

Executive Vice President

Report October 09

Submitted by Stan Wylie

I would be remiss to not take a moment to recognize the passing of Louise Caddell who until last month was the VP of District 7. While I can't say I knew Louise for a very long time but I have known her long enough to know she was a very strong willed woman with strong southern roots. She could also be funny as hell if she wanted to. Louise has been involved with the labor movement from the 1960's so for over 40 years she worked hard for working people. Louise has a long history of successes behind her that will always be there as a reminder of her hard work.

Healthcare is still on the front burner... Jeanine Maury and I were asked to go to DC October 6th thru October 8th to lobby our Senators and Congressman on health care reform for the CWA and the AFL-CIO. I was very excited about going and being able to have real discussions with our Representatives about this issue. We met with Maria Cantwell who is on the Senate Finance Committee and at the start of the meeting she was very frank. She said she knows the bill coming from the Finance Committee is not good. She indicated if she had to vote on that bill as final passage that she could not do it. She explained her amendment that was passed in regards to the states offering the public option. She indicated that amendment was not good and is built on a terrible framework. She indicated she did it too force the hand of the conservatives on the committee because they wanted to introduce an amendment for the public option with triggers etc... Senator Cantwell felt that would be far worse than her amendment but she did not want them to be able to say there was not a public option in the bill. Her goal is to get through committee then under reconciliation to incorporate pieces of the House bills and the Health Committee bill to have a final product that has a strong public option and ensures real reform.

Senator Murray came and addressed the group at the AFL CIO she discussed the importance of health care reform and is a supporter of the same issues the CWA would like to see addressed in the final reform package. We also met directly with her staff and had further discussion with them.

We met with Norm Dix and Adam Smith. Congressman Dix seemed pretty much on board with our goals but honestly he seemed a bit more interested in discussing fishing then health care reform. His staff though was pretty reassuring that Congressman Dix was involved in the reform process and also supported the goals of the CWA.

Adam Smith met with us as well and for those of you who live in his district you may want to give him a call. Congressman Smith does support health care reform and he thinks it is important. He has some concerns about the Medicare reimbursement rates which we do agree on. We don't necessarily agree reform itself should not pass if that piece is not completely resolved in the legislation. There is language addressing it in a few of the bills floating around so I think in the end it will get fixed. The bigger issue

with Congressman Smith is his desire to resolve the budget issues while reforming healthcare. While we agree that reform should not add to the debt and actually cutting some overall debt would be good he seems to want to fix the entire budget while reforming health care. We had a pretty straight conversation on this and while I admire his ambition I don't think the 2 issues can be resolved while reforming healthcare. There are plenty of other places that cuts could be made like defense, housing, etc... that could help resolve the budget issue. But trying to do it all on the back of health care I can't see how that is possible. I reminded him the bill on the table is what he is going to have to support or not and if we can get a bill that does not add to deficit and provides meaningful reform our expectation would be that he support it.

So all in all the entire trip to D.C. I felt was very productive and meaningful. I should mention a couple of other interesting tid bits from the trip. While we were in Senator Cantwell's office the phones were ringing off the hook. Everyone was calling in regarding healthcare. It was interesting to see they had two folks answering and let me tell you they took at least 100 calls just in the time we were waiting. When we flew to D.C. Congressman Reichart was on the same plane. He was in first class. When we flew back Senator Murray was on that flight. She flew coach middle seat. I thought that was interesting. Reichart is a fiscal conservative so I assume he must have cashed in some mileage points...

Since my last report we have kind of figured out that staying in our current building may be somewhat unrealistic in the long run due to costs. Even if our landlord cut our current lease by 40% it would still be not so practical to stay. If we can cut our costs by 50% it would obviously free up quite a bit of our resources to continue to represent our members while allowing us to continue the charitable work and important legislative work as well as put a stronger focus on organizing.

On that note I want to give kudos's to the budget committee they met last week and were able to get to a balanced budget for the upcoming year. So hopefully we won't suffer many cuts and will be able to make this budget work. Again it was a difficult task and they did a good job.

We had another meeting at MV. Another good day to address members concerns and again some issues were brought to our attention that we did not know about and I believe will be relatively easy to address and fix. We will schedule some stewards training soon.