

Governor's Race Down To Wire

The race for governor will probably go right down to the wire," said Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer of the West Virginia State Building and Con-

struction Trades Council. "Labor needs to pull out all the stops if Charlotte Pritt is to be elected," Smith said. "We have to remember every

vote counts." He said the Charleston Gazette's poll conducted in early October showed less than one percentage point separating Pritt's lead against her

opponent, Republican Cecil Underwood. stand the importance of going to the polls and casting a vote for our future," Smith said.

nesses. **Fair Taxation** -- We must work to phase out the food tax and reduce the gas tax to give working families the tax breaks they deserve.

Charlotte Pritt's plan for West Virginia meets the AFL-CIO's requirements for endorsement.

Environment -- We must protect the water, land and air so that future generations may benefit from West Virginia's beauty.

(From Pritt's Economic Plan)

Education -- We must prepare our students for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the 21st Century.

Health Care -- In a Pritt administration, insurance companies will no longer be able to deny coverage based on a pre-existing condition. And, health care consumers will have the freedom to choose their health care providers.

"Charlotte's emphasis on working class issues, aiding small businesses, attracting more international investment, and supporting construction of state highways is an important step in our progress," Smith said.

Jobs -- We must create real jobs with adequate pay and adequate benefits. We must help our small businesses by using West Virginia tax dollars to hire West Virginia workers and busi-



CONTRIBUTING to Charlotte Pritt's campaign for governor are Chuck Craig and Marc Estlack of Millwrights Local 1755.

The Gazette Poll asked a cross-section of registered voters in West Virginia to assume the "general election is today" and to vote in the governor's race.

A similar survey in late August gave Pritt 51 percent, Underwood 48 percent.

"We need to make sure working people of West Virginia under-

COPE Endorsement Means Pro-Worker

An AFL-CIO endorsement means a candidate has passed a tough test of questionnaires, interviews and votes all about where they stand on workers and working families.

The ACT Foundation, like the West Virginia State Building Trades Council, does not endorse candidates.

Instead member unions participate in the AFL-CIO endorsement process, which begins with a questionnaire addressing issues important to members, such as Workers Compensation, Unemployment Compensation, Prevailing Wage, prohibiting the employment of out-of-state strike breakers, the Mason County Pulp Mill, requiring all construction contractors on public

projects to pay health, welfare and retirement benefits, and the West Virginia Jobs Act.

The Labor Council in each candidates' district interviews them on the same issues and holds a vote.

Only if the candidate gets a two thirds vote does he or she then get recommended to the West Virginia State AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE).

State COPE is a standing committee of the officers and executive board of the West Virginia AFL-CIO, representatives from building trades, industrial, and labor councils, and a representative from most International Unions with membership in the state.

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Volunteers Are Crucial

Make Your Vote Count

Without a solid volunteer base most labor friendly candidates have no chance of success.

Their opponents are usually supported by big business and wealthy contributors and have more money.

"Having volunteers stuff envelopes, put up yard signs and go door-to-door can make the difference between winning and losing," said ACT legislative representative "B.B." Smith.

Smith points out some building trades members volunteer a lot of time -- the problem is not enough do.

"If each member would just give one day during an election we

would have many more victories than we have now."

"We can never match the rich candidates dollar for dollar, but they can't match us for volunteers.

"That is our way to win, if we use it."

Putting up yard signs is a cheap and easy way to get your name known as a candidate. The

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ON THE PHONES for candidates are (from left) Dan Polling, of Painters Local 1144, Bevin Seaman of Carpenters Local 899 and Sam Davis of the Parkersburg/Marietta Building Trades.

Issues To Consider When You Vote November 5th

Mason County Pulp Mill

Although ACT recently won a major battle over a water permit in the fight for fairness at the proposed pulp and paper mill in Mason County, the battle is far from over.

ACT continues to address the key issues: a commitment to hire local people to build and operate the mill and for the most modern technology to be used.

Despite the company's lack of commitment to local hiring or non-dioxin producing technology West Virginia has committed as much as \$738 million in tax credits to New York based owners Parsons & Whittemore.

Parsons & Whittemore also wants West Virginia to promise state financing, exemptions from property taxes and almost \$600 million in road improvements.

ACT is for a mill that will commit to and benefit West Virginians, ask what kind of mill candidates are for.

Local Jobs For Local Workers

The West Virginia Jobs Act was developed by ACT with the goal of securing more jobs for West Virginians. The bill requires 90 percent of workers on tax-funded construction projects to be hired locally. That includes workers from West Virginia and all bordering counties of neighboring states.

It is important to foster a strong economy, and to do so we must implement business strategies which benefit working people, not only corporations.

The creation of good-paying jobs for our citizens, keeping money in the state, and strengthening the economy are goals we all support. And we support economic development efforts to achieve these goals, as long as local workers get the benefits our tax funds create.

Ask candidates if they will support the West Virginia Jobs Act.



IMPORTING construction workers like these illegal aliens takes a heavy toll on local jobs.

Who supports jobs for our local workers?

No issue is of more concern to West Virginia families than jobs. Nearly half of our state's counties have unemployment rates of 7 percent or above, some as high as 15 percent.

Our state spends millions of dollars each year to attract new business to West Virginia. But often this money -- your tax dollars -- is spent to bring out-of-state workers into West Virginia.

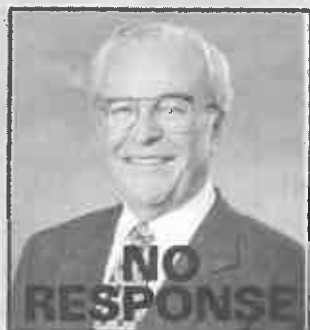
The ACT Foundation asked the candidates for Governor and State Legislature one simple question. Would they support "...constitutionally permissible efforts to require that 90 percent of all persons hired for construction projects funded in whole or in part by state and local tax dollars must be local workers?"

The majority of Legislative candidates -- Democrats and Republicans -- support enacting just such a law.

Charlotte Pritt said yes and made this part of her economic plan for West Virginia.

Cecil Underwood refused to answer our question. Underwood would not take a stand on hiring local workers when your tax money is being used to fund a project.

As a concerned West Virginian, we thought you would like to know.



Prevailing Wage

The Prevailing Wage Rate Law was passed to make sure tax funded projects improved, rather than destroyed, living standards in communities.

By establishing minimum wage rates to be paid on the construction of all public improvements in West Virginia wage scales are protected as well.

Since 1978 attacks launched against this system have been increasing.

A series of protests and appeals, many without basis, have frozen wage rates in some areas of the state and have hampered the enforcement efforts of the West Virginia Department of Labor.

Foes of the prevailing wage system threaten to again tie up the rates in a series of appeals. Efforts to repeal the law on the federal level, called Davis Bacon, failed last year after a very close battle.

Ask what candidates will do if faced with a bill to eliminate or weaken the state prevailing wage law.



PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION like this Belleville Hydroelectric project improves local living standards.

Workers Compensation

The Workers Compensation system was drastically changed by the West Virginia Legislature in 1995. The changes make it almost impossible for an injured worker to apply for permanent total disability benefits. Most damaging for construction workers was the removal of occupation, age, education and ability to be retrained from the factors to consider for disability benefits.

For example, if you lose a hand you can't even apply for total permanent disability.

West Virginia is the only state in the union that uses a medical impairment threshold to block injured workers from applying for total disability benefits. Also argued is that seniors are unfairly cut off from disability benefits when they hit retirement age.

Ask candidates if they will fix workers comp.



ATTACKS on Workers Comp sparked union protest at the State Capitol last winter.

Other Key Issues

Infrastructure projects, like Amendment 3 on this year's ballot, are key to employment opportunities for construction workers. Roads, schools, airports, water and sewer lines, and similar projects should continue to be a top priority.

Collective bargaining for public employees is a primary objective for organized labor. Public employees have fought for the right to a union, without the right to strike, for years.

Right-to-Work, which would force unions to represent non-member freeloaders who pay no dues has been proposed as the solution to all our state's ills for many years.

The governor's race will have a serious impact on various state agencies like the department of labor, workers compensation, unemployment, and division of environmental protection. ACT has worked hard to attack cheaters in all aspects of the construction industry. Without support from the top these agencies can become paper tigers, some argue most already have.

**Vote
YES On
Amendment
3**

Building Trades Candidates

Six building trades members have thrown their hat in the ring and are running for the House of Delegates. They have stopped complaining about the lack of working class representatives in the House and are taking action.



Gary Otho Tillis is assistant business manager with the West Virginia Laborers District Council. A native of Bancroft in Putnam County, Tillis is running for his second term to represent 13,000 voters of the 13th district.

"We have too many professional politicians who have a personal agenda -- to make the rich richer," Tillis said.

"We need someone who, like the working class family, can understand what it means to work 40 hours for a living."

Tillis said most of his support comes from building trades and other unions like steel workers and mine workers.

"My strongest base is definitely union members," he said.

He said he'd like to get a state debarment bill passed -- he introduced it in the last session, but it didn't pan out. "I might have a little bit better luck this time."

The bill would prevent companies from bidding state contracts if they are banned from bidding on federally-funded jobs or those with delinquent workers comp.

"It will help keep these companies from going out of control on workers comp. If we already had it we might not be in this position we are now with companies who are running up \$30 million debts."

Tillis said he thinks we have a shot at getting the Jobs Act passed --if we can get it to the floor.

"It would be hard for anybody to justify voting against it. If it's our tax dollars our people should be the first in line to get the jobs," he said.



Bill Thomas is a member of Boilermakers Local 667 and the industrial representative for the ACT Foundation.

He is making his first attempt for a seat in the House of Delegates 32nd district in Kanawha County.

"In the past, we've seen so many politicians who claim to speak for working people when in fact after getting labor's support spoke for no one but themselves," said Thomas. "How could anyone who's never actually earned a living by working in the hot sun or in cold weather have any idea of what it's like," he said.

Thomas said labor issues would be high on his list of priorities if elected.

"I walked the picket line and saw a dozen illegal aliens brought in on the Embassy Suites job in downtown Charleston," he said. "We need a law, like the West Virginia Jobs Act to make sure local jobs go to local workers."

Thomas also believes in more enforcement of existing laws, like contractor licensing and prevailing wage. Working at ACT he has seen too many companies that cheat.

Working on a small budget Thomas has come to appreciate volunteer efforts.

"I've gotten a lot of support from those who know how important politics are to labor," Thomas said. "A lot of union members probably don't bother to vote and it hurts whether they realize it or not -- they're helping to elect someone by not voting."



Joseph R. Weiland II, of Newton, is running for a seat in the House's 11th district, Roane County, because he believes working people in his district are not adequately represented.

Weiland said he is pleased with the support he received from his local, Laborers 1353, and the AFL-CIO.

Among his goals for the next legislative session are "workers comp reform--the 50 percent impairment policy and the 65 and you're off," Weiland said.

With a 50% impairment threshold a construction worker who loses a hand can't get a permanent disability. "In fact they can't even apply for permanent disability," he said.

The new law also stops disability payments when a person receives social security.

"I also think injured workers should be able to choose their own doctor."

The Jobs Act is also among his priorities, Weiland said.

"Anytime projects are funded with our tax money, the jobs need to stay in our community."

He said he would like to tell the ACT membership to get five people to go vote -- "and for each of them to tell five more."



Larry Linch is running for his third term in the House of Delegates' 41st district.

Linch, of Clarksburg, is business manager for the North Central Carpenters District Council.

He is in the Legislature because "if we are going to have a true voice in the laws that govern the way we are treated, we need to have people in office we can trust."

"It's evident after the worker comp vote that a lot of our so-called legislative friends weren't our friends when we needed their assistance," Linch said.

Linch said the precincts of his county he does best in are working class-type neighborhoods.

"I'm looked at as not only a labor candidate, but also a candidate who works in consumer protection and a lot of senior citizen issues."

As a veteran, he also works on a lot of veteran's issues, and was this year recognized as the 'Legislator of the Year' by veterans groups, he said.

Linch said he introduced the jobs bill during his first year in the legislature.

"It's been revamped and ACT has picked it up and carried the ball as far as contacting the county commissions for support. With Charlotte Pritt as governor, we have a chance to see it move ahead next year," Linch said.

"It's all about numbers. If we have a majority of the House and a majority of the Senate and the right governor, we can do a lot of good things for working people."



Sistersville native Kenneth R. Livingston said there are 9,000 voters in the 6th district, Tyler County, and he's going to try to do something to get them fair representation.

"When I went door to door to talk to the people of my district, I told them the 28 years I've been in the workforce I've been complaining like everyone else that we don't have enough people from the working class in the House or Senate," Livingston said.

Having working people in the Legislature is very important because they can relate to more people in all walks of life,

"that businessmen or lawyers just can't."

Livingston said that if it hadn't been for union endorsements, and help from his own local, Boilermakers 667, he couldn't have begun to do 10 percent of what he's accomplished in his campaign.

"A lot of people call unions a special interest group, and it's not. It's a group of concerned people," he said.

The Jobs Act and Workers comp reform would also be on his list of priorities.

Senior programs need to be kept in tact as well, Livingston said.

"When I speak to seniors groups I let them know that jobs are the main support of the programs we have in West Virginia, so if we don't have jobs, our other programs can't function either."



Sam Henry of Parkersburg used to be the president of Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers Local 35, but when AB Chance shut down in 1994 the local was dissolved.

So Henry joined Carpenters in January of 1995. Now he's a member of Local 899, Parkersburg.

Henry is running for the 10th district House of Delegates seat because -- "working men and women lack a voice."

Henry is currently serving a four-year term on the Parkersburg City Council.

He has gotten a lot of help with his campaign from unions.

"I had volunteers helping to cut stakes for signs. The apprentice class of Painters Local 1144 painted them and then volunteers put them up, too."

"I've got a lot of friends in the labor movement so it's natural that the bulk of my support would come from unions."

"I would concentrate on the Jobs Act's. We ought to use local people when state money is used before bringing in people from clear across country to take our jobs."

Henry said he thinks the key in Wood County is getting the membership out to vote.

"I am the only card carrying candidate in the district. It's important that our voice be heard but the only way we can get our voice heard is to elect people that are willing to stand up and fight for working people -- as I have done in the past and will continue to do in the future."

Make Your Vote Count

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 problem is getting the signs up and keeping them up.

Allowing a candidate to put a sign in your yard is a big help.

Putting a bumper sticker on your car or truck is another plus.

Phone banks are directed at union members trying to identify support and problems for can-

thing we all can do is vote.

With an average of nearly 70 percent of its members voting, ACT is doing fairly well on "getting out the vote" when compared to the general public's 40 to 50 percent average.

But what about the other 30 percent of our membership? That's more than 3,000 ACT members who could be casting a vote to improve their future.

"We need to concentrate on getting ALL of our membership out to the voting booths," said Smith.

Unions have a reputation for turning out on election day, but "we can't get lazy and think our vote doesn't count -- because it does."

Smith points out that earlier in the year ACT worked

with local unions to identify members not registered to vote to make it easy for them to register.

That effort will be wasted if these members don't vote.

"I'd also like to remind our members to encourage their friends and family members to get out and vote, too.

"We have a chance to make a real difference this November 5th by electing candidates who care about workers and their families," said Smith.



PUTTING UP signs is Jim Furbee, a retired member of Wheeling Pipefitters #83.

didates. It's a chance to ask about a candidate and send information for folks who have questions.

Helping out with mailings is also important. Direct mail is a cheap way for a candidate to get out their message.

Door to door efforts are usually done right before the election to remind people to vote.

All these things take volunteers, Smith said.

Of course the most important

West Virginia AFL-CIO Election Endorsements

STATEWIDE

Bill Clinton
President

Jay Rockefeller
U.S. Senate

Charlotte Pritt
Governor

Darrell McGraw
Attorney General

Larry Starcher
Supreme Court (full term)

Robin Davis
Supreme Court (unexpired term)

U.S. HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Alan B. Mollohan
1st District

Bob Wise
2nd District

Nick Joe Rahall
3rd District

STATE SENATE

3rd: Louis F. Flade
 6th: John Pat Fanning

8th: David Grubb
 14th: Jon Blair Hunter

16th: Herb Snyder

STATE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

1st: Jeff Davis
 Loretta Price (R)

Mark Forest Underwood

30th: Pam Nixon
 Larry L. Rowe
 Sharon Spencer

3rd: Tal Hutchins
 Paul Rusen

16th: Susan Hubbard
 Joe Hutchinson

32nd: Bill Thomas*
 Debra Whanger
 David Workman

4th: Kenneth D. Tucker
 Scott G. Varner

17th: Jerry "Mike" Damron

18th: Larry Jack Heck

34th: Brent Boggs

5th: James Fauber

19th: Grant Preece
 Harry Keith White

38th: John J. Tucci

6th: Kenneth R. Livingston*

20th: Tracy Dempsey
 Greg A. Butcher

41st: Ron A. Fragale
 Larry Linch*

7th: Paul Janes

21st: Ernie Kuhn

43rd: Mike Caputo
 Paul E. Prunty

9th: Larry Godfrey

23rd: Joe Sparks

44th: Bob Beach
 Mike Buchanan
 Eugene Claypole
 Barbara Fleischauer

10th: Sam Henry*
 Fred Gillespie (R)

25th: Richard D. Flanigan

26th: Mary Pearl Compton

11th: Joseph L. Weiland II*

27th: Virginia Mahan
 Warren R. McGraw II

46th: David "O.B." Collins

12th: Ginny Starcher

28th: Thomas W. Campbell

51st: Larry D. Miller

13th: Gary Tillis*

29th: Tom Louisos

54th: Laura R. Rose

14th: Debbie Phillips

*Indicates building trades members.

56th: Dale Manuel

COPE Endorsement

Continued from page 1

Once the endorsement has been made, the state AFL-CIO will begin notifying their members through mailings and phone calls.

"It's important for our members to realize that endorsements are based on labor issues," said

Steve Burton, of the Tri-State Building Trades and member of the AFL-CIO executive board.

"State COPE is concerned solely with whether or not these candidates will be helpful to workers on the basis of jobs, working conditions, wages and benefits," Burton said.

The ACT Report

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