

UMass Amherst
Labor Extension Program
Labor Center, Thompson Hall
200 Hicks Way
Amherst, MA 01003-9277
A105196



In the Past 3 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program Has Provided Trainings On These Topics...

- **Bargaining Training**
UAW Local 1596 Adjunct Professors UML
- **Basic Stewards Training**
Various unions
- **Building a Strong Union Health & Safety Agenda**
SEIU 509 Stewards Assembly
- **Changes to the FMLA and Using the Labor Board**
USW 7812
- **Facilitation Training**
Boston Tradeswomen's Association
- **Know Your Rights as ABE Workers**
MCAE Network Conference
- **Organizing for Better Working Conditions**
MCAE Network Conference

To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

<p>■ UMASS AMHERST LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM Labor Center, Thompson Hall 200 Hicks Way Amherst, MA 01003-9277 Dale Melcher: 413-545-6166 Fax: 413-545-0110 email: dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu</p>	<p>■ UMASS DARTMOUTH LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM Dubin Labor Education Center 285 Old Westport Road North Dartmouth, MA 02747 Kim Wilson: 508-999-8781 Fax: 508-999-9168 email: kwilson@umassd.edu</p>
<p>■ UMASS BOSTON LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM CPCS Labor Resource Center 100 Morrissey Blvd. Boston, MA 02125-3393 Tess Ewing: 617-287-7352 email: tess.ewing@umb.edu</p>	<p>■ UMASS LOWELL LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM 600 Suffolk St., 5th Floor Lowell, MA 01854 Susan Winning: 978-934-3127 Fax: 978-934-4033 email: susan_winning@uml.edu</p>



- **The Boss Can't Do That, Can He? Teaching Workers Rights**
MCAE Network Conference
- **Stewards Training**
SEIU 888 in Boston, Brockton, Duxbury, Harwich, Merrimack Valley, W. Mass. and Worcester
UFCW 1445
- **"Taller de Anti-Opresión" Fighting Oppression (in Spanish)**
MassCOSH Workers' Center
- **Women and Unions**
Intro to Women's Studies Class

Talking Truth about Taxes

On the campaign trail, candidate Obama promised to end the Bush tax cuts for households that make over \$250,000 a year. This would be a small but positive step toward redressing some of the worst inequities in our increasingly unequal society, by raising taxes on high earners.

Last month, a chastened President Obama backed a compromise proposal that continued the Bush tax cuts for the rich and also gutted the estate tax (another tax that affects only the wealthy). Many of his erstwhile supporters felt betrayed or at least mightily disappointed by this turn of events.

What happened? The easy answers, of course, are that the Republicans outmaneuvered the Democrats, or that the Democrats caved in too quickly. But there is a deeper problem: a large proportion of the American public seems to have a serious allergy to taxes of any kind. And that proportion includes working people and low-income people who would benefit most from vigorous and well-funded public programs. In this atmosphere, politicians on either side of the aisle don't dare call for new taxes—even taxes on the rich.

This situation did not come about by accident; it is the result of many years of work by the Right to gut social programs and destroy the government's ability to interfere with the corporate agenda.

In the last couple of years, the US has been experiencing the worst recession since the Great Depression. Unemployment is over 9%. The federal government and the states are all experiencing seri-

ous cash shortfalls, which have led to severe cutbacks in services. Meanwhile, the financiers, who brought about the crisis, are back on their feet and continuing to prosper. Why aren't the working people of America clamoring for government spending to create new jobs and provide help to those most hard-hit by the crisis:

those who have lost jobs and homes?

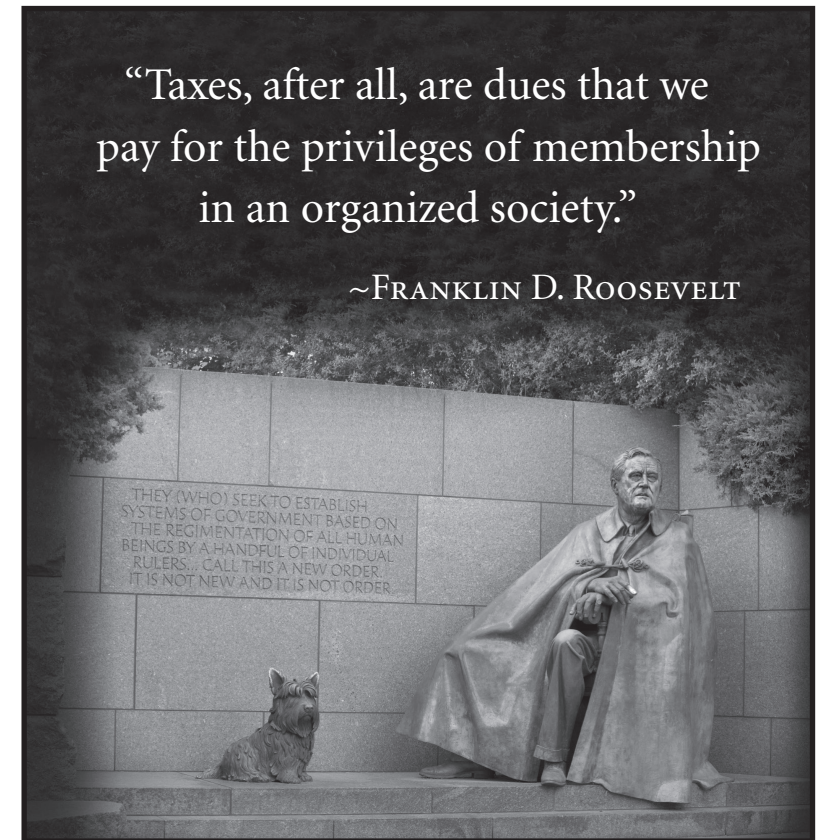
Well, increased spending requires increased revenue. And that brings us back to that little dirty word: *taxes*.

Anyone who has ever had to get a dues increase passed by their union membership knows that no one wants to pay more, but the best way to get support is to show exactly what those dues are used for: to educate the members about what the union does with their money, and why it is needed.

We as taxpayers similarly need education about all of our taxes: where does the money come from, and how is it used? How fair is our tax structure, and how could we make it

fairer for working people? Otherwise, we will continue to cede the field to the Tea Party and their ilk, with their false populism and their underlying agenda of shrinking government, shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor, and shafting unions and working people.

There are a number of organizations devoted to educating the American public about our tax system. Some of them are highlighted in our "Spotlight" and "Resource Corner" sections. The Labor Extension Program would be happy to work with your unions to promote some rational discussion about taxes and tax systems.



"Taxes, after all, are dues that we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society."

~FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Around THE STATE

Organizers' Roundtable

Second Tuesday of the month, 9:30-11:30 am

Cost: Free

Location: BEW Local 103

Contact: Bill Corley, 617-436-3710, John Drinkwater, MA AFL-CIO, 781-423-8230

Roundtable discussions on topics of interest to union organizers

At the Altar of the Bottom Line: discussion and music Wednesday, February 9, 7:00pm

Cost: Free

Location: UMass Boston Student Lounge, Wheatley building, 4th floor

Contact: Sheila Jones, 617-287-7426

UMass Amherst labor studies professor and singer/songwriter Tom Juravich will discuss his latest book, about 4 groups of workers in Massachusetts and perform songs written to go with the book.

Laboring for a Worldwide Social Justice Movement: winter workshop series

3 Tuesdays (Feb. 15, Mar. 1 and Mar. 15), 6:00-9:00 pm

Cost: \$20 for each workshop, or \$50 for all three (Scholarships available)

Location: UMass Boston, Wheatley building, 4th floor, room TBA

Contact: Tess Ewing, 617-287-7352 or Anneta Argyres, 617-287-7229

Understanding our Regional Economy, February 15

This interactive workshop will explore the forces that shape our regional economy, how they affect working people, and what we can do to shape our economic future.

(Continued on next column)

International Workers' Movements, March 1

Join us for an evening of film and discussion about workers' movements happening around the world.

Building Regional Power for Social Change, March 15

A panel of local labor and community leaders will lead-off a discussion of specific steps we can take together to build our regional power.

WILD in the Winter, East

Saturday, March 5, 9:00am -2:00pm (come at 8:30 for coffee & light breakfast)

Cost: \$20

Location: TBA

Contact: Emily Hardt, 617-426-0520

The theme for this conference will be "Our Communities, Our Jobs: The Public Sector Belongs to Us". Childcare will be available. Program in English & Spanish

WILD in the Winter, West

Saturday, Mar 12, 8:30-1:30

Cost: TBA

Location: 3rd Floor Conference Room, Gordon Hall, 418 N. Pleasant St. Amherst

Contact: Emily Hardt, WILD, 617-426-0520, or Dale Melcher 413-545-6166

Theme: "Our Communities, Our Jobs: The Public Sector Belongs to Us".

This half-day program offers women activists and leaders from labor and community-based worker organizations the opportunity to come together for workshops, discussion and networking.

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

The Amherst program began the fall with a move—organizationally and physically—into the UMass Sociology Department, where we have been warmly welcomed. We immediately plunged into a search process for a new faculty member to replace Stephanie Luce, who is now at CUNY's Murphy Institute. The Labor Center is now located in Thompson Hall, right in the center of campus. Extension, along with the Hampshire Franklin and Pioneer Valley CLCs, once again offered a five-session Basic Stewards Training program for members from six different locals, held at the new UMass Amherst Design Center space in Springfield. We offered stewards training for SEIU 888 and Changes to the FMLA and Using the NLRB to USW L7812, and taught an undergraduate course on Women and Work. As part of our Future of Work efforts the Labor Center and Extension are planning a spring conference to consider a labor agenda for economic development in Western Massachusetts, and the Commonwealth. We've also been working with UMass and area college students and Western Mass JWI to set up and train SLAP (Student Labor Action Project) groups.

■ UMASS BOSTON

The Labor Resource Center is pleased to announce the release of the fifth paper in our *Future of Work Paper Series*: "Working Alone: Protecting and Building Solidarity in the Workplace for the Future" by Charley Richardson. This was also the topic of our most recent Thinking Big/Moving Forward seminar, led by Charley Richardson, which featured his life-long study of how solidarity is built and destroyed in our workplaces. The paper, as well as Charley's slideshow and audio files of his presentation and the group discussion at the seminar, are all available on the LRC website: cpcs.umb.edu/lrc.

Plans are already afoot for our next *Thinking Big/Moving Forward* Seminar to be held this spring. Our topic will be the mounting attacks on public sector work, workers and their unions and what unions should do about them. Stay tuned for more details.

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

At UMass Dartmouth, we were thrilled to participate in the trainings around the state for SEIU Local 888. It was a real pleasure to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group of public employees. We are focusing now on planning for the spring and summer. We will offer a spring conference on union building, that will include a health and safety component, details to follow. We will also offer again this summer a young worker gathering and educational event. This year we will be holding this gathering in the community with a continued focus on 18 - 24 year olds. We also continue with cultural programming with our long running worker photography project which will finish with a exhibition in New Bedford late this spring. As the labor extension program for SE Massachusetts and the Cape and Islands, we welcome any calls or visits to discuss your training needs.

■ UMASS LOWELL

We have focused on three major initiatives during the fall. The proposal for a new interdisciplinary minor at UMass Lowell, *Work, Labor and Society*, was completed and submitted to the first committee in the approval process. We anticipate that it will be approved and the first session of the new core course *Work, Labor and Society* will be offered in fall 2011. A key part of the new minor will be service learning projects and internships with labor councils, unions and community organizations in the area. We will be developing that work during the spring. We are also working with the North Shore Labor Council, on an exciting new project, the "New Lynn" regional power building project, providing training and support work with the developing coalition. And we continue to work with the Bread and Roses Centennial committee, which recently held a large community kick off meeting on Jan. 15th, 99 years after the start of the strike.

The Resource Corner

Analyzing And Understanding Taxes & Inequality

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, (www.cbpp.org), regularly generates reports and analyses that relate the ongoing concentration of income and wealth in the United States to hard times for low- and middle-income American families.

Citizens for Tax Justice, (www.ctj.org), is a public interest advocacy group has been battling tax giveaways to the rich for nearly three decades. Reports on the site detail how recent tax changes have helped create an ever more top-heavy society.

Institute for Policy Studies, (www.ips-dc.org), is a progressive multi-issue think tank that provides information to help activists to challenge concentrated wealth, corporate influence, and military power. One project is "Inequality and the Common Good", which provides resources of the dangers that growing inequality pose, releasing periodic "data chart pack" with summary charts that look at inequality trends. This project is connected to the working group on extreme inequality (www.extremeinequality.org).

Mass Budget and Policy Center, (www.massbudget.org/about/home), produces policy research, analysis, and data-driven recommendations, including "Budget Monitors" that offer timely analysis of each version of the state budget, providing information on funding levels each budget proposes for each area of government. Resources on taxes are extensive, examining whether taxes provide enough revenue to finance the services people need.

Tax Policy Center, (www.taxpolicycenter.org) is an Urban Institute and Brookings Institution project makes available detailed data on how changes in the tax law, both already enacted and proposed, impact taxpayers at the bottom, middle, and top of the economic ladder.

United for a Fair Economy, (www.faireconomy.org), has been helping community, labor, and religious groups understand how inequality impacts us all. Among other services, the UFE site offers free downloadable inequality workshop materials.

S P O T L I G H T



The National Priorities Project

The National Priorities Project (NPP: <http://nationalpriorities.org/>) provides federal budget information in a transparent and accessible manner enabling people to understand how their tax dollars are spent, and providing tools to influence this spending. Their user-friendly website provides a range of tools that will help users understand what federal income tax dollars are being spent on, and the impact federal spending has on state and town budgets. For example, the "database" tool enables a user to find out how much federal tax dollars have been spent on certain programs, by year, for state, counties, or zip code. Sources for the information are also provided. Resources include materials for doing workshops, lesson plans for high school students and others, and charts on federal revenues by source, for the past 6 years, and individual and corporate income taxes from 1940-2011. This information is invaluable for understanding and influencing the current "slash all taxes" environment.