

Labor Extension Bulletin

A Publication of the University of Massachusetts Labor Extension Program
UMASS AMHERST ■ **UMASS BOSTON** ■ **UMASS DARTMOUTH** ■ **UMASS LOWELL**

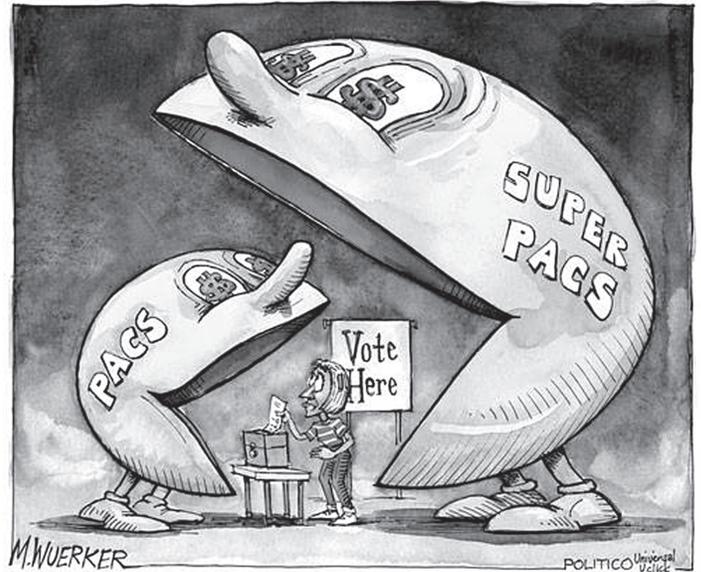
VOLUME 14 ■ NUMBER 2 ■ SPRING 2012

Here Comes the Mudslide

Campaign season is about to shift into high gear, with a deluge of political ads expected, fueled by the recent *Citizens United* decision. These ads are paid for by traditional PACs (political action committees), Super PACs, and the more insidious, so-called 501(c)(4) organizations, a kind of shadow PAC which does not have to release the names of major donors. This outpouring of negative and suspect information, will color how voters understand issues and how they ultimately cast their votes.

Many of these ads will be negative. According to the Wesleyan Media Project, 70% of presidential campaign ads so far this cycle have been negative, compared to less than 10% four years ago. Why the attack ads? Because they work. Negative advertising gets supporters committed and excited and has the potential to turn-off indifferent voters and discourage their turnout (Politickicker.com). We are not immune to these ads in Massachusetts. Recently, *Crossroads GPS*, Karl Rove's shadow PAC, released a nasty and misleading ad attacking Elizabeth Warren, who is challenging Sen. Scott Brown for a Senate seat.

Where does the money come from? According to *iWatchNews* (iWatchNews.org), a project of the Center for Public Integrity, of the top 10 donors to Super PACs so far, seven are individuals—not corporations—and four are billionaires. We don't know the donors to the shadow PACs, such as *Crossroads GPS*, which has already spent \$8.3 million on issue ads against Senate Democratic candidates. Of the top seven Super PACs ranked by total raised in the 2012 electoral cycle, five conservative Super PACs raised a total of nearly \$76 million, while the two liberal-leaning Super PACs, including the *AFL-CIO Workers' Voice* PAC, raised \$11.7 million. (see table). The Center for Responsive Politics reports that at least sixty-five 501(c)(4)s reported spending over \$89 million on political activities.



What's at stake in the next election for working families? The issues we care about—the right to collective bargaining, healthcare access and affordability, government regulation of workplace safety, and the role of government itself—will all be subjects of these ads. Those looking for small government, less regulation, the dismantling of collective bargaining, the elimination of Obama care, and continued tax relief for the wealthy will be able to inundate the media with their message.

The flood of money from extremely wealthy individuals and corporations, either through Super PACs or shadow PACs undermines democracy. We cannot outspend them, but we can do what the labor movement does best—put boots on the ground to educate and organize around issues, register voters, and get out the vote. An exciting new strategy to democratize spending by tying control of spending to on-the-ground member involvement in political action is being launched by the *AFL-CIO's Workers' Voice*. (See *Spotlight*)

SuperPACS 2012 electoral cycle (5/4/12)			
Group	Supports/opposes	Viewpoint	Total Raised
Restore Our Future	supports Romney	Conservative	\$51,904,972
American Crossroads		Conservative	\$28,082,720
Winning Our Future	supports Gingrich	Conservative	\$23,907,272
Priorities USA Action	supports Obama	Liberal	\$ 8,995,171
Red, White & Blue	supports Santorum	Conservative	\$ 8,346,179
Club for Growth Action		Conservative	\$ 5,909,322
AFL-CIO Workers' Voices PAC		Liberal	\$ 5,908,491
American Bridge 2st Century		Liberal	\$ 5,788,187

From: opensecrets.org

Around THE STATE

Legal Rights of Union Stewards

Wednesday May 30th, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Cost: \$12.00

Location: UMass Lowell, Alumni Hall, 1 University Avenue, North Campus

Contact: Sue D'Amore @ 978-934-3256 or Susan_Damore@uml.edu

In this workshop Attorney Robert Schwartz will review the legal right of union stewards and how to use and enforce those rights. There will be time for questions and discussion.

Introduction to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Wednesday June 6th, 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Cost: \$12.00

Location: UMass Lowell, Alumni Hall, 1 University Avenue, North Campus

Contact: Sue D'Amore @ 978-934-3256 or Susan_Damore@uml.edu
Attorney Robert Schwartz will review the important rights for workers of the Family Medical Leave Act and how it can be used to protect members and win grievances for workers who are disciplined for absenteeism and tardiness. He will also cover the lesser-known but very important Massachusetts Small Necessities Leave Act.

NOTE: The cost for both sessions will be \$20.00. 5 or more from the same Union: \$10.00 for 1 session or \$15 for both. Books by Robert Schwartz will be available for \$20.00 each

S P O T L I G H T

AFL-CIO Workers Voice Super PAC: the small "d" democratic alternative

How do you make a Super PAC democratic? The AFL-CIO's Workers' Voice Super PAC is trying to do just that by giving activists—union and non-union alike—the chance to decide where and how it spends money - \$5.9 million.

Earn it: Then spend it says the Workers Voice website, www.workersvoice.org. They urge participants to "make phone calls, knock on doors, and sign people up to our email list and you'll earn the ability to direct dollars towards voter registration for your local or federal candidate of choice, online ads, GOTV efforts, or a number of other options." Only work for candidates the AFL-CIO has endorsed, however, can earn credit.

This is a dramatic shift from organized labor's way of directing political dollars, with decisions made by union or PAC leadership. While that approach makes for a simplified and consistent political strategy, it also leads to conservative criticism that union dues are being used by so-called Big Labor, without member input or against their wishes. The new structure allows for not only activist rank-and-file union members making decisions, but also any member of the general public.

Workers Voice is feeling its way through this process. Democracy is messy but exciting. It only works with participation so encourage your members to visit the website and sign up.

(with thanks to Sam Stein of the *Huffington Post* and Laura Clawson of the *Daily Kos*)

The Resource Corner: Unpacking PACs

The Center for Responsive Politics' interactive website, **OpenSecrets.org**, is a great resource for federal campaign contributions, lobbying data and analysis. Nonpartisan, independent and nonprofit, the Center's mission is to inform and empower voters and activists by providing unbiased information about money in politics, and advocate for a transparent and responsive government.

The website has a searchable database on PACs (**OpenSecrets.org/pacs**) with general information about different types of PACs (leadership PACs, supper PACS, foreign-connected PACs), including how much they spend in federal and state races, on specific candidates and parties, on other PACS, or on ballot initiatives. You can even look up PACs by the industry in which they operate.

The Wesleyan Media Project (mediaproject.wesleyan.edu) tracks and analyzes all broadcast advertisements aired by or on behalf of federal and state election candidates in every media market in the country. They provide real-time information on the extent of corporate and union spending in federal election campaigns across the country, who specifically is doing that spending and which candidates are benefiting. Their goal is to develop a definitive database that tracks all advertising by source (corporation, union, interest group, party, or candidate), and to help scholars, citizens, and journalists hold government accountable by providing public information on how special interests are attempting to influence American democracy in general and political campaigns in particular.

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

Change is coming to the UMass Amherst extension program. Longtime coordinator, Dale Melcher, will be retiring at the end of the summer. This winter we worked with the MTA and UMass Boston and UMass Lowell coordinators on a new workplace bullying curriculum. We have continued to explore applying principles of popular education as we work with the MTA on training their staff. We continued our work with WILD, building a WILD in the West group and organizing a school bus full of women to attend the WILD 25th Anniversary celebration in Boston. We are in high gear planning for the Northeast Summer School for Union Women (see box) and look forward to hosting union women from all over the region for five days this summer. Upcoming programs include stewards training for area firefighters locals, leadership skills for the WILD Summer Institute (see box), and more popular education training for the MTA.

■ UMASS BOSTON

It's been a busy time at the LRC. Building off of our fall conference on *The Future of Labor Organizing in Higher Education*, we hosted a delegation of striking college students from Quebec. We released our latest paper in the *Future of Work* paper series titled "Low Wage Earners and Low Wage Jobs in Greater Boston"—look for it on our website. Along with Community Labor United, we hosted this spring's *Thinking Big/Moving Forward Breakfast Seminar* which featured MIT professor Paul Osterman debunking common myths about the low-wage job market, and CLU's Darlene Lombos and Craig Ransom sharing examples of how labor and community organizations are using the fight for job quality to help focus organizing efforts. Finally, we settled into our new digs and were able to show off during CPCS's Open House in April. The Labor Studies Program is now officially accepting students into three programs: a Bachelor of Arts Major and Minor, and a Professional Certificate Program. For more information about these programs, please email Wally.Soper@umb.edu.

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

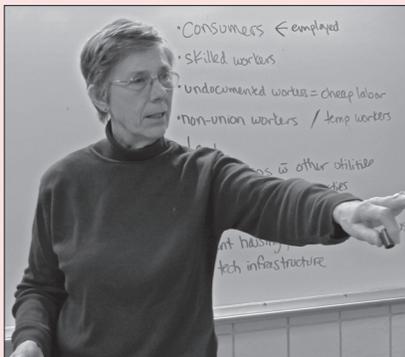
Over the past few months, the UMD Labor Extension Program has continued to work in the community, educating and organizing around transit justice. Building on past relationships with unions and community groups, we have engaged other partners including the Fall River and New Bedford ATU Locals, the Community Economic Development Center, and the Coalition for Social Justice. The coalition had a major victory, winning holiday bus service, and we are focusing now on expanded evening service. Importantly, our group has been participating statewide with Community Labor United to take on broader funding issues. This summer, we are working with the statewide extension program to plan for and participate in the work of WILD and the NE Summer School for Union Women. Kim Wilson, the extension coordinator, continues work as the Board Chair of MassCOSH, the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health. MassCOSH is finishing a strategic planning process and has just wrapped up its annual Worker Memorial Day activities.

■ UMASS LOWELL

This spring was the launching of the new labor studies minor, Work, Labor and Society (WLS), with the offering of the core course, which labor extension coordinator Susan Winning co-taught. The 25 enrolled students participated in 5 service learning projects, developed by labor extension. The projects were very successful, with one group of students researching the less well known Lowell Textile Strike of 1912, another researching workers' rights and presenting to a pre-employment class at a local workforce development agency. (See materials developed by the students at: <http://www.uml.edu/FAHSS/WLS/Default.html>) Several other students participated in the SEIU 615 Voice and Future Fund, helping English language learners practice English. One student said, of joining the union members at a march and rally, "It is true you can see solidarity in movies ... but to be there and experience it is to truly know what it means and to know what it feels like."

Tess Ewing Retires – Really?

Tess Ewing retired from her job as the UMass Boston Labor Extension Coordinator at the end of December. Tess was hired at the inception of the labor extension program in 1996, and for 16 years she brought her curriculum development talent, creativity, humor, and multi-lingual abilities to the work. In addition to providing education and training for many unions in the Boston area, she provided training and leadership development to immigrants' rights organizations and workers centers, and has worked closely with the new Domestic Workers Alliance. She was the labor extension program's web guru, an activist and leader in her union, an officer in UALE, the United Association of Labor Education, and much more. Tess sees her role as a labor educator as broader than the classroom and can often be seen on a picket line or attending a rally, lending her support for labor and working people's struggles. Tess continues to work with WILD and support the movement, so it's not goodbye, its hasta luego, Tess.



The 37th Northeast Summer School for Union Women

will be held July

28-August 2 on the

UMass Amherst cam-

pus, and hosted by

the entire statewide

UMass Labor Exten-

sion Program. Our

union coordinator is

Kathy Casavant, Di-

rector of Governance,

Organizational and

Leadership Development at

the AFL-CIO and past Treasurer of

the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. This five-day residential program

provides an in-depth, engaging, energizing, educational and

networking experience to union women members, activ-

ists and leaders from public and private sector unions from

all over the Northeast. This year we will welcome domestic

workers from NY and Massachusetts, who are organizing

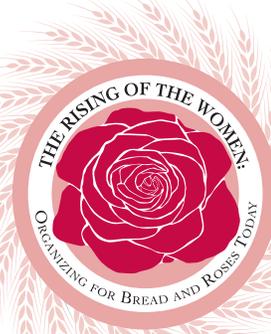
non-traditional unions. Our theme, The Rising of the Women:

Organizing for Bread and Roses Today, commemorates the

100th anniversary of the Lawrence, MA Bread and Roses

strike and the connection to organizing and activism today.

For more information visit <http://umasslep.org/>.



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UMass Amherst

Labor Extension Program

Labor Center, Thompson Hall

200 Hicks Way

Amherst, MA 01003-9277

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In the Past 4 months...

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

- **Bargaining Team Training**
UFCW Local 348
- **Basic Unionism for Nurses**
UMass Amherst class
- **Fair Taxes for Public Education and Public Services**
North Shore Labor Council
- **Political Economy of Race**
1199SEIU
- **Popular Education: Teaching to Change**
MTA
- **Re-framing the Debate on Public Sector Workers**
North Shore Labor Council Education Conference

To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:

■ UMass Amherst Labor Extension Program

Labor Center, Thompson Hall, 200 Hicks Way
Amherst, MA 01003-9277 www.umass.edu/lrrc
Dale Melcher: 413-545-6166 Fax: 413-545-0110
email: dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu

■ UMass Boston Labor Extension Program

CPCS Labor Resource Center, 100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393 www.umb.edu/lrc
Annetta Argyres: 617-287-7229
email: anneta.argyres@umb.edu

■ UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension Program

Dubin Labor Education Center, 285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, MA 02747 www.umassd.edu/labored/
Kim Wilson: 508-999-8781 Fax: 508-999-9168
email: kwilson@umassd.edu

■ UMass Lowell Labor Extension Program

600 Suffolk St., 5th Floor
Lowell, MA 01854 www.uml.edu/laborextension/
Susan Winning: 978-934-3127 Fax: 978-934-4033
email: susan_winning@uml.edu

Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program at <http://umasslep.org>

- **Solidarity or Exclusion: Exploring the Legacy of Labor's Response to Racism**
Bread & Roses Centennial Symposium
- **Speaking Up! Speaking Out!**
Women's Institute for Leadership Development
- **Standing Up to Bullying in the Workplace**
UALE Conference
- **Strategic Planning**
PSU/MTA
- **Strategies for Resolving Conflict**
SEA/MTA
- **Treasurers Training**
UMB Labor Studies students
- **Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Challenges to implementing popular education in the real world**
UALE Conference