



# the BOILERMAKER Activist

For leaders within the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers Vol. 1 No. 3 June 2004

## House adopts four anti-worker OSHA bills

### Near party-line vote approves bundle of bills favoring negligent employers and overlooking worker safety

THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP of the House of Representatives hit a “grand slam” for negligent employers, adopting four regressive bills May 18 that weaken the enforcement of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and threatens the health and safety of American workers.

● HR 2731, the so-called OSH Access to Justice Act, would drain limited resources available for health and safety enforcement by placing the burden of proof on the federal government to defend the certainty of every violation cited. The

inevitable result would be an already cash-starved agency reluctant to enforce the rules, regardless of the threat to workers.

● HR 2730, the Independent Review of OSHA Citations Act, undermines the Secretary of Labor’s authority to enforce health and safety regulations by giving deference to the OSHA review commission in interpreting standards.

● HR 2729, the OSH Review Commission Efficiency Act, would unnecessarily expand the number of members on the Review Commission from three to five. It

is no coincidence that Republican congressional leaders have put forward this proposal when a Republican president would have the opportunity to stack the commission with anti-worker members.

● HR 2728, the OSH Small Business Day in Court Act, is blatantly unfair and one-sided. It turns excuses into legal loopholes for employers — but not workers — to miss a 15-day deadline by which to respond to OSHA citations. The action only encourages more lawsuits and delays the reduction of workplace hazards.

All four were adopted on a near party-line vote. The bills will be bundled and moved to the Senate, where several Democrats have pledged to hold it.

## No consensus on asbestos legislation

AFTER A YEAR of negotiations, the AFL-CIO, asbestos companies, and insurers were unable to reach an agreement on legislation for a national trust fund to compensate victims of asbestos disease.

Experts say actual claims will far exceed projected claims, requiring greater funding than was proposed. While labor and defendants negotiated in good faith throughout the process, insurance negotiators offered no new proposals.

Labor is committed to seeking fair compensation for asbestos victims. Until a number of non-funding issues are resolved — treatment of pending claims, medical screening, and preemptions of Federal Employees Liability Act (FELA) coverage for asbestos claims by railroad workers — endorsement is premature.

## S. O. S. Save Our Ships!

America faces both a national security and a jobs crisis

For the past 12 years, the Department of Defense has ordered an average of six ships each year, resulting in the smallest U.S. Naval fleet size since 1917 and the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

This lowered rate threatens thousands of Boilermaker shipyard jobs.

Protect these jobs and your nation’s security

Go to [www.seapowerambassador.org](http://www.seapowerambassador.org)

Get the latest information on the state of our sea services

Contact your elected representatives and political candidates

Ask them to rebuild the fleet of the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard

# Senate votes to stop the overtime pay grab

## House Republicans refuse to let measure come to a vote

U.S. WORKERS WON a victory and handed President George W. Bush a stinging defeat on May 4, when the U.S. Senate voted 52-47 to guarantee that workers now eligible for overtime pay will not lose their overtime pay protections, despite new regulations issued by the Bush administration April 23.

However, the new rules, which redefine who is eligible for overtime pay, will go into effect in late August unless the House passes a similar measure.

May 4 —

**The U.S. Senate votes 52-47 to guarantee that workers now eligible for overtime pay will not lose their overtime pay protections**

Today —

**Urge your representative to contact the House leadership and demand a vote on overtime pay**

An effort by Democrats to force the House of Representatives to address the administration's final rule was stymied when all but two Republicans supported a

procedural maneuver preventing debate and a vote on a motion to protect overtime pay for workers.

The Republican leadership knew that if a vote was allowed, they would lose.

A group of 19 Republican representatives who had previously voted to support workers on this issue changed their votes to support GOP leaders — blocking overtime pay protections, for now.

If your representative is a Republican, urge him or her to contact the House leadership and demand a vote on this measure to protect overtime pay.

## Join the TRCP — the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

INTL. PRES. NEWTON JONES is encouraging all Boilermakers to join the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP). This dues-free organization is working to guarantee us all places to hunt and fish, and has been officially endorsed by the AFL-CIO's Building Trades Department.

The TRCP not only supports the protection and preservation of fish and wildlife habitat and the right to own, use, and enjoy guns, bows, and fishing equipment, it is working to make sure Americans have access to places that provide quality hunting and fishing opportunities.

To learn more, log on to [www.trcp.org](http://www.trcp.org) or call toll-free 1-877-770-8722.

## Bush on trade: Tough talk, no action

ONCE AGAIN, President Bush demonstrated that he is "all hat and no cattle" when it comes to protecting American workers through fair trade policies: His administration rejected the AFL-CIO's petition for immediate trade remedies against China.

Filed March 16, the petition claims that China's frequent violations of workers' rights gives that nation an unfair trade advantage that has cost the U.S. more than 727,000 jobs.

The petition was filed under Section

301 of the Trade Act of 1974, a regulation that has been used extensively to protect corporate interests. However, this is the first time Section 301 has been invoked to protest a nation's labor practices.

The White House claims, "The president believes American workers are the best in the world, and when given a level playing field they can compete against workers anywhere."

Unfortunately, the president has refused to take any action to level the global playing field.

## Senate Republicans block temporary unemployment benefits extension

SENATE REPUBLICANS used a parliamentary maneuver to defeat Democratic attempts to renew the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation program, which provides additional weeks of federal unemployment benefits to jobless workers who have run out of regular state benefits.

A "super-majority" of 60 votes was needed to adopt the amendment to overcome a technical "point of order" raised by Republicans. Just 11 Republicans supported the measure offered by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA). The amendment fell one vote short because the Republican leadership manipulated

the timing of the vote to occur when Senator John Kerry was out of town campaigning for the presidency.

## Get active online

1. Just go to the Boilermakers' Web site at [www.boilermakers.org](http://www.boilermakers.org)
2. Click on LEAP (near the top of the page under the word BOILERMAKERS)
3. Read about legislative issues, candidates, and needed action
4. Sign up for legislative updates
5. Register to vote

## the BOILERMAKER Activist

Newton B. Jones, International President  
Jerry Z. Willburn, Intl. Secretary-Treasurer

Published by the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers to assist local lodge leaders.

Submit articles and ideas to  
*the Boilermaker Activist*  
753 State Avenue, Suite 570  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
(913) 371-2640; FAX (913) 281-8104

## How do I ... ?

Tips for dealing with headquarters

IT ISN'T EASY to figure out who does what at International headquarters. How is a local lodge officer supposed to know where to send a particular form or who can answer a question?

We hope this column will help. If it took you three weeks to figure out who to call when you need to order more application forms or to get a seal so you could make your local lodge letterhead, then you can bet there is somebody out there still trying to figure it out.

Help us help everybody else by sending us your questions and sharing your frustrations. You can remain anonymous.

### Where do I send address changes?

**The Membership Department** keeps all member records. Cindy Cosner supervises that department.

Mail: Cindy Cosner, Boilermakers Membership, 753 State Avenue, Suite 565, Kansas City KS 66101

E-mail: ccosner@boilermakers.org

FAX: 913-281-8197

**The Boilermakers-Blacksmiths Pension, Annuity, and Health & Welfare** are housed in a different building and have their own records, so if you need to change an address with them, it's best to contact them directly.

Mail: National Funds, 754 Minnesota Ave., Suite 522, Kansas City KS 66101

### Who do we ask for a copy of the Boilermaker seal so our local lodge can get some T-shirts printed?

**The Publications Department** can provide copies of the Boilermaker seal in hard copy or digital format. We also have various types of clip-art for use in newsletters, flyers, and other local lodge publications.

Mail: Donald Caswell, Boilermaker Reporter, 753 State Avenue, Suite 570, Kansas City KS 66101

E-mail: dcaswell@boilermakers.org

Phone: 913-371-2640

FAX: 913-281-8104

## Training department is ready to help

NO ONE IS BORN knowing how to handle a grievance or negotiate a contract, and few public schools offer much education in these areas.

Fortunately for Boilermaker local lodges, the International's Department of Education and Training Services (ETS) provides classes in these and many other subjects that lodge officers find useful.

In addition to coordinating the summer seminars at the University of Wisconsin's School for Workers every year, ETS also provides special classes for local lodges and industrial councils.

Most classes are taught by International staff with training and experience in the subject. When special expertise is called for, ETS can arrange for experts to provide training in your town or at other locations, such as at the AFL-CIO's George Meany Center in Silver Springs, Md.

Steward training is our most popular class, but we have offered training in the following areas as well:

- Grievance and arbitration handling
- Collective bargaining preparation
- Communication skills
- Negotiating for pension benefits
- Building the union
- Secretary-treasurer training
- Using computers
- Creating newsletters and flyers

If your local lodge or industrial council is interested in setting up a training program for members, stewards, or local lodge officers, contact the Boilermakers' Department of Education and Training.

Mail: Wade Davis, Boilermakers Director of ETS, 753 State Avenue, Suite 570, Kansas City KS 66101

Phone: 913-371-2640 (Linda Dunham is the ETS department secretary.)

## Who is John Kerry? Members need to know

THE BOILERMAKERS HAVE endorsed Democratic Senator John F. Kerry for president in 2004, but a surprising number of Americans, including our members, still do not know very much about him.

The Bush campaign has taken advantage of this knowledge gap by launching a \$98-million ad campaign filled with distortions and outright lies about Kerry. Local lodge leaders can help their members learn the truth about Kerry by distributing flyers from the Boilermakers Department of Government Affairs (DGA).

These flyers can be used to leaflet job-sites or include in mailings to members.

**Who is John Kerry?** provides some basic biographical information about Kerry along with his proposals for creating jobs, taming health care costs, and keeping America safe. Kerry has a 91 percent voting record on labor issues. He volunteered to fight in Vietnam and earned a Bronze Star and a Silver Star for his heroism in that war. When he returned to the United States, he publicly opposed the war that he had come to believe was misguided and immoral.

**Candidate comparison** contrasts George Bush's record with John Kerry's record. It's best to distribute this one after you distribute the *Who is John Kerry?* flyer. There are many significant differences between these two candidates.

**Kerry Sportsman** describes Kerry as a lifelong sportsman who supports the Second Amendment. Guns are an important issue with many of our members, and it's important that they understand John Kerry has worked hard in Congress to protect the rights of Americans to own and bear firearms, to expand public access to places to hunt and fish, and to conserve and enhance fish and wildlife habitats.

To learn more about John Kerry and his plan for America, visit his campaign Web site at [www.johnkerry.com](http://www.johnkerry.com).

To order these flyers or other political materials, contact the Boilermakers Department of Government Affairs.

Mail: 2722 Merrilee Drive, Suite 360

Fairfax, VA 22031

Phone: (703) 560-1493

FAX: (703) 560-2584

E-mail: bmartin@boilermakers.org

# Another "Free Trade" Agreement?



**Why did the Bush administration sign a major trade agreement on the Friday before a long Memorial Day weekend?**

**Perhaps they thought no one would notice.**

IT'S MAY 28, CONGRESS IS IN RECESS, the nation's capital is preparing to celebrate the dedication of the World War II Memorial, and most of work-day America is gearing up for a long weekend of cookouts and family reunions. And U.S. Trade Representative Bob Zoellick is meeting with the trade ministers of five Central American countries to sign the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), which extends NAFTA to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

**Do they have something to hide? You bet they do.**

Signing CAFTA moves us another step closer to the Bush administration's goal of expanding the job-destroying NAFTA to the entire Western Hemisphere in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

With almost three million manufacturing jobs lost, a record trade deficit, almost 10 million Americans looking for work, and a presidential election coming up, President Bush's political advisers were no doubt hoping that American workers would not notice that the Bush administration has signed another agreement that threatens to move even more jobs out of the country.

**We noticed.**

**And we do not like the direction this agreement is taking our country.**

Now you need to let the president and your members of Congress know that you were paying attention by letting them know how strongly you oppose their push to expand NAFTA.

## Equal Trading Partners?

### Average hourly manufacturing wage

Costa Rica	\$2.23
El Salvador	\$1.38
Guatemala	\$1.28
Honduras	\$1.30
Nicaragua	\$1.30
United States	\$16.08

## TAKE ACTION NOW!

**Visit [www.boilermakers.org](http://www.boilermakers.org) and click on LEAP. Send a message to President Bush.**

International Brotherhood of Boilermakers  
Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers  
753 State Ave., Suite 570  
Kansas City, KS 66101

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 329  
Kansas City, KS