

From Page 2

apprenticeship programs, and there was no basis in federal law for Trump to set up such an employer-only program. Congress refused to appropriate any funding for IRAPs, but under the direction of Trump appointees, the Labor Department set up the program anyway. Before his term ended, 27 “standards recognition entities” (SREs) were established under the program that would have the power to approve new federally registered apprenticeship programs on the IRAP model. Those 27 SREs can continue to recognize additional IRAPs, DOL said in a statement following Biden’s announcement, but the Biden executive order directs DOL to halt funding for them, and not consider new or pending SRE applications.

“IRAPs undermined training and safety standards across multiple industries and encouraged employers to lower apprentices’ wages and benefits,” said IBEW International President Lonnie Stephenson, who was present at the White House meeting.

A White House statement explaining the move said IRAPs have fewer quality standards than registered apprenticeship programs, failing to require a wage progression that reflects increasing apprentice skills, for

example.

“The Biden administration is concerned that the IRAP program creates a redundant apprenticeship program, with duplicate and often inferior systems that compete with the highly successful and longstanding Registered Apprenticeship Program,” added the Department of Labor Feb. 17.

Besides Trumka and Stephenson, the White House meeting included AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler; Machinists President Robert Martinez, Jr.; and six other building trades union leaders: North America’s Building Trades Union President Sean McGarvey; Operating Engineers General President James T. Callahan; Iron Workers General President Eric M. Dean; International Union of Painters and Allied Trades General President Kenneth E. Rigmaiden; Plumbers and Fitters General President Mark McManus; and Laborers’ General President Terry O’Sullivan.

**“Unions built the middle class”**

Ten days later, Biden released a pro-union video commenting on the in-progress union vote at an Amazon distribution center in Bessemer, Alabama. Labor leaders hailed it as a far more explicitly pro-union statement than any that other recent presidents have made. [See box on Page 2]

## Springfield nursing home strike ends with mass resignation

After 23 residents died in nine weeks, six from COVID, 85% of workers at the Rawlin memory care nursing home in Springfield, Oregon, signed union cards and went on strike Feb. 16 to demand union recognition.

Though common in the 1930s, so-called “recognition strikes” are rare today. But nursing home workers felt conditions were too unsafe to wait months for a National Labor Relations Board election to prove majority support for joining Service Employees Local 503. Workers said they were motivated to strike in response to understaffing, severe patient neglect, inadequate training, and high employee turnover. Twenty-six of the facility’s 48 workers took part in the strike.

Onelife Investments, owner of the nursing home, hired replacement workers and declined to voluntarily recognize the union. On March 2, workers ended the strike with an uncon-

ditional offer to return to work—for those who want to. But the majority of strikers resigned en masse the same day.

Local 503 is helping strikers find work at unionized nursing homes, said union field coordinator Sean Staub. DM



Photo by John Adair

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

For more about the strike, see the Rawlin Workers Union Facebook page at <https://bit.ly/383t3N1>

## WALMART: SELL LED BULBS THAT ARE MADE IN THE USA!

Northwest Oregon Labor Council executive secretary Bob Tackett joined Chelsea Watson of the Oregon AFL-CIO and her sister Hayley outside the Walmart store on 82nd Avenue in Southeast Portland Feb. 20 to call attention to GE/Savant’s plans to offshore LED bulb manufacturing to China. About 80 Ohio workers who make LED lights exclusively for Walmart are members of the International Union of Electrical



Workers Local 84704, a division of Communications Workers of America. “Walmart has made pledges to buy and sell American-made products. This is a perfect opportunity for them to act on that commitment,” Tackett said. Similar noontime rallies were held Feb. 20 at Walmart stores around the nation.

## Machinists-Boilermakers Federal Credit Union

(DistW24 affiliation is required; please call the credit union for details (503) 210-2477)



**Why:** We gain a new relationship while you and your referral could gain \$200.00

**How:** Contact the Credit Union for eligibility.

**When:** NOW! YOU and YOUR REFERRAL will be placed in a drawing to receive \$200.00 directly into your accounts. *Details @ [www.mbfcu.com](http://www.mbfcu.com)*



## THOMAS, COON, NEWTON & FROST

PORTLAND LAW FIRM SINCE 1980

Workers’ Compensation

Construction Injuries

Death Claims

Personal Injury & Product Liability

Medical Malpractice

Social Security Disability

Mesothelioma

[www.tcnf.legal](http://www.tcnf.legal)

503-228-5222

Straight answers. No cost for consultation.

*If you are hurt on a construction site and another contractor had control over the work that injured you, you may be able to sue that company for your injuries in addition to your workers’ compensation claim.*



Raymond Thomas



James Coon



Cynthia Newton



Chris Frost



Sydney Montanaro



Scott Sell



Chris Thomas

820 SW Second Ave., Suite 200, Portland, OR 97204