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Labor launches new measures to wipe out unequal pay for women

By Larry Rubin

At a press conference here today, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler announced that the labor federation is launching several measures to wipe out pay inequality based on gender and to guarantee that all workers have paid family and sick leave and fair scheduling.

Women workers bear the heaviest burden.

Shuler said, "Women in the workplace have gained a great deal: laws to protect women's rights, new freedoms, and career opportunities that were once thought unimaginable. ... But discrimination still exists."

Women overall make 79 cents for every dollar earned by men; black women earn 63 cents for every dollar earned by men, and Hispanic women 54 cents.

Women are more often than men denied promotions or are fired because they more often must take care of their families. They must stay home from work to care for their children when they get ill, take time off to meet with teachers, and attend to hundreds of other family-related matters.

Women workers who are not given regular schedules, or who receive last-minute orders to report to work, find it particularly hard to manage family responsibilities.

Moreover, the cost of child care often makes



it impossible for working women to take home enough pay to support their families.

Then there's "clopening."

This practice forces workers to come in for back to back closing and opening shifts, with only seven or eight hours between. The result? Women workers are being left with less control over how much time they can spend with their families and when they can spend it.

Shuler said that despite all the discrimina-

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tion, women "too often go along to get along."

"We need to join together and speak out for good wages, great benefits, fair scheduling and equal pay for equal work. We need to demand paid sick leave, paid family leave and quality child care.

"These things are accessible and available to

The demands women seek are accessible and available if we stand together for them.

us if we stand together for them,” Shuler said.

She announced that to help “galvanize the power of women,” the AFL-CIO is launching “a comprehensive survey about the lives of working women. This survey will take the pulse of working women inside and outside the labor movement. It will be a baseline measure of working women’s lives.”

Further, the AFL-CIO is going to offer training to working women who do not have a union. “We want to pass on our experiences and our skills. We are going to train, cajole, encourage, support and inspire women to win better wages, standards and working conditions.”

Shuler said the labor federation will help women without a union craft their demands, determine fair ground rules and negotiate with management.

Moreover, the AFL-CIO will redouble its efforts to pass pro-worker legislation.

“Passing an equal pay for equal work law would be a huge boost for the economy as a whole,” Shuler said.

She also said that the AFL-CIO will also fight

for passage of the Schedules that Work Act, the Healthy Families Act, and the WAGE Act, which would raise the nationwide minimum wage to \$12 an hour over a period of four years.

“This legislation, Shuler said, “would help level the playing field and give working women the opportunity to live healthy, happy and productive lives.”

Shuler is the first woman to be elected as AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer and the youngest officer to ever sit on the Executive Council.

She ended the press conference by saying. “... Forty-five years ago, U.S. Representative Shirley Chisholm said: ‘Discrimination against women ... is so widespread, that it seems ... normal, natural and right.’

“But women are a formidable force. Together ... [we can] build an America where all working women can sustain their families and realize their dreams. ... Tomorrow, if we do our job, this will seem ‘normal, natural and right.’”



Larry Rubin is Washington correspondent for PW.

Nepal’s parliament elects nation’s first female president

By Binaj Gurubacharya

Nepalese lawmakers elected Bidhya Devi Bhandari, a longtime women’s rights campaigner, to become the country’s first female president Wednesday, as the Himalayan nation pushes for more gender equality in politics and work life. She had previously served as the defense minister of the government of Nepal from 2009 to 2011. As president, she is supreme commander of the armed forces.

Bidhya Devi Bhandari, the 54-year-old deputy leader of Nepal’s Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), had lobbied actively for the new constitution to require that either the president or vice president be a woman. She was chair of All Nepal Women Association. Nepal has been trying to shift from a traditionally male-dominated society, where women are mostly limited to working at homes or on farms, to one in which women have equal access to opportunities and legal rights.

Bhandari said her election -- by a vote of 327-

214 against Congress party leader Kul Bahadur Gurung -- marked a first step toward assuring the new constitutional guarantees of equality are fulfilled. The constitution, adopted last month, also requires that one-third of the country’s lawmakers be women, and that women be included in all government committees. And last week, Onsari Gharti was elected as the country’s first female Parliament speaker.

Bhandari has been a leading political figure since 1993 when her late husband, Communist party leader Madan Bhandari, died in a car accident, which was alleged to have been a case of murder and is unsolved to date. Bhandari is Nepal’s second president since then.

Nepal, officially the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, is located in South Asia. The mountainous north of Nepal has eight of the world’s ten tallest mountains, including the highest point on Earth, Mount Everest. More than 250 peaks over 20,000 ft above sea level are located in Nepal, while the southern region is fertile and humid.

Nepal elects first female president.

Thieves, crooks and war profiteers avoid jail

By David Trujillo

There is something wrong. Why haven't there been any corporate Wall Street executives, billionaire hedge fund CEO's or big bank executives placed in jail for planning and working to destroy our economy - harming thousands of innocent working people, people of color and the poor. All the while they pocket their millions of dollars as they gain more and more wealth. In other words: We get hard times and the rich get richer.

These same people create war options as an answer to save our economy, to save our country, to save our communities, to save our military reputation around the world. The military and corporate hierarchy has been called "too big to fail." They are not too big, however, to spend time in prison where they belong.

Working people continue to work hard and still many find themselves in debt or trying to recover. Yet, these corporate thieves get big payouts, outlandish incentives and continue to flourish. It seems like they are entrenched and constantly rewarded.

Why haven't any of the war profiteers who make billions on the military war machine and who continue to push our country to the brink of war been held accountable for their actions? These thieves, crooks and war profiteers created an environment that placed thousands of working people in financial



hardship, nearly caused our economy to collapse and then they advocate for sending thousands of young people off to war in order to solve our economic problems.

You will never find Wall Street crooks and corporate thieves on any such list, however, and you will never see these crooks and thieves serve any time. In fact, the only list these crooks and thieves will be on, are those that list the top most profitable individuals and corporations. In some cases, you may find these thieves and crooks listed on some right-wing political donation list.

What do these thieves and crooks want the American people to believe? Using their paid associates, many who are right wing politicians, they seek to turn public opinion against working people.

One major way the corporate elite try to turn public opinion around is to blame unions for many of our problems. In their minds, corporate greed is good and worker rights are bad. In their minds, war is good and profitable and peace is bad for the economy, bad for the nation and bad for the world.

It's time we set an example and put these crooks and thieves in prison or at least fire them from their well-paid jobs. It is time to stand up and organize around a people's economy, and a peace economy. What do you think?

These corporate thieves get big payouts, outlandish incentives and continue to flourish without being penalized.

Survey: Health care premiums continue to outpace inflation and wages

By Don Mcintosh

The Kaiser Family Foundation's 17th annual nationwide employer survey confirms what most workers already feel: Health care costs are gobbling up more and more of their wages.

Employers are the principal source of health insurance in the United States, providing health benefits for about 147 million Americans who are under 65. But most workers share the cost of the medical services they use. That cost sharing can take a variety of forms, including a share of the premium deductibles, co-payments (fixed dollar amounts per visit), and co-insurance (a percentage of the charge for services).

In 2015, 57 percent of employers offer health benefits to at least some of their workers, statistically unchanged from the 55 percent in 2014. That includes 98 percent of large firms (200 or more workers) but just 47 percent of the smallest firms (three to nine workers).

Kaiser found single and family premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance rose by an average of 4 percent between 2014 and 2015. Since 2005, premiums have grown an average of 5 percent each year, down from the 11 percent annually from 1999-2005.

The same goes for visits to a primary care physician's office. There, 68 percent of covered workers have a copayment, averaging \$24, and 23 percent have coinsurance, averaging 18 percent. But that was for workers. Retirees are another story. Of large firms (200 or more workers) that offer health benefits to their employees, just 23 percent offer retiree coverage in 2015. That's down from 66 percent in 1988, and 34 percent in 2006.

Premio Nobel japonés aboga por desarme nuclear

Prensa Latina

El Premio Nobel de 2008 en Química, Osamu Shimomura, se sumó al reclamo de la comunidad científica internacional en Nagasaki para eliminar las armas nucleares y la guerra, publicó hoy el diario japonés Mainichi.

"La guerra es algo terrible", declaró Shimomura, sobreviviente de unas de las dos bombas atómicas lanzadas por Estados Unidos, mientras asiste a la LXI Conferencia Pugwash sobre Ciencias y Asuntos Mundiales hasta el próximo jueves.

"No había nada aquí", evocó el científico de 87 años, al desandar los alrededores de la Estación JR Nagasaki. "Absolutamente nada".

"Cerca de un mes y medio después de la bomba atómica, caminé por la ciudad para buscar comida. Pero todo había sido quemado. Fue un espectáculo absolutamente atroz", afirmó.

Con 16 años de edad por entonces, Shimomura trabajó en 1945 en un centro de detención convertido en morgue que recibió cada vez en mayor número los cadáveres calcinados de las víctimas de la explosión.

Producto de esa trágica experiencia, el investigador japonés posee fuertes opiniones sobre la inhumanidad de las armas nucleares, que ha expresado en diversas ocasiones, incluyendo su discurso de aceptación del Premio Nobel en Suecia.

Tras realizar una solicitud hace dos años, Shimomura pudo visitar el Laboratorio Nacional de Los Alamos, la instalación súper secreta donde Estados Unidos fraguó durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial sus primeras bombas atómicas.

Los investigadores que escucharon allí el relato de su experiencia, sin embargo, no le preguntaron nada.

"No parecen interesados", dijo Shimomura sobre el punto de vista de los científicos estadounidenses sobre los bombardeos atómicos. "Para ellos, es solo otro incidente en la historia".

Aun así, el veterano investigador no renuncia a generar conciencia entre sus colegas, de ahí que este año asiste por primera vez a la Conferencia Pugwash para abogar por un mundo libre de arsenales nucleares.

Un coro japonés integrado por supervivientes de los bombardeos atómicos estadounidenses, comenzará 20 oct. una gira por Europa, consigna el sitio de la televisión pública NHK.

El coro Himawari partió este lunes con rumbo a Alemania desde el aeropuerto de Nagasaki, una de las ciudades víctimas de las bombas atómicas norteamericanas en agosto de 1945.

La gira de ocho días incluirá conciertos en Alemania, Italia y el Vaticano. En éste último estado, los cantantes con un promedio de edad de 77 años, interpretarán la obra Nunca más ante el papa Francisco.

En mayo pasado, el coro Himawari dio un concierto durante una conferencia de la ONU dedicada a la revisión del Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear.

Los bombardeos atómicos estadounidenses, los únicos en la historia, causaron la muerte inmediata de 70 mil a 80 mil personas en Hiroshima y de 50 mil en Nagasaki.

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