

Wishing you well
this holiday season.



Season's Greetings

from the Officers, Representatives
and Office Staff of

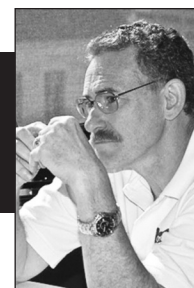
Machinists District W24

Lodge 63 in Gladstone, Lodge 1005 in Gladstone,
Lodge 1432 in Gladstone, W12 in Klamath Falls,
W246 in Springfield, W261 in Central Point,
W2 in Aberdeen, W38 in Shelton,
W130 in Centralia, W157 in Tacoma,
W536 in Longview, W98 in Arcata, California,
W364 in Lewiston, Idaho,
Local 88 in Butte, Montana

International Association of
Machinists & Aerospace Workers,
Woodworkers,
AFL-CIO

Who's On Our Side?

By Tom Chamberlain



Economists tell us that the recession officially ended in 2009. But for over 25 million Americans who are underemployed or can't find work, the recession has become a depression. Folks who have been unemployed longer than 99 weeks (about 22 months) have exhausted their unemployment benefits. More likely than not, they live with family, friends or are homeless. Over 40 percent of the unemployed have been looking for work for over two years — the longest length of time since 1948.

The impact of joblessness can be seen every day in the streets of every U.S. city, where hard-working Americans have fallen through our social safety net into a hardknock lifestyle of homelessness.

Oregon has the highest child hunger rate in the country.

As the "99ers" who have exhausted their benefits sit without any help, wondering where to turn, the unemployed who are receiving benefits may need to start worrying, too. Congress is playing political games — posturing for the next election rather than finding funding to ensure that unemployment insurance benefits continue to be available at all.

The unemployment insurance program extension is scheduled to expire at the end of 2011 and what in the past has been a simple renewal-

has become a political game.

Without the extension, 32,000 Oregonians will lose their UI benefits. Unemployment benefits stimulate the economy. Think about what you buy when you're unemployed: your money goes immediately into the economy, purchasing food and other essentials, or it keeps you in your house. Failure to extend UI benefits will result in a loss of income in Oregon communities of \$9,082,568 per week. Our economy grows by \$2 for every dollar spent on UI benefits.

As of this writing, every member of the Oregon Congressional delegation, save one, supports extending the UI program immediately. Rep. Greg Walden is the exception.

Walden represents District 2 in Southern, Central, and Eastern Oregon. District 2 has been hit harder by the recession than any other area in the state. Unemployment is over 2 points higher than the state average. Bend has one of the highest home foreclosure rates in the country.

Walden will support the extension of UI benefits to help his district, but only if the cost is offset by budget cuts elsewhere. With so much human distress in District 2, it's hard to understand why Walden is demanding that an extension be tied to a political goal at all, let alone to cuts that will most likely come from the very social programs that our rural commu-

nities need to survive.

Dec. 10 was International Human Rights Day, which we often mark by talking about the right to organize, or the plight of workers in other countries. This year, we chose to mark the day by talking about unemployment — and the need to extend unemployment insurance benefits.

There is a political connection between these issues: the same corporations and corporate shareholders who moved jobs overseas, crashed the economy, and demanded a bailout are now calling for massive budget cuts. Unemployment insurance is tied up in their call for budget cuts and they aren't letting it go.

They still aren't on our side.

Could Congressman Walden be on our side? If we want him to change his mind, he needs to hear from the hard-working families in Congressional District 2. Explain to him the importance of the unemployment extension, the impact of losing over \$9 million per week from our economy, and what that will do to your family. Explain to him that he needs to be on his constituents' side.

Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.



Wishing you a **happy, HEALTHY** holiday season!



Oregon Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals

AFT Healthcare Northwest, Local 5017

www.ofnhp.org