

SOAR PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST

Calls for single-payer health care system

June 19, 2008—With the assistance of crutches, Steve Skvara District 7 executive board member walked with demonstrators gathered on Main Street across from Humana's corporate headquarters. An auto accident left the 61-year-old with a compound fracture in one of his knees and reliance on the crutches. While he has health insurance, he said his wife does not.

Skvara joined more than 50 demonstrators who want health insurance to be available for all Americans regardless of economic status or employment. He said the American people are at fault for letting the government fail to provide health coverage to all citizens

and instead give health insurance corporations too much power in deciding who gets health care.

The gathering was part of the National Day of Protest Against Health Insurance Corporations, an event sponsored by a collaboration of groups that support a national health insurance program. The demonstration was timed to coincide with America's Health Insurance Plans' national convention in San Francisco. The group is a "national association representing nearly 1,300 insurance companies," the group's Web site said. Demonstrations like the one in Louisville were planned in more than a dozen cities, including New York,

Stephen P. Skvara, USW District 7 SOAR executive board member addresses demonstrators in front of Humana's Corporate Headquarters in Louisville, Ky.



Chicago, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, according to a press release from Physicians for a National Health Program, one of the groups backing the events.

Steelworkers Reach Settlement with FreightCar America

To Provide Pensions and Severance Pay to Johnstown Workers When Company Laid Off Workers to Avoid Pension Eligibility

Johnstown, Pa.—The United Steelworkers announced June 26, 2008 that a tentative settlement has been reached with FreightCar America (FCA) that will provide pensions to 201 union members and severance pay to another 110 who were laid off in 2007. The settlement will resolve a lawsuit supported by the union which claimed that FCA unlawfully laid off employees in 2007 in order to deprive them of pension benefits, and will resolve an arbitration won by the union which found that the company violated the contract by laying off employees with 20 or more years of service.

Most of the affected workers were hired during 1988-89 and were nearing pension eligibility. FreightCar's CEO called the union committee into his office during the summer of 2006 and told them that he would not allow the workers to accrue enough seniority to qualify for pensions.

In addition to the mass layoffs, the company ceased rail-car production, removed equipment and assigned the work to other locations.

The union immediately supported an ERISA lawsuit asserting that layoffs motivated by a desire to prevent pension eligibility constituted unlawful discrimination. In January, Judge Kim Gibson of Johnstown federal district court ordered laid off employees reinstated. The order was

appealed by the company, which also sought to vacate the arbitration award.

The settlement will resolve all outstanding issues between the parties, and grant pensions to workers who would have worked until the end of 2009 and qualified for a pension. Most pensions include retiree health care as well as a \$400 monthly supplement until age 62. It also provides \$750,000 to be disbursed to union members; settles all outstanding grievances with monetary payments to individual members; and recognizes an official plant shutdown date of May 15, 2008 for the purposes of collective bargaining, providing vested pension benefits to additional employees.

"We've gotten justice for our members," said USW Local 2635 unit president Jeff Anderson. "My only regret is that we've lost jobs in Johnstown because the company took our technology and our processes and moved them to other locations.

"We've been making rail cars in Johnstown since 1901," he said. "History will record that we were noted for making two things—freight cars and company millionaires," he said. "Now, both are gone but we have salvaged fair treatment for our members with this settlement."

The settlement must be approved by the Court.