION signed the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) at the end of last year. This law radically alters collective bargaining rights for over 200,000 civilian workers and allows the Pentagon to decide who is eligible to join a union and what issues a union can negotiate (H.R. 1588, the National Defense Authorization Act of fiscal year 2004).

Check out how this will affect you

FACT: The Department of Defense (DOD) will have total power to decide what personnel changes are subject to negotiation with employees and unions.

FACT: Employees with a complaint about unfair treatment at work will lose their right to an unbiased appeal process. All complaints will ultimately be settled by a panel hand-picked by the secretary of defense.

FACT: As many as 200,000 employees, ranging from clerical staff to term employees, will be denied collective bargaining rights.

Don't let the Bush administration deny your rights at work. Please call upon your members of Congress to inform the DOD that this proposal is contrary to congressional intent and should be rewritten.

Source: "NSPS Pre-Collaboration Labor Relations Systems Options," DOD Proposal, Feb. 6, 2004.

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Bush opposes pension relief for construction workers

FOR MONTHS, the Boilermakers have been working with our allies in Congress to pass real pension reform that will help multiemployer pension funds recover from the stock market collapse. Unfortunately, President Bush has opposed our bipartisan efforts to pass legislation that will provide meaningful relief to multiemployer pension funds that construction workers rely on.

The Republican negotiators — at the direction of the White House — ignored the will of the Senate, which overwhelmingly, by a bipartisan vote of 86 to 9, included modest relief for multiemployer plans when it considered this legislation. Fairness dictates that if Congress was going to provide temporary relief to single-employer plans, and the airline and steel industries, then it provide relief for multiemployer plans. But that's not the case. Instead we are faced with an administration that is opposed to helping multiemployer plans, and small contractors.

The good news is that our friends in the Senate are still fighting for us. Despite strong support from Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.), the Senate failed to invoke cloture to stop debate. But Sen. Kennedy has pledged to con-

tinue fighting for fair treatment of union-sponsored multiemployer plans.

Stay up-to-date by visiting the LEAP section of www.boilermakers.org.

What does it mean?

POLITICAL TERMINOLOGY can be confusing. Here are definitions of some of the terms you may have seen here and in other publications.

CLOTURE: A parliamentary procedure by which debate is ended and an immediate vote is taken on the matter under discussion. Also called "closure."

FILIBUSTER: A tactic for delaying or obstructing legislation by making long speeches.

MULTIEMPLOYER PENSION PLAN: Multiemployer pension plans are maintained pursuant to collective bargaining agreements between unrelated employers — generally within the same industry — and unions. By pooling the costs, multiemployer plans enable small employers to sponsor defined benefit plans for their employees and provide mobile employees with "portability" to earn continuous benefits as they go from job to job within the same industry.

Get Active Online

MORE AND MORE WORKERS are getting politically active by going online. You can, too. The department of government affairs maintains a Web site that keeps members informed on the issues, the candidates, and what actions they can take to help support workers.

You can also sign up for e-mail updates and alerts. When you register your e-mail address, you will begin receiving occasional legislative updates by e-mail. When there's a need for immediate action, you will get an e-mail alert explaining the issue and telling you who to contact and what to say.

You can even download a voter registration form and get information on early voting or voting by absentee ballot!

Just go to the Boilermakers' Web site at www.boilermakers.org and click on **LEAP** (near the top of the page under the word BOILERMAKERS).

John Kerry's tax plan will benefit working families

AS IF TRADE AGREEMENTS that put American workers at a competitive disadvantage aren't bad enough, the Bush administration has promoted tax policies that make things even tougher.

The administration has provided tax benefits for the offshore operations of U.S. corporations, encouraging the flow of jobs out of our country. A company faced with the decision to locate production at home versus a foreign, low-tax haven is given a tax incentive to not only move jobs overseas, but to re-invest profits permanently, instead of bringing them back to the United States for job creation.

Instead of asking corporations to pay their fair share of the war on terrorism,

infrastructure repair, homeland security, and other domestic priorities, an increasing portion of the tax burden has been shifted to wage earners. For these global multinationals, profits come before patriotism while American workers are left with the bill for protecting our nation and improving our schools.

Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic nominee for the White House, recently unveiled a comprehensive economic agenda that will restore fairness to the tax code and help create 10 million jobs in his first term as president. Kerry will eliminate all the tax breaks that encourage companies to move jobs overseas and use the savings to create jobs. The plan will spur real job growth by

encouraging companies to invest their foreign earnings — currently locked away in tax-haven nations abroad — in job creation investments here at home.

Tax reform is part of Sen. Kerry's plan to regain America's competitive edge. Given a level playing field, there is no question that U.S. workers can get the job done. Restoring fairness to the tax code and eliminating outsourcing incentives would be a giant step in the right direction.

For more information on Sen. Kerry's tax plan or to learn more about how you can help ensure John Kerry is the next president, please contact the Boilermakers government affairs department at (703) 560-1493.

GET THE FACTS

Campaign ads distort the truth about candidates, issues

The truth is out there — it's just not always easy to find

IN MARCH, President Bush spent nearly \$50 million attacking his Democratic opponent, Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., according to reports his campaign filed with the Federal Elections Commission.

The ads seem to have worked. Kerry's five-point advantage in preference polls had disappeared by the end of March.

They also raised eyebrows.

Many of the most successful ads have depicted Kerry as a candidate who would raise taxes and abandon our troops in Iraq. According to Brooks Jackson, who heads FactCheck.org, an independent group dedicated to finding the truth behind campaign claims, the Bush ads are full of lies and distortions.

For example, one series of ads claims Kerry voted for higher taxes "over 350 times." If that is true, asked MSNBC, what is he doing running for president?

"That number is so bogus," Jackson told MSNBC. "They counted votes that would have kept them [taxes] at current levels, and they counted votes that

would have cut taxes." Their methods even counted some votes twice.

The Bush ad claiming Kerry supported a 50-cent gas tax is equally false. According to Jackson, Kerry "never voted for it, never sponsored a bill, [and] doesn't support it."

What's a voter to do? First of all, be skeptical.

— Brooks Jackson, FactCheck.org

Where did the Bush campaign get the idea? From a casual statement Kerry made 10 years ago, one he never followed up on and does not support.

The John Kerry portrayed in Bush's campaign ads bears no resemblance to the John Kerry portrayed by impartial news articles.

News articles from the Associated Press and respected newspapers like *the New York Times* and *Washington Post* report that John Kerry never called for the \$900 billion tax increase that Bush's ads accuse him of supporting.

Quite the opposite. He has called for tax cuts for the middle class. He does,

however, support rolling back the Bush tax cuts for those making over \$200,000 a year in order to reduce the deficit and pay for the war in Iraq.

To be sure, all candidates try to make their opponents look bad and often focus narrowly on statements or votes that do not tell the whole truth.

But the Bush campaign is taking these campaign tricks to new levels. And they have enough money to fool a lot of people between now and Nov. 2.

Where do voters find the facts?

JACKSON WARNS that political ads cannot be trusted. "What's a voter to do?" he asks. "First of all, be skeptical . . . Ask yourself, 'Does that really make sense?' Ask yourself, 'Where can I go to check some of this stuff out?'"

One good place to go is Jackson's Web site, www.factcheck.org.

Another place to get candidate analysis you can trust is the LEAP section of the Boilermakers' Web site. Go to the Boilermakers' Web site and click on **LEAP**.

You can also contact the Boilermakers government affairs department by calling (703) 560-1493.

Tired of painting yourself into corners?

Annoyed with excessive static when trying to file and win grievances?

Fed up with slow response to abuse and harassment by bosses and supervisors?



Are your members apathetic because your grievance process doesn't work?

It's time to upgrade to SUPER UNION ACTIVIST VERSION 2004!

Sign up for the Boilermakers Summer Institute at the University of Wisconsin School for Workers.

This upgrade is available to all Boilermaker local union activists.

Basic Institute July 11-16.

Advanced & Construction Institutes July 18-23.

Registration fee for each institute is \$662, which covers tuition, double occupancy room, and meals from Sunday evening to Friday noon. For more information and a complete information packet, contact the Education and Training Department at (913) 371-2640.

This is a limited time offer. You must respond by June 4, 2004.

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