Labor of love: Local 13 Vice President Jesse ‘Nacho’ Enriquez (left) stands with LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn. Labor Day is usually a holiday for workers. This year’s march and picnic in Wilmington, CA was replaced with service to the community. ILWU volunteers suited-up and masked-up to join with other LA County union members to distribute food to thousands of local workers who have been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

Annual SoCal Labor Day event shifts focus from celebration to service

Labor Day in the Southern California harbor area has always meant one thing—a Labor Day march through downtown Wilmington followed by a picnic at Banning Park. But this year there were no early-morning breakfast burritos at the Longshoremen’s Memorial Hall sponsored by the Southern California Pensioners. The school marching bands, union banners, floats, classic cars and the thousands of proud union members walking side-by-side with their fellow workers were nowhere to be seen on the streets of Wilmington. There were no hamburgers or hot dogs served at Banning Park and no Brian Young Blues Station to entertain the crowd.

For the first time in 41 years, the annual event was canceled. Instead, the unions of the LA/Long Beach Harbor Labor Coalition, including the ILWU, the Labor Community Services, and the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, suited-up and went to work to put on a food drive to help area families impacted by the COVID-19. The pandemic continues to spread through communities, because the federal government response has failed to meet the challenge posed by the virus.

US Representatives Maxine Waters and Nanette Barragan, State Senator Maria Elena Durazo, Supervisors Janice Hahn and Hilda Solis and Los Angeles Councilmember Joe Buscaino were among the elected officials at the event.

Local 13 President Ramon Ponce de Leon spoke briefly at the event. “On a day that the nation celebrates Labor, Labor is giving back to the community,” he said. “The Good Lord said ‘It is more blessed to give than receive.’ God bless you, brothers and sisters.”

The union-hosted food distribution helped more than 4,500 families, or 18,000 individuals, impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

“The workers in the harbor decided to turn this into a day of helping,” said Supervisor Hahn. “These workers who deserve a day off decided to work today because many people have been hurt by this pandemic. It speaks to the generosity and hospitality of unions and workers in the harbor area.”
Amercia is in crisis and Donald Trump and the Republican Party have shown that they aren’t up to the task. The working class of this country cannot afford another four years of their failed leadership.

At the time of this writing, over 200,000 lives have been lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to some forecasting models, that number may unfortunately double by the end of the year. Trump’s response to the crisis has been to deny, deflect and divide. At a recent rally in Ohio, Trump told a crowd of his admirers that coronavirus “affects almost nobody.”

This administration has failed to get the pandemic under control because they have refused to follow the science, science-based health policies that have been successful throughout the industrialized world. Because of Trump’s failure, workers have paid with their lives and their jobs. We cannot allow this to continue.

Wildfires are raging throughout the Western United States with dozens of lives lost, thousands of homes destroyed, and over 5 million acres of land burned so far this summer.

Hurricanes are currently pummeling the southeastern states and are seemingly increasing in frequency, size, and damage every year. Climate change is real. But like the administration’s response to the pandemic, their policy is to deny the science as the costs to workers, the economy, and the planet grows.

And if enough negative events haven’t occurred already in 2020, imagine Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—a champion of gender equality, women’s interests, and civil rights—has passed away at the age of 87.

President Trump and his sycophants have quickly attempted to take advantage of this tragic loss by actively working to ram in another extremist Supreme Court justice confirmation with fewer than 50 days left until the U.S. Presidential election. These actions are in stark contrast to the GOP’s position in 2016 when they refused to confirm President Obama’s Supreme Court pick because the country was only 200 days away from an election.

On March 16, 2016, Senator Mitch McConnell stated on Fox News Sunday “The Senate has a role to play here. The president nominates, we decide to confirm. We think the important principle in the middle of this presidential year is that the American people need to weigh in and decide who’s going to make this decision. Not this lame-duck president, not the way out the door, but the next president.”

Throughout the last four years, Senator McConnell and the rest of the duplicitous party hacks all have proven that the only principle they stand for is power. It is another clear reason why your vote matters so much this year and why this election is so important to working-class people.

Don’t despair about the Supreme Court

In preparation for this article, I came across a very interesting op-ed from historian Howard Zinn published in The Progressive magazine on October 21, 2005. It was entitled “Don’t Despair about the Supreme Court.” In his essay, Zinn provides strong historical evidence to formulate the following sound conclusions regarding Supreme Court appointments. His conclusions are highly relevant today and provide me with hope.

He wrote, “There is enormous hypocrisy surrounding the pious verbatimion of the Constitution and the ‘rule of law.’ The Constitution, like the Bible, is inflexibly flexible and is used to serve the political needs of the moment. When the country was in economic crisis and turmoil in the Thirties and capitalism needed to be saved from the anger of the poor and hungry and unemployed, the Supreme Court was willing to stretch to infinitesimal the constitutional right to regulate interstate commerce. It decided that the national government, desperate to regulate farm production could tell a family farmer what to grow on his tiny piece of land.

“When the Constitution gets in the way of a war, it is ignored. When the Supreme Court was faced, during Vietnam, with a suit by soldiers refusing to go, claiming there had been no declaration of war by Congress, as the Constitution required, the soldiers could not get four Supreme Court justices to agree to even hear the case. When, during World War I, Congress ignored the First Amendment’s right to free speech by passing legislation to prohibit criticism of the war, the imprisonment of conscientious objectors under this law was upheld unanimously by the Supreme Court, which included two persuasively liberal and learned justices: Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis.

“It would be naïve to depend on the Supreme Court to defend the rights of poor people, women, people of color, dissenters of all kinds. Those rights only come alive when citizens organize, protest, demonstrate, strike, boycott, rebel, and violate the law in order to uphold justice.”

The Constitution gave no rights to working people, no right to work less than twelve hours a day, no right to a living wage, no right to safe working conditions. Workers had to organize, go on strike, defy the law, the courts, the police, create a great movement which won the eight-hour day, and caused such commotion that Congress was forced to pass a minimum wage law, and Social Security, and unemployment insurance.

The Brancen decision on school desegregation did not come from a sudden realization of the Supreme Court that this is what the Fourteenth Amendment called for. After all, it was the same Fourteenth Amendment that had been cited in the Plessy case upholding racial segregation. It was the initiative of brave families in the South—along with the fear by the government, oppressed with the Cold War, that it was losing the hearts and minds of colored people all over the world—that brought a sudden enlightenment to the Court.

“The right of a woman to an abortion did not depend on the Supreme Court decision in Roe vs. Wade. It was won before that decision, all over the country by grassroots agitation that forced states to recognize the right. If the American people, who by a great majority favor that right, insist on it, act on it, no Supreme Court decision can take it away.

“Let us not be disconsolate over the increasing control of the court system by the right-wing. The courts have never been on the side of justice, only moving a few degrees one way or the other, unless pushed by the people. Those words engraved in the marble of the Supreme Court, ‘Equal Justice Before the Law,’ have always been a sham.

“No Supreme Court, liberal or conservative, will stop the war in Iraq, or redistribute the wealth of this country, or establish free medical care for every human being. Such fundamental social change will depend, the experience of the past suggests, on the actions of an aroused citizenry, demanding that the promise of the Declaration of Independence—an equal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—he fulfilled.”

The time is now

The time is now for all working-class people to step up and vote. The stakes have never been higher for organized labor or for American workers. High voter turnout by the working class will best protect our collective interests and can bring about the significant and positive changes that are required in this country.

Your vote in the 2020 election will determine if the United States rejoins the global community in properly addressing climate change instead of denying scientific evidence. Your vote in the 2020 election will determine if police brutality and systemic racism end in the United States instead of having the federal government promote a false “law and order” fear-based narrative.

Your vote in the 2020 election will determine if corporations and the 1% start paying their fair share of taxes. Workers simply cannot afford another four years of the status quo. We cannot afford another four years of extremist, anti-union federal judge appointments by the GOP. We cannot afford to have the many gains won by working people in the New Deal lost to corporate greed and special interest groups. We cannot afford another four years of denying climate change. We cannot afford to continue to lose innocent American lives to the COVID-19 virus because of an inefficient and incompetent federal response.

In 2020, we don’t have the luxury of being apathetic when it comes to politics. There must be a massive and historic voter turnout in the 2020 election to ensure a “peaceful transition of governmental power.” Once that occurs we can all focus on the important work of rebuilding America.

As Susan B. Anthony once said, “Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it.” In solidarity, Ed Ferris

ILWU TITLED OFFICERS
William E. Adams, President
Bobovy Olivera, Jr., Vice President, Mainland
Edwin Ferris, Secretary-Treasurer

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#blacklivesmatter

SECRETARY-TREASURER’S REPORT

Your vote has never meant more

Your vote has never meant more
Su voto jamás ha importado tanto como ahora

A mérica está en crisis y Donald Trump y el Partido Republicano han demostrado que no dan el ancho. Los trabajadores de este país no pueden aguantar su falta de liderazgo por otros cuatro años.

En el momento de esta redacción, más de 200,000 vidas se habían perdido debido a la pandemia del COVID-19. Aunque algunos modelos de pronóstico, esa cifra desgraciadamente podrá doblarse para fin de este año. La respuesta de Trump a la crisis ha sido negar que existe, desviar la atención y fomentar la división. En un minuto reciente en Ohio, Trump se dirigió a un multitud de sus admiradores y les dijo que el coronavirus "casi no afecta a nadie."

Esta administración ha fallado en controlar la pandemia porque se han negado a seguir las políticas de salud sensatas basadas en la ciencia que han tenido éxito en todo el mundo industrializado. Debido al fracaso de Trump, los trabajadores han pagado con sus vidas y sus empleos. No podemos permitir que esto continúe.

Los incendios forestales están causando grandes estragos en los estados del oeste, resultando en docenas de vidas perdidas, miles de hogares destruídos y más de 5 millones de acres quemadas en lo que va del verano. Los graderíos realmente están golpeando a los estados del sureste y al sureste están aumentando, sufrimiento que causan cada año. El cambio climático es real, pero a igual que la pandemia, su política es de la que llega a las personas que han sido golpeadas por la pandemia, su política es la de negar que dicen la ciencia mientras que los daños a los trabajadores, la economía y el planeta van creciendo.

Ahora es el momento para que todos los trabajadores tomen un paso adelante y voten. Nunca ha habido tanto en juego.

La Corte Suprema de EU es una de las instituciones más respetadas en el país, y su próxima elección es tan importante para los trabajadores como para su familia. No tenemos que esperar que la elección sea un momento en que los derechos de los trabajadores se vean amenazados.

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WASHINGTON AREA DISTRICT COUNCIL ENDORSEMENTS

State District Races

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<th>House/Senate</th>
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OREGON AREA DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Attorney General: Ellen Rosenblum
Secretary of State: Shemia Fagan
Treasurer: Tobias Read

State Senate:
- SD 5: Melissa T Cribbins
- SD 22: Lew Frederick
- SD 25: Chris Gorsek

State Representative:
- HD 9: Cal Mukomoto
- HD 10: David Gomberg
- HD 20: Paul Evans
- HD 24: Lynnette Shaw
- HD 25: Ramiro Navarro Jr
- HD 26: Courtney Neron
- HD 31: Brad Witt
- HD 35: Dacia Grayber

President / Vice President: Joe Biden / Kamala Harris

L.A. COUNTY SUPERVISORS
- District 3: Herb Wesson
- District 7: Patrick Castellanos
- District 10: Mark Ridley-Thomas

LA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
- District 2: Cindy Allen
- District 6: Dee Andrews

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL
- District 4: David Ryu
- District 8: Mike Bonin

LONG BEACH CITY COUNCIL
- District 2: Vivian Malahuwu

LONG BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
- District 2: Vivian Malahuwu

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
- District 2: Erik Miller
ILWU join millions of Americans mourning the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Trump nominee Amy Coney Barrett a threat to the Affordable Care Act, healthcare for millions of workers at risk

“When on behalf of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU), it is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I join the millions of people across the country as we mourn the death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Part of our democracy has died today,” said ILWU International President Willie Adams in a statement released on September 19.

San Pedro vigil honors RBG
Scores of people gathered in San Pedro on September 21 to honor Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg with a candlelight vigil.

The gathering was one of many across the country to celebrate the life of Ginsburg, the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

Ginsburg has become an icon in recent years and was the most prominent member on the Court.

Speakers included LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn, Assembly member Patrick O’Donnell, LA Councilmember Joe Buscaino, LA Harbor Commissioner Diane Middleton and ILWU Local 26 President Luisa Gratz.

Middleton said that Ginsburg served as a role model for women.

“When I graduated law school in 1971, there were four women in my class,” she said. “Today in law school, women make up 40 to 50 percent of the classes. When I arrived in San Pedro in 1978, there were only six women on the waterfront. Justice Ginsburg stood for all of these women. It wasn’t just about her landmark dissents; it was about what she showed us that could be possible.”

Gratz challenged the crowd, which included many ILWU members, to continue Ginsburg’s fight.

“While what is going on in the Supreme Court today is the result of our silence over the last few decades. If we don’t organize, we will live with the results,” Gratz said. “Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a unique human being. She also was a woman. She had integrity, courage, brilliance, tenacity, humility, intelligence, and was driven by factual analysis, and a sense that drove her perspective in the name of justice for her clients, her country, for the judicial arena, and process we evolved to, and most of all, she knew no men are free unless women are equal without litigation, economic, or structural limitation. She was amazing and unfortunately rare. She left an abyss that many don’t yet understand. She will be and is already missed.”

IN MEMORIUM

Justice Ginsburg passed away on September 18 after a long battle with pancreatic cancer at the age of 87.

Legal trailblazer

Ginsburg was the architect that defined the legal battle for women’s rights in the 1970s when she was a lawyer for the ACLU. In a series of legal cases, Ginsburg advanced the idea that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment covered discrimination based on sex.

Her legal strategy was to bring cases that she could show how such discrimination harmed men because she believed judges would be more likely to find that to be problematic than those that focused solely on the impact to women. Ginsburg’s lawsuits also challenged the norms that defined women’s primary role as caregivers and men’s role as workers outside the home.

In the 1972 case, Charles E. Moritz v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, argued before the 10th Circuit, Ginsburg represented the plaintiff, Charles Moritz. Moritz brought suit after the IRS denied his deduction for the cost of a caregiver for his invalid mother.

The law at the time specifically allowed such a deduction, but only for women and formerly married men.

In 1975, Ginsburg argued the case Weinberger v. Wiesenfeld before the U.S. Supreme Court. Ginsburg represented Stephen Wiesenfeld, a widower and the sole provider for his newborn son. Wiesenfeld sued after he was denied Social Security Survivor’s benefits that were made available to widows but not widowers.

In both Moritz and Weinberger, the courts ruled that the Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

Defender of workers’ rights

Ginsburg was also strong supporter of the rights of workers. In her dissent in the 2018 case of Epic Systems Corp v. Lewis, Ginsburg articulated a fundamental principle of unionism—the strength of workers’ collective power.

She wrote, “For workers striving to gain from their employer’s decent terms and conditions of employment, there is strength in numbers. A single employee, Congress understood, is disarmed in dealing with an employer.”

Ginsburg joined the dissent in Janus v. AFSCME. In that case, the Court’s majority ruled that public employers do not have to pay fees to unions to cover the costs of collective bargaining. The dissent, written by Justice Elena Kagan, criticized the Court for being “black-robed rulers overriding citizens’ choices” by overturning “a decision entrenched in this Nation’s law—and its economic life—for over 40 years. As a result, it prevents the American people, acting through their state and local officials, from making important choices about workplace governance.”

Rush to replace

Immediately after Ginsburg’s death, Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell vowed to confirm a new appointment to the Supreme Court before the November 3rd elections. This rush to fill the vacant seat stands in sharp contrast to the Republican position in 2016 when the GOP-controlled Senate refused to hold a confirmation hearing on Obama’s Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, because the country was nine months away from an election.

Another Trump appointment would cement a 6-3 supermajority for the Republicans on the Supreme Court who are increasingly out-of-step with the majority of American voters. If the nomination goes through, Trump, who lost the popular vote by over 3 million votes, will have appointed one-third of the Court’s nine Justices. George W. Bush, who also lost the popular vote, appointed two Justices.

Healthcare for millions at risk

Trump’s nomination to fill Ginsburg’s seat, Judge Amy Coney Barrett, poses an immediate threat to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the healthcare of millions of Americans. The Supreme Court will review the constitutionality of the ACA this November in the case California v. Texas. If the ACA is invalidated, Americans will lose protections for pre-existing conditions—including those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19—and tens of millions of workers who benefit from 1) financial assistance to obtain coverage, 2) the Medicare expansion provisions of the ACA and 3) those who are allowed to remain on their parent’s plan until the age of 26, are at risk of losing medical coverage in the middle of a pandemic.

continued on page 8
The ILWU's International Executive Board met over Zoom on September 24-25. The Board passed a Statement of Policy defending the United States Postal Service (USPS). The policy calls on Congress to fully fund the USPS, restore the Postal Services’ operational efficiencies that have been undermined by the Trump Administration and conduct a thorough investigation of the management of the USPS to determine if they implemented changes in order to make it more difficult for people to vote by mail in the upcoming election.

**Statement of Policy on the United States Postal Service (USPS)**

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has played a vital role in connecting Americans since the founding of the 13 original colonies. Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 of the United States Constitution empowers Congress to “To establish Post Offices and Post Roads.” The USPS dates back to 1775. It has exclusive access to “letter boxes” (residential and business receptacles for receiving mail) and is obligated to serve all Americans, regardless of geography, at a uniform price and service level.

The USPS is managed by a “Board of Governors” consisting of nine members appointed by the U.S. President with the consent of the Senate, a Postmaster General, and a Deputy Postmaster General. The current Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, has been the CEO of logistic companies and has been a large Republican Party fundraiser.

Under President Trump’s appointees, the management of the USPS has engaged in a concerted effort to hamstring its capacity and efficiency. This year alone, more than 700 high speed sorting machines have been removed from service under the false premise of improving efficiency. Obviously, efficiency and capacity will suffer. Additionally, many mailboxes in towns and cities across the nation have been removed and Postmaster DeJoy has slowed mail delivery by refusing to authorize overtime. DeJoy stated at a U.S. Senate hearing in August that the removal of the high speed sorting machines and mailboxes will stop until after the election in November. He denied that he halted overtime. DeJoy refused to reinstall the sorting machines and mailboxes.

DeJoy’s actions, and the statements of others in the Trump Administration, such as Attorney General William Barr, are intended to support Trump’s unfounded accusations that mail ballots will lead to fraud, thereby giving Trump an excuse to contest the election or question its validity if he loses.

It is imperative that Congress take action to (1) fully fund the USPS, (2) restore the operational capacity and efficiency of the USPS, and (3) conduct a thorough investigation of the management of the USPS as to how they have done Trump’s bidding to tilt the election in his favor.

Statement of Policy on the United States Postal Service (USPS)
The Golden Gate Bridge Labor Coalition fights COVID layoffs

The Golden Gate Bridge Labor Coalition responded with a letter to the District’s Board of Directors asking the District to explore alternatives: “We are aware of the impact that the COVID-19 crisis has had on the traffic on the Golden Gate Bridge as well as the reduced demand for the Bridge District’s bus and ferry service. However, the budget that is being presented creates a severe financial hardship for a considerable number of employees during a time when many working families are struggling to ensure that they stay housed and fed. We are sure that the families keep their head above water,” the letter which was signed by Shane Weinstein, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local #1575 and Marina Secchiato, IBU President and Chair of the Golden Gate Bridge Labor Coalition.

“With the holidays quickly approaching, the timing of the General Manager’s letter regarding the WARN Act Notice is untimely and insensitive,” the letter read. “Furthermore, our hard-won and well-deserved Working-Families’ Act Notice to 185 workers who run the buses and ferries between the North Bay and San Francisco. Layoffs could begin as soon as November if federal aid isn’t forth coming to offset the lost revenue caused by the COVID-19 crisis the District said.

The Golden Gate Bridge Labor Coalition would consider economically ruinous layoffs of our rank-and-file workers who made the District the great agency it is today.”

The letter asked Board to explore using Federal Transit Administration (FTA) capital project grant funds to be used for operating expenses as permitted by the CARES Act or to tap into the $207 million in the District Reserve Fund.

“As your labor partners we commit to working with the District to reach a reasonable objective that meets the operational needs of the District, while at the same time helping working families survive this pandemic crisis,” the letter concludes.