

Labor's Language: Glossary of Union Terms

Labor agreements, publications, and even officials often use terms that are almost exclusive to the labor arena. To help stewards feel more comfortable operating in this area, "Labor's Language: A glossary of Labor's Terms" is a regular Steward Edition feature.

Just Cause: A reason an employer must give for any disciplinary action it takes against an employee. An employer must show just cause only if a contract requires it. Most contracts have just cause requirements which place the burden of proof for just cause on the employer.

Landrum-Griffin Act of 1955: Also known as the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA), it provides safeguards for individual union members, requires

periodic reports by unions, and regulates union trusteeships and elections.

Litigate: To carry on a legal contest by a judicial process. For example, employers will often go to the courts (litigate) to appeal a decision by the National Labor Relations Board.

Lockout: A suspension of work initiated by the employer as the result of a labor dispute. A lockout is the employer counterpart of a strike and is used primarily to pressure employees to accept the employer's terms in a new contract.

Made Whole: A catchall phrase used in grievances and other legal actions where a remedy is sought from an employer. Often used in discharge and discipline cases where the union seeks

to have a worker, who had been wrongly discharged or disciplined, returned to work and reimbursed all wages, benefits, or other conditions lost due to an employer's unjustified action.

Management Rights or Prerogatives: The claimed rights of employers to control operational aspects of the workplace.

Mandatory Subject of Bargaining: Those items included under wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment over which an employer must bargain. An employer may not make a change in a mandatory bargaining subject without providing prior notice to the union and an opportunity to bargain.



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UFCW 876 STEWARD EDITION

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Stewards Encouraged to Promote and Participate in May 15 Event

UFCW Michigan Lobby Day Offers Unique Opportunity

Local 876 members will have the opportunity to directly witness and participate in the state's legislative process during Lobby Day 2008. On May 15, UFCW members from across Michigan will descend on the state capitol for a day of political action. Following a briefing on current legislative issues of special interest to UFCW members, participants will head to the capitol halls. While the legislature is in session, members will listen to the proceedings, notify their representatives of their presence, and request specific legislative action.

"Last year, members really enjoyed this part of the day," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "We stood shoulder to shoulder with the paid lobbyists, including the lobbyist for Wal-Mart, and representatives come out into the hall for one-on-one conversation with members. Even if they weren't necessarily on our side, representatives were eager to meet their constituents and hear what members had to say."

Legislators have been invited to spend their May 15 lunch break with members at a union-hosted luncheon.

"During lunch, members will be able to spend some time getting to

know their representatives in an informal setting," Robinson said. "This will give members the opportunity to develop personal and institutional relationships with their elected officials. These associations are at the heart of a positive working relationship between workers, their unions, and elected officials."

Following lunch, members will break into small groups to call on their individual representatives to discuss issues on the UFCW Michigan's united political agenda.

"Lobby Day provides participants with a first hand behind-the-scenes look at our political process that few people experience," Robinson said. "It also helps members become comfortable talking with their representatives and asking for support on issues. Michigan is going through a tough time, and we fully expect to be calling on our elected officials to do the right thing for workers and their families as they make future decisions."

Evidence that legislators listened to

Lobby Day 2007 participants can be found in the recent passage of legislation changing Michigan's food stamp distribution process.

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"During last year's Lobby Day, many members talked to legislators about the benefits of changing the state's food stamp distribution process from once to twice a month," Robinson said. "Clearly, we made an impact, as legislation change food stamp distribution was recently passed."

(See page two for more on this legislative victory.)

Round trip bus transportation from the Local 876 union hall will be provided for Lobby Day. However, space is limited and will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. For more information on Lobby Day, or to reserve a place on the bus, call Local 876 at 1-800-321-6406 ext. 8644.

UFCW, Members Score Lobbying Victory

Lawmakers Listen to Workers, Approve Change in Food Stamp Distribution

The grocery industry and its workers, along with food stamp recipients, scored a victory when the Michigan Legislature passed the "Social Welfare Act" in early April. The legislation, which Gov. Jennifer Granholm is expected to sign, would make Michigan the first state to issue food stamps twice, rather than once, a month.

"We applaud the bi-partisan action by the legislature in passing the Social Welfare Act. It's a win-win for everyone involved -- Michigan's workers, consumers, and retailers," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "For almost two years, the UFCW in Michigan has been advocating for this change. Last summer, UFCW members went to Lansing to lobby their legislators on a variety of issues including food stamp distribution. It's encouraging to see our efforts paid off."

The advantages of twice a month distribution include:

- Greater shopping and budgeting flexibility for food stamp recipients.
- A greater and more even distribution of work hours for grocery workers whose hours are often cut, following the drop in shopping levels after the distribution of food stamps.
- Eliminating the financial, management, and inventory problems experienced by retailers, suppliers, wholesalers, and manufacturers caused by the current food stamp distribution system.

● A greater selection of fresh food for all shoppers. Currently, many grocers are unable to stock fresh products during the last 20 days of the month when their business is reduced due to once a month food stamp distribution. "Once the change becomes effective,

we expect members who work in the grocery industry to notice a more even workflow and scheduling of hours," Robinson said. "This issue is a perfect example of how Local 876 members are impacted by what hap-

pens in Lansing, and reinforces how important it is for the UFCW and our members to be politically active. Our lobbying and other political efforts can and do make a difference for workers."

Three Steps to Active Listening

Most people think they are pretty good listeners, but studies have shown the majority of individuals listen at only 25 percent efficiency.

Communication experts have identified a practice referred to as "active listening" which increases an individual's listening efficiency. By employing the three basic principles of active listening, as detailed below, stewards can sharpen their listening skills, bringing their listening efficiency closer to 100 percent.

Step 1: Stop and Think

When someone is talking to you, it's important to stop what you are doing and pay attention. Not focusing your complete attention is a common listening problem. The moment someone starts talking to you, stop whatever you are doing and change your physical position by turning your body toward the speaker. When you make a conscious effort to move into a listening position, your mind will follow your body's direction.

Another common road block to effective listening is letting your mind wander. The listener's mind wanders because people listen three to 10 times faster than people talk. If you stop and think, you can use the lag time to your advantage by asking mental questions about what you are hearing such as "What are the key points?" or "What does he or she mean?"

Step 2: Look and Listen

Watch for body language. How someone says something may tell you whether they are angry, bored, interested, friendly, or aggressive. Keep an eye on their arms, posture, facial expressions, etc.

Your own body language can also give messages to others. If you look at them as they speak, you'll appear more interested than if your eyes wander while the person is talking.

Step 3: Clarify and Verify

Asking questions to clarify a point is one of the best ways to understand the speaker's real message. As you listen, make sure to verify your perceptions. When in doubt, ask! It is crucial to verify your perceptions. It only takes a few seconds to ask a clarifying question such as "If I understood correctly, the main points are..." or "What I hear you saying..."

Remember, when listening, your goal is to understand, not to be understood.

John McCain's Failing Record on Good Jobs

While the Democratic nominee for president is yet to be determined, Sen. John McCain has secured his party's nomination. The Republican senator from Arizona claims to be a "maverick" and a "straight talker," yet he has a record of failing to support policies that encourage good jobs with good wages and benefits.

"John McCain has repeatedly voted to undermine workers' wages and cut overtime eligibility and unemployment benefits," Roger Robinson, Local 876's president, said. "McCain has also failed to support job-creating construction projects that stimulate our economy. Local 876 members need to know that John McCain is not a friend of workers or their unions."

The following are some facts that stewards can share with their co-workers to educate them about the Republican candidate for president's record on jobs.

WAGES

John McCain Opposed a Minimum Wage Increase

McCain voted against a minimum wage increase for working families. McCain voted with the Republicans in 2007 to stall a minimum wage increase for working families— before bowing to public pressure — and voting to pass the final bill that included tax breaks for businesses. He even voted to completely repeal the minimum wage laws in 45 states and allow the other five states to opt out of any future minimum wage increases above \$5.15 an hour. [H.R. 2, Vote #23, 1/24/07; Vote #24, 1/24/07; Vote #25, 1/25/07; Vote #37, 1/31/07; Vote #39, 1/31/07; Vote #42,

1/31/07; S. 2766, Vote #179, 6/21/06; S. 256, Vote #26, 3/7/05]

When the Senate was debating a minimum wage increase in 2006 and the Senate's many pay raises were brought up, McCain called the comparison "a very clever ploy." He defended his opposition to the minimum wage increase, saying he had foregone Senate pay raises, "...sometimes to the dismay of my family." However, McCain's 2005 personal financial disclosure reported his family held assets worth between \$27 million and \$42 million, which generated income between \$1.8 million and \$4.6 million.

[ABC News, 7/2/06; McCain 2005 Personal Financial Disclosure Statement]

McCain Repeatedly Tried to Eliminate & Weaken Prevailing Wage Laws

McCain supported an amendment to prohibit the application of Davis-Bacon requirements for fair wages in declared federal disaster areas. This amendment would have undercut the wages of workers in the harshest conditions. [S. 1650, Vote #320, 10/7/99]

McCain voted to allow the Bush administration to create a new class of workers called "helpers," who would have no formal training and would not fall under Davis-Bacon wage protection requirements.

[H.R. 2518, Vote #289, 9/28/93]

OVERTIME

McCain Voted Against Protections for Workers' Overtime Rights

McCain voted against protecting workers' overtime pay from Bush

administration rules that threaten the overtime rights of six million workers. [S. 1637, Vote #79, 5/4/04]

HEALTH & SAFETY

Workers Well Being Not Important to McCain

McCain voted to block the Occupational Safety and Health Administration from issuing, implementing or enforcing standards to protect workers from ergonomic injuries. [H.R. 4577, Vote #143, 6/22/00]

McCain voted to gut the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). In 1993, before finally voting for the FMLA, McCain voted to jeopardize leave for millions of workers by gutting the bill. He voted to suspend the act unless the federal government either certified that compliance would not increase costs for business or provide financial assistance to businesses to cover any costs associated with implementing the law. [S. Amdt. 16, S. 5, Vote #7, 2/4/93; H.R. 1, Vote #11, 2/4/93]

FREEDOM TO UNIONIZE

McCain Voted Against the Employee Free Choice Act but For a National Right-to-Work for Less Law

McCain voted against the Employee Free Choice Act, which would level the playing field for workers trying to form unions. He voted for a National Right-to-Work for Less law that would attempt to eliminate unions altogether. [H.R. 800, Vote #227, 6/26/07; S. 1788 Vote #188, 7/10/96]