

**Subject:** UNION CITY! 06/26/2009

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**Date:** Fri, 26 Jun 2009 05:03:59 -0500

**To:** newsletter@progressivemaryland.org

# UNION CITY



## METRO WASHINGTON COUNCIL NEWS, AFL-CIO

### TODAY'S LABOR NEWS

- [Huge Crowd Demands Health Care Now](#)
- [Live From The Health Care Reform Rally](#)
- [689 Transit Operator Memorial Today; Jeter Calls for Safety Measures](#)
- [Weekend Labor History](#)

### ON THE LINE

*Today, June 26*

9:45A: [Labor On The Air: Latest Local Labor News Updates](#)

10A: [AFGE's "Inside Government" radio show](#): the ongoing fight

against the Pentagon's misguided pay-for-performance system

*Saturday, June 27 6P:*

[NoVa Launches Local](#)

[CLUW Chapter](#)

Friday, June 26, 2009

### HUGE CROWD DEMANDS HEALTH CARE NOW:

The debate over healthcare hit the streets yesterday when a crowd of nearly 10,000 rocked the U.S. Capitol with chants of "We Want Healthcare" to the tune of Queen's "We Will



Rock You." The midday sun blazed overhead and speakers called for healthcare reform as the colorful sea of activists swamped Upper Senate Park in one of the biggest and liveliest labor demonstrations in years, organized by Health Care for America Now, a broad-based labor-community coalition. "This is our year!" thundered AFSCME President Gerry McEntee and the sense of urgency was palpable in the crowd that had gathered from up and down the East Coast and out into the Midwestern states, rolling in on buses all morning. "With this health care system, if you don't have a job, you're gonna die," said Marisol Marte, chairperson of ACORN in the South Bronx, which holds the dubious distinction of having the highest asthma rate in the nation. Susie Taylor, a small business owner in Washington, told the crowd how she'd been forced to



stop paying for her employees' health insurance when healthcare premiums skyrocketed. "This is not how we want to run our business or treat people who work for us," she said. "There is a



whole undercurrent of people you don't know about," said Reverend Andrew Stephens of Nashville. "I'm a pastor, I know them. The health care forms are more complicated in places that need more help; we're going to sick workplaces and sick schools." Amid the placards saying "No Health Care Profiteers" and "Everybody In Nobody Out,"

doctors' white coats gleamed in the sunlight. "We stand in solidarity with our own patients. We have their back," said a passionate Dr. Lydia Vaias, founder of the 215,000-member National Physicians Alliance, disputing the American Medical Association's (AMA) claim to speak for all doctors when it opposes the proposed government-sponsored health care plan. After rousing speeches from workers, small business owners, political leaders and union leaders, thousands of the fired-up activists marched on the Capitol to meet with their elected representatives to demand health care reform.

- report by Julia Shindel; photos by Adam Wright

**LIVE FROM THE HEALTH CARE REFORM RALLY:** Seth Michaels posted live reports Thursday via Twitter from the massive health care reform rally and lobby day on the AFL-CIO Now Blog. Here are highlights:

- Working America represents at hc rally.
- The rally starts to convene beneath the Capitol Dome.
- Looks like a lot of workers want real health care reform...
- APWU members joining the crowd in our fight for real health care reform.
- Sen. Schumer points to Capitol: "we can't do this alone. We need to do this together. Hold everybody in that building's feet to the fire".
- We're hearing from hc consumers, faith leaders, sm business owners hurt by hc costs.
- Sen. Schumer says "time for greatest country in the world to have greatest healthcare in the world".



Rep. Schwartz: health care "has always been a moral responsibility-but it's increasingly an economic imperative".

AFT members at the rally.

Sen. Sherrod Brown: "special interests, health ins industry won't hijack this process" "must, will have strong public option".

Larry Cohen of CWA: "a united movement to change our country, a united movement for health care for all" crowd



loves it.

Rep. Becerra: "can we make sure that you and I, whether rich or poor, can get affordable hc for our children and loved ones? Yes we can!".

- Sen. Menendez: "no one should have to choose between medicine and food".
- AFSCME Pres. McEntee: "this is our year!".
- AFSCME members watch as Pres. McEntee speaks.
- Nearly 10,000 people are here - a big, enthusiastic crowd filling the entire park.
- AFLCIO exec VP Holt Baker: "HC w/o cost control will not work. HC w/o a quality public option to lower costs is unacceptable".
- A sea of red CWA t-shirts.
- RT @SenSherrrodBrown Check out Sen. Brown's speech at today's HCAN rally -- thousands gathered to fight for H/C reform.
- Rep. Sestak explains that he got into politics to make sure everyone had health care like him.
- Sen. Specter agrees, health care is a right.



*photos: Adam Wright*

### 689 TRANSIT OPERATOR MEMORIAL TODAY; JETER CALLS FOR SAFETY



**MEASURES:** A memorial service will be held today for Jeanice McMillan, the Local 689 member and train operator who died in the crash on Monday. The service is at the Temple of Praise (700 Southern Avenue, Washington, DC), from 11A to 1P. Condolences or donations in McMillan's name can be sent to the Local 689 Union Hall at 2701 Whitney Place, Forestville, MD 20747. At a press conference outside Metro headquarters Tuesday, Local 689 President Jackie Jeter (l) said "This was not supposed to happen. There are safety mechanisms in place on every train, no matter what series the cars, to keep this from happening. As

president of Local 689 and a former driver, the fact that the train did not [have these safety mechanisms] is a serious concern. The trains Series 1000 to 6000 all have an automatic locking mechanism, and I know this for a fact because I used to operate a 1000. Several years ago the older models were enhanced, but no matter the series, one of those three braking systems should have kept this from happening," Jeter said. Jeter also called for the Series 1000 cars to be "bellied" between newer cars until it's determined what caused the accident. Click here for reports in the [Washington Post](#), and [New York Times](#). *photo courtesy Washington Informer*

**WEEKEND LABOR HISTORY:** Members of the American Railway Union, led by Eugene V. Debs, refuse to handle Pullman cars, in solidarity with Pullman strikers. Two dozen strikers were killed over the course of the strike (**6/26/1894**); The Industrial Workers of the World (below), also known as the "Wobblies," is founded at a convention in Chicago.

The Wobbly motto: "An injury to one is an injury to all." (6/27/1905); Congress passes the National Labor Relations Act, creating the structure for collective bargaining in the United States (6/27/1935); A 26-day strike of New York City hotels by 26,000 workers - the first such walkout in 50 years - ends with a five-year contract calling for big wage and benefit gains (6/27/1985); A.E. Staley locks out 763 workers in Decatur, Ill. The



lockout was to last two and one-half years (6/27/1993); Birthday of machinist Matthew Maguire, who many believe first suggested Labor Day. Others believe it was Peter McGuire, a carpenter (6/28/1850); President Grover Cleveland signs legislation declaring Labor Day an official U.S. holiday (6/28/1894); The federal government sues the Teamsters to force reforms on the union, the nation's largest. The following March, the two sides sign a consent decree requiring direct election of the union's president and creation of an Independent Review Board (6/28/1988); More info & ammo for unionists is available online from [Union Communication Services](#).

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Published by the Metropolitan Washington Council, an AFL-CIO "Union City" Central Labor Council whose 200 affiliated union locals represent 150,000 area union members. JOSLYN N. WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT.

Story suggestions, event announcements, campaign reports, Letters to the Editor and other material are welcome, subject to editing for clarity and space, and should be directed to:

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