



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

BOB KING, President



DENNIS WILLIAMS, Secretary-Treasurer

JULIE KUSHNER
DIRECTOR
REGION 9A UAW
111 SOUTH ROAD
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032-2560
PHONE: (860) 674-0143
FAX: (860) 674-1164
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

March 5, 2012

To: Senator Stillman, Rep. Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee

From: Beverley Brakeman, UAW Region 9A

Re: SB 304 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF LABOR HISTORY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

My name is Beverley Brakeman and I am the Political Representative for UAW Region 9A. UAW Region 9A represents over 50,000 members in New England, New York and Puerto Rico. Our members are legal service workers, higher education professionals, table games dealers, small manufacturing workers, technical office and professional workers and auto technicians.

Our union has a proud history of fighting for workers to have the right of representation and collective bargaining. The right to organize and bargain collectively, as you know, began under President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a law we know as the National Labor Relations Act or the Wagner Act after its author, Senator Robert Wagner from New York. The bill also created the National Labor Relations Board which was charged with supervising union representation elections.

The UAW was founded after this law went into effect to address the poor wages, benefits and working conditions within the auto industry. Starting in 1936, auto workers fought back against companies unwilling to recognize their work and their value. A series of sit down strikes began to storm the industry. From South Bend, IN, to Detroit, MI to Flint MI, auto workers led by the UAW sat down and demanded representation and improved working conditions, pay and benefits. And they won.

UAW members gained power collectively and began to win fights in their workplace that some argue created a middle class where there was none. At the height of our growth, the UAW was 1.5 million members strong.

Academic standards and curriculum resources such as textbooks have historically ignored or been deficient in their treatment of workers and the labor movement. Teachers who want to cover this history have no written curriculum standards set by local and state educational institutions to help or encourage them.

SB 304 would set standards to teach labor history in Connecticut's public schools so that students can learn the role labor unions have played in our country and our state. Some of these standards include:

- An 8-hour work day & 40-hour work week
- A minimum wage

- Extensive child labor laws
- Safer working conditions
- Unemployment insurance
- Protection against workplace discrimination
- Workers' Compensation
- Collective bargaining to give workers a voice

Students deserve to know that these protections were not just inherited from previous generations, but rather were won by the efforts of ordinary people who made extraordinary sacrifices to create the society we enjoy today.

My children know this history because of me. Not because they learned it in school, in a book or in a college classroom. It's time for that to change.

Thank you.

opeiu494