

## Gerard Urges Delegates to Seize the Moment Challenge Exploitation of Global Capital

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for us to go on  
the offense.”

**D**eclaring that “The wind is at our backs -- now is our time to seize the moment” and secure a better life for our children and grandchildren, USW International President Leo W. Gerard called on the union’s local leadership to challenge the global assault on workers and their families.

In a keynote speech opening the USW’s Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas on Monday, Gerard urged 3,500 delegates to create the world’s first global union, strengthen the union’s Strike and Defense Fund to better withstand assaults from cut-throat employers, and to elect a new president and Congress this November committed to improving the lot of working people.

“It’s well past time to challenge the power of today’s global capital – before it does any more damage to the lives of working people,” Gerard said.

This week, delegates from local unions in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean will consider creating Workers Uniting, an international combination of the USW and the London-based Unite the Union that will represent some 3.2 million workers and retirees in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

“United in global solidarity – three million strong – we’ll be a force that global corporations and their financiers in New York, London and Toronto will have no choice but to reckon with,” Gerard said. “And that’s a reckoning that’s long overdue.”

Delegates will also consider strengthening the USW’s formidable Strike and Defense Fund to gain better bargaining clout with employers and better benefits for those who find themselves forced out on strike.

Gerard called globalization the driving force behind a New Age of Robber Barons, Wall Street and Bay Street financiers who export our jobs, gut our health care coverage and rob us of pensions.

“Now is the time for us to go on the offense,” Gerard said. “It’s time to take back every job they’ve contracted out, every job they’ve outsourced. It’s time to restore every right they’ve managed to diminish.”

It’s also time to challenge this new global system of finance and trade, to develop a trade agenda that lifts all boats on a wave of prosperity, and to fight for an Employee Free Choice Act that restores a worker’s right to choose a union and bargain our way to prosperity, Gerard said.

Building the kind of power it takes to prevail in the global economy means fighting on more fronts than bargaining.

“It means taking the fight wherever we must to protect our members and grow our numbers,” Gerard said. “It means challenging rotten trade deals at every turn, in more and more innovative ways.”

In 2006, the USW’s activists helped Democrats take back the Congress with wins in both the House and the Senate. Our work helped to wipe out 22 Republican incumbents in the House and eight more in the Senate.

This year, the country is again at a crossroads.

We face a choice between presidential candidates – one would privatize Social Security, tax our health care benefits as income and veto the Employee Free Choice Act. That candidate is John McCain.

Instead, Gerard urged delegates to “make history” by voting for the union’s endorsed candidate – Democrat Barack Obama, who has pledged to rebuild manufacturing, make workers the top priority in trade deals and push for Employee Free Choice and universal health care that lowers costs and maintains benefits.

“We can have real change by shooting for the stars,” Gerard told delegates. “Or we can shoot ourselves in the foot and get four more years of Bush’s assault on working people with John McCain.”



## Senator Sanders condemns America's decline under Bush Hails USW as "conscience of America"

Condemning what he termed America's current "culture of greed," Independent Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont delivered a scathing critique of the Bush administration for inducing the worst income inequality since the 1920s.

Sanders called Bush's tenure "seven and a half years of the worst presidency in the history of the United States of America."

universal health care, and Employee Free Choice, "the conscience of America."

In addition to calling on delegates to work for Barack Obama's election, Sanders urged even greater activism. "We need to build the strongest grassroots movement that this country has ever seen so that we can move this country forward in a progressive direction."

Sanders bolstered his condemnations with a litany of Bush administration failures:

- Five million Americans have fallen out of the Middle Class and into poverty since Bush has been president.
- Median household income has dropped \$2,500.
- Eight and half million people have lost health their health care, he said, adding: "We must end the disgrace that America is the only country in the industrialized world that does not provide health care for every man, woman and child."
- Three million manufacturing jobs have been exported to China or other developing countries.
- Almost 3 million Americans have lost their pensions.
- The highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world – one in 25 children.

In all, Sanders concluded, "We're seeing the collapse of the Middle Class. For the first time, our kids will have lower standards of living than we do – and we must not allow that to happen!"

Proclaiming resounding support for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), Senator Sanders called the USW, with its unrelenting push for trade reform,

## Convention Video Dramatizes Global Assault on Workers

Delegates to the Constitutional Convention were treated to a powerful opening day video that dramatized the global assault on workers undermining our members' bargaining leverage.

Video footage revealing the brutal assault on our members by authorities at the WTO demonstrations in Seattle and the FTAA protests in Miami, as well as the assassinations of trade unionists in Mexico and Colombia was highlighted with statements by our members from a wide array of industries declaring our union's commitment to keep up the fight against the exploitation of workers, both at home and throughout the world.

A montage of bygone events revealed our members being killed at the Memorial Day Massacre at Republic Steel in South Chicago in 1937, as well as images of former presidents Phillip Murray, Lynn Williams and George Becker rallying our members to resist employer domination.

"No one can guarantee you that if we fight we'll always win," president Leo Gerard declares at the climax of the video. "But I can guarantee you that if we don't fight, we'll always lose!"

You can see the video on our new website: [www.usw.org](http://www.usw.org).

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the United Steelworkers (USW) website. The browser's address bar shows "http://www.usw.org/convention/". The website has a blue header with the USW logo and the tagline "UNITY AND STRENGTH FOR...". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "HOME", "OUR UNION", "MEDIA CENTER", "MULTIMEDIA", and "BLOG". The main content area is titled "CONVENTION COVERAGE" and features a large video player showing a group of people. To the right of the video player is a sidebar with "USW 20" and "NEWS" sections. At the bottom of the page, there is a banner that says "EXPERIENCE THE USW THROUGH VIDEO, PODCASTS, PHOTOS VISIT MULTIMEDIA" and a "DAILY N" section on the far right.

# Senate Majority Leader condemns Bush's failure to invest in domestic job growth

U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Democrat from the Nevada mining town of Searchlight, thanked the Steelworkers for the Senate's fight to defeat privatization of Social Security.

Reid cited the fact that the Iraq War is costing the American people \$5,000 a second, and condemned the Bush administration for its inaction on energy policy, which he said is contributing to the crisis in energy prices.

He called for investments in the new technologies that would contribute to a clean energy economy, including solar,

geothermal and other renewable resources that he said will also lead to domestic investment and home-grown jobs.

Senator Reid called for revitalizing the nations, roads, bridges and water systems, needs that, if met, would lead to growth in decent-paying jobs.

He also cited procedural steps he has taken in the Senate to prevent the Bush administration from doing even further harm to labor unions.

## Congressman Thompson says America's destiny tied to November

In his address to USW delegates Monday afternoon, Congressman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) said, "All our destiny is tied to what happens in November, because if you don't want a third term for George Bush, then you need to support Barack Obama."

"A worker voting Republican in November," he quipped, "is like a chicken voting for Colonel Sanders."

He added, "You've already made a down payment on November. You've helped us elect Travis Childers to Congress in northern Mississippi," the first time that a Democrat has been elected to that seat since Reconstruction following the Civil War.

Congressman Thompson, however, did not wait until November to take action. As Chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, he recently pushed through legislation that will require the Department of Homeland Security to use "Made in America" steel when it is building a fence or anything else.

In citing passage of the legislation, Congressman Thompson declared, "How can you not be for American-made products and how can you not be for American workers who make those products?"

At the conclusion of his remarks, District 9 Director Stan Johnson presented Congressman Thompson with a campaign contribution for the general election that matches the contribution the union made during the primaries.



## CLC President calls for greater accountability from politicians

Ken Georgetti, four-term president of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), congratulated the Steelworkers for working to form the world's first global union, and urged U.S. delegates to elect Barack Obama president.

Georgetti, himself a Steelworker from District 3, also urged the members to "hold politicians accountable, the most important job we have."

Since 1982, the promise of trade deals to create prosperity, he said, "is a great big lie," citing the 4 million manufacturing jobs lost in the U.S. and Canada.

Georgetti condemned the double standards employed by the free marketers. When workers lose their jobs, he said, government throws its hands in the air and declares, "Well what can we do? That's the market."

In contrast, he said, "When a huge investment firm gets into trouble, the government flies into action."

Georgetti said that politicians must be threatened with losing their jobs in the next election if they refuse to address working people's needs, and heralded Canada's Workers First legislation, which raises workers' standing in the financial pecking order during bankruptcies as the kind of action that needs to be taken.

He also called on Americans to pass universal health care, as Canada has, and said Canada is now pushing for a national pharma care program.