

**IT'S UP TO US**  
**Report to the National Committee**  
**Thursday, June 28, 2012**  
**Joelle Fishman, Chair Political Action Commission**

This has been quite a day.

First, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act that benefits millions of Americans, and is a huge step toward achieving health care as a basic human right.

Then, on a negative note, the Republican House leadership insisted on voting on contempt charges against Attorney General Holder. Perhaps we should start with an expression of solidarity with the Congressional Black Caucus decision to lead a walkout today on that despicable vote, which was joined by 100 Democrats including the leadership.

\* \* \*

Tonight's phone meeting of the National Committee comes at a very important time in the election calendar, not just in swing states, but in every state and in every community.

In past meetings we have laid the foundation for why this election is a critical part of the democratic struggle and the class struggle in our country and how this election is a necessary and vital part of long term labor and people's movement building and Communist Party and YCL building.

Corporate interests are pouring many millions of dollars into this election with the aim of increasing the power and control and profit margins of the 1%.

Karl Rove and the Koch Brothers shadow group ads are already up and running to create confusion, undermine confidence in President Obama, persuade swing voters that Romney is the one who will create jobs, and peel off as many voters from the labor-community base as they can. They have set up shop in the bluest of states as well as the swing states and red states. They are utilizing state voter suppression laws to try and steal this election, especially in key swing states.

As the attacks on everything won in the last century escalate including from the Republican controlled House and from the Supreme Court, the conclusion is being drawn more widely that now is the time to stand up and join together to defeat the extreme right-wing in this election if our nation is to preserve: the right to vote, the right to a union, to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, women's reproductive rights, Environmental Protection, public education, the Affordable Care Act, and reverse growing income inequality and the racial and gender divide.

**The idea that it is necessary to come together not just for this election but for year-round organizing is taking hold and gives much needed momentum against the anti-worker onslaught.**

At the Take Back the American Dream conference attended by 80 organizations, in recent national union conventions, in immigrant rights and youth organizing, among others, the agendas were shaped around building a diverse and united movement. Working America's slogan "There is Strength in Numbers" and the Labor 2012 slogan "Building to Win, Building to Last." are an indication.

The youth at Take Back America were a real inspiration. They were from grass roots groups across the

country. They had stopped Bank of America from charging for use of credit cards, won the cessation of deportation of Dream Act eligible youth, organized to overturn Citizens United, marched against racial profiling, called for an end to the wars, and they were leading the movement to extend low interest rates for student loans. They were fully geared up to defend their right to vote, and they were signing up to run for public office. They described their visions for a more just and sustainable society and expressed confidence that, with a multi-generational and multi-racial movement, it is possible to achieve that reality.

"Another world is possible," said Molly Katchpole, speaking of the cultural shift in the country and calling on youth to run for public office, get money out of politics and make education a right, not a privilege.

### **Building a movement to uphold democratic rights and challenge capital shows the interconnection of organizing and elections.**

In Ohio 1.3 million signatures were collected to repeal union busting SB 5 and the vote was delivered, leaving a much stronger movement in place in one of the key swing states this November. That struggle has inspired local progressive candidates to run for office in other swing states like Colorado.

In Wisconsin a data base of one million was created from voters who signed the petitions for repeal of Scott Walker. That will now be used to mobilize for workers' rights as well as to turnout in November's election.

Another example is the courage and boldness shown by young immigrant Dreamers who marched from Miami to Washington DC to stop their deportations. They captured the attention of the nation, inspired other actions across the country, and succeeded in winning a Presidential executive order that will remain in effect as long as Obama is in the White House. It is not a finished struggle, but it gives hope for the next stage and it is a remarkable mobilizer to turn out the vote.

### **The main issue for voters remains jobs and the economy.**

The debate about who are the job creators, how jobs are created, what kind of jobs are needed and who gets the jobs is at the center of the campaign.

Romney says his business experience proves he is a job creator. In fact, Romney is a job killer. His company Bain Capital specialized in outsourcing jobs overseas for higher profits. Romney likes austerity. He opposes government spending on jobs and human needs. He supported SB 5 in Ohio and the Paul Ryan budget in Congress which would result in large-scale layoffs of police, firefighters and teachers.

The AFL CIO started their member education program with a video exposing Romney as 'Mr. 1%.' Now they are exposing Romney as "Mr. Outsource-er."

On the other side, while much more was required, President Obama took many initiatives in the right direction, starting with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, to create public jobs and assist job creation by private sector businesses adding up to 4.3 million jobs created.

Democracy Corps pollsters released findings on June 11 from a focus group of 32 Ohio swing voters who had been or were now unemployed. While the majority of them did not like Romney's arrogance,

they believed he would do better for the economy. Yet they wanted Obama to continue as President. They were angry about possible cuts to Social Security and Medicare. The statement they responded to most strongly in the affirmative, "the middle class has taken it on the chin for years" ended by supporting an increase on taxes above \$200,000.

In Tucson Arizona, a Democrat has retained Gabby Giffords seat in the special election despite the fact that there are more registered Republicans than Democrats in the district. A team of 500 volunteers including many from labor led an intensive door knocking campaign. They also found voters angry about possible cuts in Medicare and Social Security

This shows that when undecided voters understand how shrinking government and giving tax breaks to the rich endangers the programs and needs that affect them most, they change their mind.

On August 11, the national AFL CIO has called for a mass gathering in the swing state of Pennsylvania, on the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum, where they will roll out a "Working People's Program" for this election which will serve as the basis for discussion and voter turnout.

And, on July 24 actions will be held by low wage workers across the country initiated by SEIU around the theme "The 99% needs a raise." [[www.99uniting.org/minimumwage](http://www.99uniting.org/minimumwage)]

Not one jobs bill has passed under Republican control of the House. There are five jobs bills now before congress that candidates should be held accountable to support: This was sent out by Scott Marshall yesterday: The American Jobs Act; America Needs a Raise; the Bring Jobs Home Act & Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act; the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century transportation bill; and the most comprehensive is the Rebuild America Act introduced by Sen. Harkin and Rep DeLauro.

The polls continue to show this a very close race for President, very close race for control of the Senate, and many close races that will determine the balance of power in the House of Representatives and in many state houses. With an all-out united movement, it is possible to overcome the odds and have a victory against tea party politics across the board.

### **There is a plan to overcome the massive disinformation.**

Not only are AFL CIO unions pledged to mobilize 400,000 volunteers and not only is SEIU pledged to mobilize 200,000 volunteers, but NAACP, NOW, NCLR, Youth Voter League, the American Dream Movement, MoveOn LGBT organizations, Alliance for Retired Americans, League of Conservation Voters and many others are gearing up to an unprecedented neighbor to neighbor conversation about the meaning and choice of this election, and why everyone has to know their rights and turn out to vote.

Labor 2012 is gearing up now. Many unions, like the IAM, are adopting new technology that can also be used for general rapid response, with e-notebooks for phone banks and social media on-line. They are also fielding union members as candidates for state legislature in a number of states with an eye toward electing workers to Congress in the future.

The significance of personal contact with union households is shown by the fact that in 2008 seniors as a whole voted in majority for McCain, but seniors who were union retirees voted for Obama in the same percentage as union members overall, as a result of discussing the issues from a pro-worker union perspective.

An all-out project of massive voter contact is the only way to overcome the misinformation and disinformation flooding into workers' homes through TV ads. It is the only way to overcome the odds of voter suppression and unlimited spending. It is the only way to insure the biggest voter turnout ever

Voter turnout can win this election. It is the best way to discuss what the Affordable Care Act means to each voter as a counter to the barrage of lies against the bill that will be coming from Republicans who plan on attempting to repeal the bill if they get control of Congress in November.

As Communists, we can make our biggest contribution by giving our complete and undivided energies to taking part in this historic voter mobilization of union members and all the core forces for social change.

**One reason that the corporate right wing is pulling out all the stops in this election is that they see the handwriting on the wall.**

The demographics of our country are rapidly changing. We are becoming more diverse. We are becoming younger. Attitudes are shifting more progressive. Class consciousness is on the rise.

For the first time new births are no longer majority white. The Mexican American and Latino population, centered in major metropolises in the Southwest, is growing in cities and towns across the country. Harlem, where Rep. Charles Rangel just won a hotly contested primary, now has a large number of Latino voters.

National Journal reports that "minorities now make up at least one third of the population in more than 200 Congressional Districts. That number is steadily climbing across much of the country." (The Next America , Spring 2012). The Latino population grew rapidly throughout the country in the last decade, with the fastest increase in the Southeast and Midwest.

The Latino Engagement Fund is focused on four Senate races where the Latino vote could make the difference in Florida, Nevada, New Mexico and Virginia.

The youth at Take Back America refer to the emerging majorities as "Rising America" voters including Latino, African American, Asian and Native American. These voters all heavily favor the re-election of President Obama. Along with the labor movement, women and youth, this adds a new dimension to our concept of the core forces for social change.

The shifting demographics and the new dynamics among the working class that are resulting require a thorough study on our part.

The workshop on the War on Women at Take Back America showed a united front in the face of an all out assault on women's reproductive rights and health care and wage equity. The fact that the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act today is a big victory.

In the Michigan legislature the V word was vagina which a female legislator was censured for saying while reading a constituent's letter. But for women the V word is Vote. This weekend's NOW convention is aimed at firing up a massive voter education and turnout effort that can make the difference in the outcome of this election at every level in conjunction with the mobilization of labor union women through Labor 2012 and African American, Latino, Native American and Asian women

as part of their community mobilizations.

"Our people didn't vote in 2010 and the Tea Party flooded into Congress and State Legislatures in the swing states," said NOW president Terry O'Neill. This year a targeted approach will be made to the 55 million single women eligible to vote, who in large majority favor President Obama.

The youth vote was decisive in 2008, and it has the potential to be decisive again this year if the youth come out to vote. Obama's support for marriage equality, for extending low interest student loans, and for the DREAMers are building up momentum. However, organizing on the ground is necessary. Karl Rove noted lowered youth enthusiasm and established XG (Crossroads Generation) with a budget of \$750,000 for web ads in swing states, hoping to attract 40% of the youth vote to put Romney over the top.

The Obama campaign itself is creating the space for specific constituency organizing with a dozen committees anyone can join on-line including African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Environmentalists, Jewish Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, LGBT, Military/Veterans, Native Americans, People of Faith, Seniors, Women and Young Americans for Obama.

Another factor that can help turn out the vote is the growing number of progressive candidates running for state legislature and congress. The Progressive Congress Table endorsed 51 candidates in 21 states, 19 of whom are running in primaries.

Progressive Majority has signed up 234 progressive candidates for local and state office around the country. There are a growing number of union members running for office in addition, all of which opens up possibilities for new political formations in the future.

As well there are progressive ballot questions in some states and cities addressing tax the rich and some to bring the troops home and allocate that money for the needs of cities.

## **The Party and YCL**

The intensive and single minded voter education and turnout campaign we are called upon to carry out starts now. If the health care fight in 2009 and the Republican sweep in 2010 told us anything it is that the extreme right wing will step into any void and poison people's thinking.

If we put our strategy and tactics into practice, and take part in this momentous effort to the fullest extent that we can in neighborhoods and workplaces across this country with our allies we can inspire those we have worked with to come to a club meeting and check out the Communist Party and YCL. They will want to find out more about the leadership and the ability to win for the working class that they see.

Our policy may seem like common sense, but we cannot take it for granted. We have arrived at our position through the best possible scientific examination of the balance of forces and assessment of how to achieve the necessary level of unity against racism, bigotry and hate to move our communities and country forward on behalf of all working people. We have taken to heart the message of Ana Maria Prestes of the Communist Party of Brazil who told us at our national conference that the peace loving peoples of the world are counting on the re-election of President Barack Obama.

The Trayvon Martin Freedom Voter Camp initiated by the YCL is a tremendous contribution, in the

heart of one of the most critical states, making sure the democratic right to cast a vote is afforded to everyone who is eligible. This example and experience can help to build the YCL and the youth movement nationally.

The Political Action Commission is publishing UNITY e-newsletter the first week of each month. We hope that this is useful and that you will forward it widely to comrades, friends and contacts. Contributions of articles or links to your local fliers are welcome. The commission is also keeping in touch with districts and is prepared to help where need be. Each commission agendas usually includes a report from one district which has been mutually helpful.

**During this summer and fall we have a tall order to fill.**

First is to help build up the success of Labor 2012 and other similar efforts to get out the vote and to lay the foundation for ongoing organizing.

Next is to build up the readership of the People's World and Political Affairs. One way is to keep a couple of the People's World promo cards and printouts of particular articles in your pocket and take the opportunity where appropriate to invite people you get to know while campaigning to sign up for headlines by e-mail or "like" the Face Book page. Along with that goes sending in stories about the elections in your area so the People's World can become a prime source for grass roots information and ideas. And asking those who read the paper to become one of those who shares articles on Face Book.

Then I would argue that this is the time to think through how to build clubs that are focused on a small geographical area so that it is possible to make a significant impact in the election there now and continue on an ongoing basis in the struggles and lives of the community. This is what Gus Hall used to call sinking roots in the working class, a concept that fits as much today as it did in the past, and can be applied in combination with new technology. And the concept of triple concentration developed by Henry Winston with special approach to a few key working class African American and Latino communities for building Communist Party and YCL clubs, fits as the National Board schedules a series of agenda items addressing the equality questions and the elections.

We have members now in many states where we have not been organized for some time. This summer and fall is a tremendous opportunity for our Party and YCL comrades to become more deeply immersed with the labor movement and its community form Working America as participants in the door knocking and phone banking and rallies and other actions that will be organized. This election project is an opportunity to assist new members and new clubs to become involved, to learn from the experience, to contribute toward the results and toward our assessments and development of policy. It is an opportunity to sink roots in the working class and grow.

We can do no less if we are to be the growing and thriving organization that our country demands in these remarkable times.

A formulation by Van Jones of Rebuild the Dream is very appropriate as we approach July 4. Quoting the Emma Lazarus poem at the base of the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired your poor your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" he concludes that it is not possible to be a patriot and be anti-immigrant. Taking that further we can say it is not possible to be anti-worker, racist, anti-woman, anti-gay and be a true patriot. Building the Communist Party and YCL and defeating the anti-democratic extreme right wing in this election is, in reality, the highest form of patriotism to uphold the promise of our country.