

Winter 2023

This year is gearing up to be one of our best years yet in Rapid Response. After a long three-year hiatus, we are looking forward to gathering once again in our nation's capital for our 2023 Rapid Response, Legislative, and Policy Conference. We know that the success of our program relies on getting information into the hands of our Rapid Response activists and the one-on-one conversations they have with their coworkers about the issues that affect us as a union, and we can't wait to see what everyone has been up to!

Read on to discover what's new in Rapid Response and learn about our upcoming No Cuts to Retirement Security Action.

[The Rapid Response, Legislative, and Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. is Back! \[usw.to/RRConf23\]\(https://usw.to/RRConf23\)](#)

USW activists from across the U.S. will once again be meeting in Washington, D.C., for the Rapid Response, Legislative, and Policy Conference. Attendees will gain knowledge on the key issues of today, learn how to share those issues with their membership, and build skills to help their local engage in actions that boost our union's power to impact government decisions – whether that's in Washington, in your state, or even your local community.

The Conference will be held from June 11 - 14, 2023, in Washington, D.C., at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. We will have two full days of general session and workshops, followed by a day on Capitol Hill meeting with our legislators and an evening reception to close out the conference.

Every local is encouraged to take part. We all have a stake.

Go to usw.to/RRConf23 for more information and don't forget to register today!



[No Cuts to Our Retirement Security \(\[usw.to/NoCuts\]\(https://usw.to/NoCuts\)\)](#)

When [we asked members and retirees \(usw.to/results\)](https://usw.to/results) to rate issues through a survey last year, thousands of you took the time to weigh in. You told us your top issue was retirement security. As the urgency to address the debt ceiling approaches, a growing number of lawmakers are advocating for cuts and other fundamental changes to undermine retirement security programs, like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. These programs are not entitlements; they are hard-earned benefits that workers have already paid for.

While some legislators are pulling back on their statements, we plan to hold their feet to the fire to ensure no concessions are made off the backs of hard-working Americans. [Earlier this week we asked your local union to adopt a resolution. \(usw.to/4ga\)](#) This resolution urges Congress to quickly raise or eliminate the

debt ceiling without any spending concessions that would cut Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid now and moving forward. We are then asking that locals circulate a signature page around their worksites for members to sign onto for deliveries to congressional offices.



Our retirement security is not just our union-negotiated benefits like a pension, 401k, and healthcare. It is also making sure we push for policies that protect all of the other benefits – like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid – *that we have earned over the course of our working lives.*

Stay tuned to Rapid Response and make sure your local is taking action to ensure Congress keeps its hands off of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

For more information on our Action and how your local can get involved go to usw.to/NoCuts today!

The PRO Act is Back Again!

When U.S. [approval of Labor Unions is at 71 percent \(usw.to/4gi\)](https://usw.to/4gi), its highest point since 1965, but the share of U.S. workers who belong to a union is at 10.1 percent, an all-time low, it is clear that the system is broken. This is the result of attacks on workers' rights protections and the exploitation of weak accountability mechanisms by corporations and special interest groups that have been going on for decades. Today, our nation's labor laws are woefully outdated and have become ineffective as a means for working people to have our voices heard. On Tuesday, February 28, 2023, the [Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize \(PRO\) Act \(H.R. 20\) \(usw.to/4gj\)](https://usw.to/4gj) was introduced into Congress by a group of bipartisan legislators in the House and Senate. USW members and staff traveled to Washington, D.C., to witness this historic event and thank the cosponsors of the bill for their support. This bill would restore the right of workers to freely and fairly form a union and bargain together for changes in the workplace. It is landmark worker empowerment, civil rights and economic stimulus legislation, and an essential part building an America that works for workers. Click [HERE \(usw.to/4gk\)](https://usw.to/4gk) to read the USW press release and President Conway's statement.



Honoring our Veterans

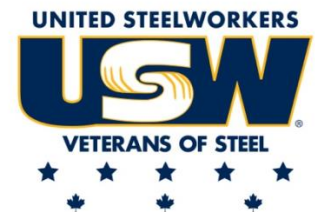
In early 2020, District 4 activists gathered in Albany, NY, for their first ever District Rapid Response Conference. When they went to the statehouse to meet with their legislators about our issues, they pitched an idea for a bill that would make information on resources for our nations' veterans more widely available. They proposed that every worksite in the state should display a standardized workplace posting that includes basic information about veterans' benefits and a way for veterans to learn more about the programs available to them. Once passed, this bill would be the first of its kind in the country.

The effort, led by Cary Eldridge, District 4 Vets of Steel Coordinator and USW Staff Representative, picked up steam with broad bipartisan support, yet was quickly put on the back burner as our nation was thrust into the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, that didn't stop our work. District 4 activists continued to call, email, and even meet with their legislators virtually. They made sure that this bill stayed on legislators' radar and, when the pandemic eased, they put the pressure on to get this important legislation passed.

We are happy to report that on Veteran's Day, November 10, 2022, over two years after our efforts began, Governor Kathy Hochul signed New York Assembly Bill A3913B into law. "It was a long process," said Cary Eldridge. "But with the help of USW Rapid Response and Steelworkers banding together to fight for a good cause, we stayed the course for as long as it took. The passage of this bill will not only aid our USW Vets of Steel, but every veteran and their family in New York State."

As we look to our work ahead, the USW Rapid Response and Legislative departments are diligently working with our Vets of Steel program to identify other states where we can get similar legislation passed. Currently, we have bills introduced in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky, and are engaging with state legislators across the country to expand that list. If you or your members would like more information on this bill and how you can help get it passed in your state, contact your [District Rapid Response Coordinator](#) (usw.to/3zi) for more information on how you can get involved.

Are you a veteran? Sign up for the United Steelworkers Vets of Steel program [HERE](https://usw.to/VetsOfSteelPage) (usw.to/VetsOfSteelPage) to receive more information on this legislation and other resources available to you and your family, and don't forget to watch [President Conway's video on our ongoing efforts to get this legislation passed in every state across our nation.](#) (usw.to/4gm)



Our State Work is Heating Up

Rapid Response members know that using our voices to affect change for working people extends well beyond the halls of Congress. With a divided Congress now in Washington, D.C., more and more we look to our state and local legislators to fill the gap. It's important that they hear from Steelworkers about our legislative issues and priorities, and that we hold them accountable for the decisions they make.

Throughout the year each District takes on their own unique state level legislative fights, here is a brief update on some of the work we are doing so far in 2023:



District 1 – Efforts are [underway in Michigan \(usw.to/4f6\)](http://usw.to/4f6) to repeal Right to Work (RTW) in the newly elected worker-friendly legislature, as well with assist with other pro labor priorities. Over 60 Steelworkers were in Lansing this week to spend time meeting with their legislators at the statehouse and educating them on the real worker impacts of RTW and urging them to support its repeal.

District 4 - Currently, [we are concerned about legislation in Connecticut \(usw.to/4en\)](http://usw.to/4en) that would prohibit natural gas hook-ups in new and renovated construction throughout the state. HB 5219 was introduced by House Representative Amy Bello Morrin and would require all new and renovated construction of public buildings and schools to be energy efficient and utilize renewable energy sources. This legislation ignores the impacts that this policy would have on gas workers and our communities and has been an issue in other states.

District 8 – Several states in District 8 have legislation pending where our members’ voices may be needed. [In Maryland, House Bill 2 was introduced. \(usw.to/4e6\)](http://usw.to/4e6) The legislation would modify Maryland’s tax code to once again allow union members to deduct their dues from their state income taxes. West Virginia has [introduced Senate Bill 59, \(usw.to/4eg\)](http://usw.to/4eg) a bill that would limit unemployment insurance in the state. It is nearly identical to legislation that was defeated last session. In Virginia, [there was a version of our Veteran’s bill introduced, \(usw.to/4dz\)](http://usw.to/4dz) but it was unfortunately struck down quickly. Lastly, in Kentucky over [100 Steelworkers gathered for two days \(usw.to/4gn\)](http://usw.to/4gn) to learn about our union’s core issues and speak to state legislators about the importance of expanding family care leave and ensuring all workers have access to earned sick time, as well as the USW’s Veterans Bill initiative and the importance of Buy American legislation. We are happy to report that as a result of those meetings, both a Veteran’s and Buy American bill have been introduced and are moving through committees.



District 10 – In Pennsylvania, our members spent time lobbying this month on a set of USW priorities including a [Veteran’s bill, \(usw.to/4dx\)](http://usw.to/4dx) the [Greene - Trumka Child Reunification Act \(usw.to/4go\)](http://usw.to/4go) and recognizing [June 5 - 9 as “Union Organizing Week” in Pennsylvania \(usw.to/4gp\)](http://usw.to/4gp) – an effort being led by Representative Dan Miller.

District 12 - In Utah, the legislature has introduced HB 241, [a bill that weakens public employee unions. \(usw.to/4ej\)](http://usw.to/4ej) California has introduced two bills that impact our EMTs. [AB 40 \(usw.to/4gq\)](http://usw.to/4gq) would require more data to be provided by hospitals when it comes to Emergency Medical Services transportation and provide more transparency for stakeholders. [AB 55 \(usw.to/4gr\)](http://usw.to/4gr) makes changes to California’s Medicaid program relating to reimbursement rates.

We are tracking each of these issues closely and will request action when needed.

USW Rapid Response Activists Help Protect Democracy in Ohio!

When we see dangerous legislation passed with little concern for the will of the people, Steelworkers get to work. Last November, some lawmakers in Ohio decided that the rights of citizens to weigh in on the laws the legislature passes were too broad. As a result, they tried to amend the state constitution to make it harder for Ohioans to pass citizen-led ballot initiatives. In the last weeks of the session, just before the holidays, OH HJR6 was introduced. OH HJR6 would have raised the threshold for voters to pass citizen-led ballot initiatives – like the repeal of RTW – from a simple majority, 50 percent plus one of those voting, to

a super majority of 60 percent. This would mean that instead of allowing the majority of Ohioans decide the fate of the state, the minority of those voting, a mere 40 percent plus one, could hold all the power.

With no time to spare, District 1 Rapid Response activists got to work. They rallied at the statehouse with our allies, sent thousands of emails, and made calls to Ohio Representatives and Senators asking them to protect democracy. Because of this pressure, legislators backed off and HJR6 did not see a vote in 2022.

The fight is not over. Too many legislators throughout the country want all the power. In Ohio, they have already reintroduced this bill for the 2023 session, and we are watching it closely. We must keep the pressure on and be ready to engage.

For more information about our fight against OH HJR6, click [HERE](#). (usw.to/4cb)



Your Hard Work Helped Extend TAA and Secure Additional Funding for the NLRB

December 29, 2022, President Biden signed [the Consolidated Appropriations Act, of 2023](#), (usw.to/4ci) a spending bill that funds our government for the next year. **Because of your voices and our union's persistence, two critical Steelworker priorities, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) gained additional funding.**

In the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, Congress passed \$494 million dollars in funding for TAA. However, to date there has been bureaucratic wrangling over whether this money can go to new TAA petitions or not. Our union, along with the AFL-CIO and others, recently [sent letters to Department of Labor Secretary Walsh urging him to begin accepting new petitions](#). (usw.to/4gf) The Steelworkers will continue to fight to ensure that our members who have been negatively impacted by bad trade have access to this critical program.

The NLRB's additional \$25 million in funding will help avoid layoffs and potentially secure additional staffing. It is a 9.5 percent increase to the NLRB's budget and the first increase in nine years.

Although we did not get everything we wanted, and we are still fighting to ensure that the TAA funding goes to the workers that need it, these gains would have never happened without your work and persistence.

For more information about this fight and to see how your elected officials voted, click [HERE](#). (usw.to/4cm)

For more ways to get involved in Rapid Response, or to schedule a Rapid Response training for your local please [contact your District Coordinator](#) (usw.to/3zi) or email us at uswrr@usw.org.