

NEW JERSEY STATE AFL-CIO

106 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08608
(609) 989-8730
FAX (609) 989-8734

www.njaflcio.org

CHARLES WOWKANECH

LAUREL BRENNAN



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|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|
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CHARLES H. MARCIANTE

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August 16, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Now, more than ever, it is important that the labor movement speak with a unified voice on the most important issues facing working families in our state and our nation.

The Opposition of organized labor would like nothing more than to see the house of labor divided into competing factions. Sometimes we disagree, as we did at our endorsement conference, but we agree on a lot more.

First, regardless of where we work or what union we belong to, we agree that a union contract makes life better for our members and all working families. Unions and collective bargaining strengthen the middle class and provide working families with upward mobility. That was what happened in the 1930s and 1940s, when the AFL and CIO unionized tens of millions of workers and created decades of economic prosperity for all Americans — not just the wealthy. That's why we have to support our brothers and sisters at Verizon and all of those who are fighting for their rights on picket lines and across the bargaining table because when labor wins, we all win.

Second, we agree that creating and keeping jobs with good wages here in the United States is critical for working families who worry about losing their jobs or taking pay cuts as a result of a recession that was created by Wall Street greed. Anybody who says the recession is over is not paying attention, especially when we have 9.1 percent unemployment and when New Jersey is lagging behind New York and other States in job growth.

Third, we agree that we need to make sure that Democrats keep control of the Legislature. Vote decisions of the Democratic budget at the end of June showed that little thought of working families, senior citizens, police in the streets, women's health, poor people, or the quality of education in our cities or suburbs. Republican Legislature would open the door to "right to work" laws, the elimination of prevailing wage and project labor agreements, and the total destruction of collective bargaining in the public sector. We cannot let this happen. We cannot go backwards.

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We agree on what's important. Let's not fall victim to the divide-and-conquer tactics of those who are out to break our unions and destroy our labor movement. Don't let anyone ever tell your members that they or their unions are irrelevant. We in New Jersey have worked so hard to achieve a strong unified labor movement. We need to move forward, we need to respect each other, and we need to work together because we will all go backwards if we don't. In our unity — in our solidarity — is our strength.

In Solidarity,



Charles Wowkanech
President

Laurel Brennan
Secretary-Treasurer

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