

## **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **Legislative & Political Action Strategies**

The following excerpt was read and approved following discussion at the April 2005 Longshore Caucus:

“...Individual participation by members stepping up to the call involved over 300 people throughout our International Union. The faces representing the ILWU message learned firsthand the perils of American union families who have lost everything at the hands of this new world government.

However, for as many things that were accomplished from our 2004 political action efforts, the true challenge and work has just begun. It is no longer time to look back because 2006 mid-term elections and the 2008 contract negotiations are squarely before us.

Over the next 36 months the Union must create a multi-layered political action strategy that includes the following:

1. Use our rich history to create a platform for “A Call to Conscience”. This format of position paper would define ILWU positions and also be used as a tool for coalition building (examples of this format are included at the conclusion of this report).
2. Continue fundraising for our International Political Action Fund. Fundraising should take place in April and May of each year.
3. Educate the members as to the issues and the value of both International Political Action funds as well as Local Political Action accounts.
4. Concentrate on continuing to build our district councils and work to coordinate strategies of communication that involves all divisions of the ILWU.
5. Coordinate a political action, legislative and PR campaign strategy.
6. Start to build international and national understanding with other progressive groups to build coalitions that share common interests.
7. Build an apparatus for state and local politics through the District Council that resembles our national Legislative Committee.
8. Expand the size of the national Legislative Committee to take advantage of the new relationships made during the 2004 presidential elections.
9. Set a 20-month midterm strategy that is meant to roll into a 36-month contract strategy.
10. Create an ILWU 10-point program capitalizing on the AFL-CIO’s 10-point program’s strengths, and building up its weaknesses.
11. Preparation of a 30-minute DVD for all locals explaining the importance of political action and coordination with the Education Committee to create a political action booklet.

With the ILWU firmly implanted at the very center of the world's economic reshuffling, it is critical that we remember that during the 2002 contract negotiations Republican staffers asked the Legislative Committee why our Union should make more than Wal-Mart workers? Our decisions over the next 36-months and how we position ourselves may very well determine what will remain of democracy and union rights. As Harry said at the conclusion of his article, "Our Union and our freedom smashed until some courageous children of our children's children shed the blood to build it up again." This statement explains why political action has become a matter of life and death. Harry Bridges' statement made in the 40s was referring to fascism and imperialism during the war. Sixty years later, the attacks on democracy and unions are no longer from far away foreign lands, but instead coming from our own shore."

### **Legislative Committee Recommendations:**

In addition to the above eleven (11) recommendations approved at the April 2005 Caucus, the Committee recommends that the Caucus adopt the following four (5) recommendations:

1. That the newly elected Coast Committee reappoints a Legislative Committee of its choosing and the co-chairs of this committee consist of one (1) member from the north and one (1) member from the south. It is recognized that in order to utilize our most experienced Legislative Committee members, Caucus status is not required to serve on this committee. It was also discussed and left at the new Coast Committee's discretion to consider combining the Legislative Committee and the Port Security Committee.
2. That we create a program for a legislative/political action strategy working through 2009.
3. That we design a contract strategy in preparation for the 2008 Contract negotiations.
4. That we create a PowerPoint for local memberships and district councils to foster and build participation in the political action process. Within this PowerPoint, an explanation of the reasons for shifting from federal elections to state and local emphasis shall be presented. As a priority, pertinent contract issues must also be outlined at the federal, state and local level.
5. That the Coast Committee make funds available for sending members to key states in an attempt to take back the House in this November 2006 mid-term election cycle.

Fraternally Submitted,



THE ILWU LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

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