



# the BOILERMAKER Activist

For leaders within the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers Vol. 1 No. 6 Sept. 2004

## Election Day is the LAST day to vote

**THE 2004 ELECTION** is expected to be one of the closest ever. Every vote counts, so don't wait until the last minute to vote. Encourage your members to think of November 2nd as the last day you can vote.

Don't just tell them to vote early, help them. Each state's laws are different. Before your next local lodge meeting, have a member of your LEAP committee get information on the absentee ballot and early voting laws in your state and make copies. At the meeting, briefly explain the laws and distribute the information to interested members.

It is usually easy to get printed information from the elections office or you can find information on the Boilermakers' Web site (<http://www.boilermakers.org>). Click on LEAP at the top of the front page. Following the voter information link, click on "Absentee Ballots" in the right column, and enter your zip code or state to find a page with instructions on how to vote by absentee ballot.

If you need assistance and do not have Internet access, phone the Boilermakers' Government Affairs Office at 703-560-1493 between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.. (Eastern Time), Monday - Friday.

You can vote early, either in person or by mail. Some states allow you to come into the elections office and vote before Election Day, and every state allows absentee voting.



So if you think there's a chance you won't be home on Election Day, you should vote early.

You can vote at the elections office. Voting early is an option in some states. You can take advantage of early voting by going to the elections office and filling out your ballot. It's good to take advantage of early voting if you can, because something may come up on Election Day that keeps you from going to the polls. And on

Election Day, you don't get a second chance.

You can vote several weeks early by mail using an absentee ballot. If you are going to vote by absentee ballot, you need to make arrangements ahead of time - in some cases, several weeks before Election Day. In order to use an absentee ballot, you must state that you will be out of town on Election Day or unable to come to the polling place for some other reason (illness is about the only valid one).

Absentee ballots must be completed and mailed back to the elections office by Election Day. Late ballots are not counted. Since mail typically slows down near Election Day because of heavy demand, you should fill out your ballot the day you get it and put it in the mail immediately.

Share this information with your family and friends. Encourage them to register to vote and then show them how they can vote early, too. We must ensure that the voices of America's workers are heard loud and clearly this election year.



## QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR VOTING OPTIONS?

Visit [www.boilermakers.org](http://www.boilermakers.org) and click on LEAP.

If you need assistance and do not have Internet access, phone the Boilermakers' Government Affairs Office at 703-560-1493 between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.(Eastern Time), Monday - Friday.

# Overtime takeaway fight continues

**IN A STINGING REBUKE** to the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate Appropriations Committee both passed amendments to their respective appropriations bills that would force the Department of Labor to rescind changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act that limit eligibility for overtime. The bipartisan vote of 223-193 sends a strong message to the White House that America's workers do not support his overtime pay cut.

Twenty-two Republicans broke ranks with their leadership, joining a united Democratic front to put a stop to the new regulations. The President has vowed to veto the legislation if it reaches his desk

with the provision intact. Doing so would demonstrate the lengths to which the Bush administration will go to rob working families of their overtime pay. The \$142 billion domestic spending bill provides much needed funds for education, community health centers, and job training

**NO  
OVERTIME  
PAY CUT**



programs - all of which the president is willing to hold hostage to ensure his overtime pay takeaway stays in place.

Workers have sent more than 1.6 million letters, emails and faxes protesting the overtime take-away since it was announced in March 2003.

The new rules went into effect August 23, putting the overtime pay of 6 million Americans in jeopardy.

Under the new rules, many chefs, nurses, police officers, journalists, athletic trainers, computer employees, and low-level supervisors may be denied time-and-a-half for overtime.

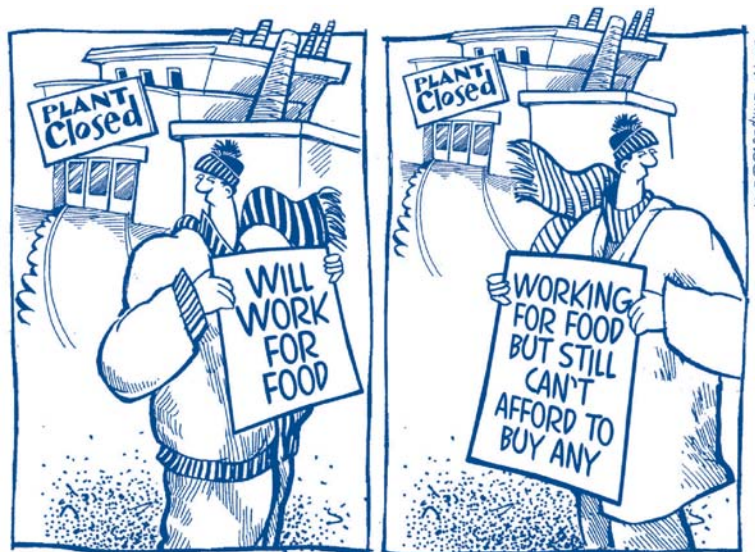
# White House fails to crack down on China currency problem

**IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG** for the Bush administration to reject a petition calling for strong trade sanctions against China unless it revalues its currency. The China Currency Coalition — a broad coalition of unions, businesses, agricultural and service organizations, including the Boilermakers — filed the 200-page petition September 9 at 9:30 am. Just three hours later, the Bush Administration rejected the petition outright.

China keeps its currency exchange rate artificially low, under-pricing its

exports and giving it an unfair trade advantage over the United States. China's refusal to change its exchange rate gives it a 40 percent advantage over U.S. products and is an unfair practice under World Trade Organization rules and U.S. law.

But the Bush administration doesn't want to call them on it. While claiming progress with China on the issue of currency manipulation, the White House has yet to show results. In June, the U.S. trade deficit with China had risen to an all-time high of \$14 million.



*The Bush Recession*

*The Bush Recovery*

## 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

# Bush puts the squeeze on seniors

**WHILE TOUTING HIS** accomplishments at the Republican Convention, President Bush conveniently forgot to mention that his administration was set to announce a record breaking 17.5 percent increase in Medicare Part B premiums, the largest increase in history. The increase will take effect Jan. 1, 2005.

The biggest chunk of this increase is \$83 billion in bonuses to HMOs, the privatized Medicare plans that were supposed to reduce costs. More than 15 percent of the 2005 increase is earmarked for subsidizing private plans.

"Think of it," Judith Stein, director of the Center for Medicare Advocacy, told Newsday. "Next year, already strapped older people and people with disabilities will be paying more . . . to help entice

private plans into Medicare . . . even though private plans have left Medicare beneficiaries high and dry. . . . Who is Medicare for, anyway?"

Medicare premiums have risen 56 percent since 2001, when Bush took office. The latest premium increase is the newest evidence of the Bush administration's disregard for the retirement security of older Americans and the failure of his health care policy. In the same time period, Social Security benefits have risen only about 6 percent.

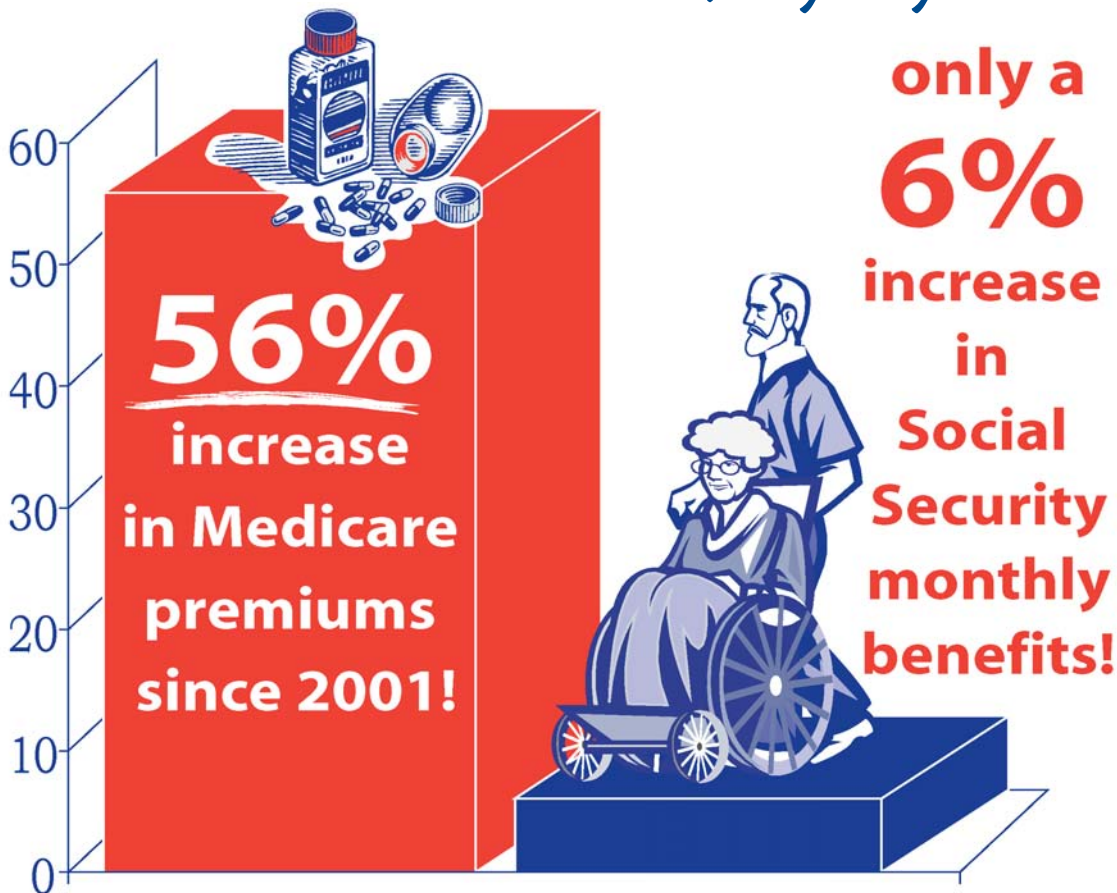
In addition, the recently enacted Bush Medicare drug benefit will take an even larger bite out of Social Security checks when it takes effect in 2006, even though it contains loopholes in coverage. The omission of key language in the drug bill

stands to wreak havoc with the monthly budgets of many seniors.

Currently, Medicare deducts premiums for doctors' visits from Social Security benefits, but federal law prohibits premiums from exceeding Social Security's annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). This provision keeps Social Security checks from shrinking from one year to the next.

But under the Bush Medicare law, premium increases for the drug benefit are tied to increases in drug price inflation—with no limit, regardless of what the COLA is. Drug prices have been increasing at double digit rates for several years, while Social Security COLAs are averaging about two percent a year.

## "Who is Medicare for, anyway?"



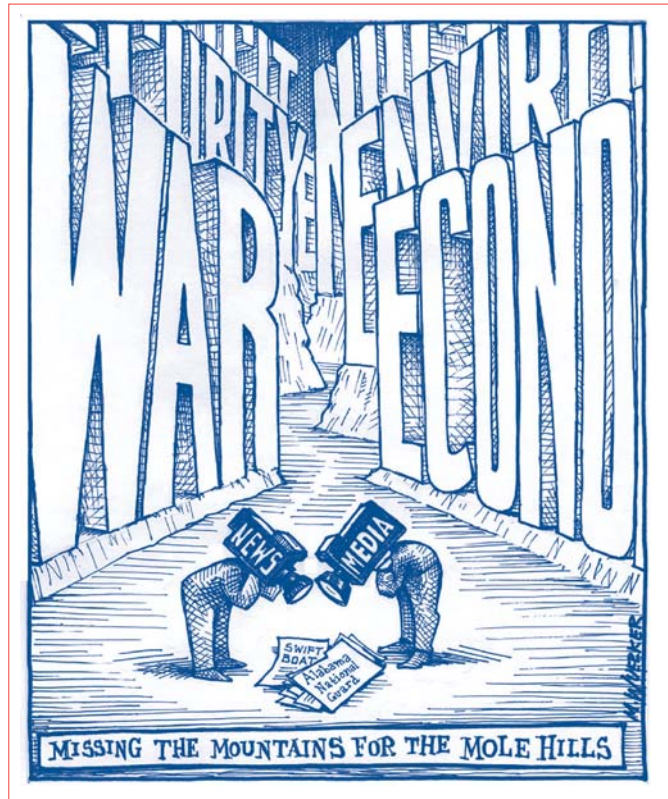
## Kerry is committed to a future for coal energy

**DESPITE THE SCARE TACTICS** from Karl Rove and conservative interests groups trying to convince workers that John Kerry would threaten their jobs, Sen. Kerry is pledging billions of dollars to ensure coal has a bright future. He has pledged to spend \$10 billion on clean coal technology to ensure that coal remains a vital part of America's energy mix

Meanwhile, the President's supporters ignore the fact that Bush has proposed regulations this year on mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants that would devastate coal mining jobs in Appalachia and the Midwest. The coal industry and coal producing states have indicated that Bush's mercury proposal "threatens the future of the Appalachia coal" and is "devastating to the bituminous coal industry."

Under the plan put forward by the Kerry-Edwards team, America will take the lead in developing the new technology and production methods needed to ensure that coal and is used more efficiently and cleanly and fully integrated into the "New Energy Economy."

For more information on John Kerry's plan to ensure a future for coal and create good jobs, visit <http://www.johnkerry.com>.



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