



USW Congratulates Ken Neumann on New Role as International President of SOAR

TORONTO, ON – There’s no rest for Ken Neumann. The former United Steelworkers union (USW) National Director is taking retirement seriously by becoming International President of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR).

“Congratulations, Ken! We are so fortunate to have you serve as International President of SOAR. We are happy to have your energy and experience on the front lines of all the fights for working people – now with a focus for seniors and retirees,” said Marty Warren, USW National Director.

Neumann served five terms as USW National Director from 2004 to 2022. Prior to 2004, Neumann was the elected Director of USW District 3 (Western Canada and the Territories) for 15 years. At the time of his retirement, Neumann was the longest-serving member of the USW International Executive Board.

“I’m proud and delighted to be able to continue serving my union and its members – particularly seniors and retirees – in my retirement. I like to stay connected, and if I can make a contribution by advancing the interests of union members in their retirement, I am honoured to do so,” said Neumann.

One of Neumann’s passions has been fighting for the dignity and independence of injured and disabled workers. He is co-chair of the National Institute for Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR), operating out of Port Alberni, B.C. Neumann helped found Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences, the first university of its kind, which trains health-care professionals in the return-to-work process for injured workers.

In 2022, Neumann was honoured with the University of Toronto’s Sefton-Williams Award, recognizing his tremendous contributions to the labour movement and Canadian labour relations landscape.

Neumann, was officially sworn in as SOAR International President on March 1, becoming the organization’s fifth international president and the second Canadian to hold the post. He succeeds Bill Pienta, who led the organization for 13 years, after announcing his decision to step down last December.

Recognized as an affiliate of the USW, SOAR provides opportunities for Steelworker retirees to stay on the frontlines as activists, helping to advance the policies and programs working families need.

Membership is open to individuals aged 45 and over who want to remain active in our union and fight for working people.

Then-USW International President Lynn Williams formed SOAR in 1985 as a way to keep retirees connected to activism and to their union. Upon his retirement, Williams became SOAR International President from 1997 to 2007, the first Canadian in each of those positions. Williams passed away in 2014.

USW.CA Press Release - March 4, 2026



Honoring the Past, Building the Future: A Message from SOAR's New President



On March 1st, I was proudly sworn in as President of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) – and it was a day I will never forget. That same day, history was made when Roxanne Brown became the first woman ever elected President of the United Steelworkers. Being sworn in alongside her and this historic new Executive Board is an honor I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Throughout my tenure as the National Director of Canada, I was proud to champion the SOAR program alongside our late International President Leo Gerard. Leo was a fierce defender of retirees' rights and a towering figure in the labor movement — someone who understood that our obligation to Steelworkers does not end when they leave the shop floor.

This role is both a personal milestone and a continuation of my lifelong commitment to the labor movement – and I do not take it lightly. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of my longtime mentor, the late Lynn Williams, the fifth International President of

the United Steelworkers and a decade-long SOAR President whose tireless dedication to retirees set the standard for this office. Every decision I make will be guided by the values he embodied: solidarity, service, and an unwavering commitment to our members.

As President, my focus will be on expanding SOAR's reach — growing chapters across every district, deepening solidarity with local unions, and ensuring every retired Steelworker feels seen, heard, and supported. Engaging members aged 45 and older, along with like-minded allies, and inspiring them to step up in their chapters and communities will be central to that effort. This organization's strength has always come from its people, and I am committed to building the connections that keep it alive and growing.

For over four decades, SOAR has served as a vital bridge between active and retired Steelworkers – and I am committed to making that mission stronger than ever. Together, we will fight for the issues that matter most to our members, defend the dignity they have earned through a lifetime of hard work, and build an organization that future generations of Steelworkers will be proud of.

To the leaders of SOAR chapters across our union: I am honored to work alongside you. Together, we will forge the best practices needed to build a stronger, more connected SOAR.

Ken Neumann, SOAR President

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

Nelson Mandela

Electronic Deposit Available for SOAR Chapter Dues Refunds

There is still time before our next round of SOAR Chapter Dues Refunds. Please be advised that SOAR dues refunds can be electronically deposited into your SOAR chapter's bank account rather than by receiving a paper check.

To set up your chapter to receive electronic deposits, please mail the following items to the SOAR office:

- 1) A voided check from your SOAR chapter's checking account.
- 2) The most recent copy of a bank statement to confirm the complete title/name of the chapter's bank account and the current mailing address listed on the account.
- 3) A note requesting that you want your chapter to be set up for automatic deposit of SOAR dues refunds.



Send the above items to:

SOAR

Attn. Julie Stein, SOAR Director

60 Blvd of the Allies

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or, you can scan the items to jstein@usw.org

As a reminder, SOAR dues refunds are sent three times per year, in April, August and November. Once on direct deposit, a confirmation receipt for the sum transferred into the SOAR chapter's bank account is mailed to the officer designated to receive financial mailings. Also included in the mailing is a "SOAR Chapter Refund Summary" report listing the members who paid their SOAR dues during the cycle.

Feel free to contact the SOAR office if you have questions. Toll-free: 866-208-4420

Reminder Notice For SOAR Chapters



Please contact the SOAR Office

immediately if your chapter
hasn't returned its required Annual
Financial report for 2025.

SOAR Office toll-free number:
866-208-4420



SOAR Chapter Connection

A bi-monthly publication
of SOAR

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Articles and Photos Requested

The next deadline for the SOAR in Action magazine will be April 28, 2026, and articles should be emailed to the SOAR Director, Julie Stein at jstein@usw.org



The deadline to submit material for the next issue of the SOAR Chapter Connection newsletter is May 20, 2026. Email your article to soar3@icloud.com.

DID YOU KNOW THAT A WOMAN CREATED:

- Social Security
- Minimum wage
- Unemployment insurance
- The 40-hour work week
- Child labor laws
- Welfare
- Protections of labor rights

...all while the first ever female member of a U.S. cabinet?

THAT WOMAN WAS FRANCES PERKINS

MARCH - WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2026



francesperkinscenter.org

Old Charlie Sez

I'm 82 years old. Last December, I went to see my doctor for my yearly wellness visit. He asked if I had fallen since I last saw him. I said that I did get dizzy once, but didn't actually fall. He asked if I take any prescription drugs. I don't. He gave me an EKG, and when the results came in, he said I had AFIB (Atrial Fibrillation) and gave me a prescription for ELIQUIS, which is some sort of blood thinner. I knew that I had AFIB because after each of maybe 3 or 4 small surgeries months and years before, I was always reminded that I had AFIB. I just didn't think much about it because I've never had an "episode." One doctor, long ago, said I probably have AFIB from having had Rheumatic fever as a child.

I'm on Medicare, and the company I retired from doesn't have a prescription drug plan that is as good as the medicare Part D drug plans, so I have always purchased the drug plan that has zero monthly premium. So, this year is my first year having to take a RX drug. The deductible for all of the Part D plans this year is \$615, so my ELIQUIS is \$615! And that was in December of last year. So I had to get it renewed this year, so I had to pay the darn deductible again for another \$615 bucks!

One good thing though, is that the last issue of the Connection newsletter on page 11 says that ELIQUIS is to be negotiated this year (2026) to lower the price, so I'm hoping that the price for this particular drug will come down this year. Also, this year, my out-of-pocket limit for prescription drugs is \$2,100.

Part of the wellness test is to determine if a person is beginning to develop MCI. Mild Cognitive Impairment is an early stage of memory or cognitive loss, such as language or thinking problems, that are more pronounced than normal aging but don't significantly interfere with daily life or independence. What the doctor usually does is, at the beginning of his spiel, when he says he's going to give me three words or phrases, and towards the end of his spiel he will ask me to repeat those words. I flunked that test even though I jotted them down on paper when he left the room for just a moment. I forgot where I put that paper... I have never been a good liar.

Charlie

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

United Steelworkers



It's Been My Life

By David McCall

USW International President Emeritus

I'll always remember how company bosses got red in the face, tried to water down our contract proposals and made absurd demands for concessions at way too many bargaining sessions over the years.

"You're not talking to Dave McCall," I liked to remind them at these moments. "You're talking to the members of the United Steelworkers."

It was my way of cutting the bigwigs down to size, of forcing them to focus on the people who really matter—the tough-as-nails, make-no-excuses workers who deliver for America every day.

Working shoulder-to-shoulder with USW members—hundreds of thousands of them, in every sector of the economy—has been much more than an honor.

It's been my life.

I'm retiring in the near future, confident that the union I joined more than 55 years ago will keep leading this nation forward.

USW members will continue to produce the highest quality materials, goods and components anywhere, sustaining our country's industrial might and security. They'll continue to provide the greatest level of service in the public sector and health care, safeguarding us all.

I know that my co-workers also will double down on solidarity, the source of worker power, to build stronger communities and an economy that works for everyone.

USW members stand better equipped for this work than ever before. And that's fortunate, because rarely has it been needed as much as it is right now.

As working people struggle to afford life's essentials in an uncertain economy, they increasingly look to unions to balance the scales.

Union members make higher wages, have better access to affordable health care and enjoy greater retirement security, on average, than other Americans.

That's the [union difference](#), created and sustained in large part by decades of [strongly enforced](#), forward-looking USW contracts—the kind I relied on as an 18-year-old just starting out with Local 6787 at what was then Bethlehem Steel's Burns Harbor, Ind., Works.

But it wasn't only the good wages and benefits that made an indelible impression or shaped my future early on.

The union went to bat for me and a handful of co-workers, saving our jobs after a wave of unfair firings at the mill.

Afterward, when the local needed a steward, I knew it was my turn to step up for others. I picked up a set of grievance forms and got busy. I've been representing USW members in one capacity or another ever since.

The one percent will never understand the bond that unites us.

Employers chase quarterly profits. But we go all in for the long haul, investing decades of sweat equity in jobs that mean everything. The way we see it, shared prosperity is the only real kind.

That's why a handful of USW activists, including me, stood strong one night many years ago in Canton, Ohio, when authorities demanded we end a protest inside the headquarters of Republic Engineered Steels.

The company wanted to cut hundreds of union jobs in the Midwest and open a non-union mini-mill in the South. We weren't about to let that happen.

A judge arrived and threatened to arrest us if we didn't leave, saying he'd taken an oath to enforce the law. We told him that, as union officials, we'd taken an oath as well—to our members—and that we weren't leaving.

Our defiance cost us a night in jail. But that mini-mill never got built.

During the steel import crisis of the 1980s, we took care of each other in ways that left a lasting impression on me. Locals operated food banks and provided other assistance to those who lost their livelihoods while the entire union fought to preserve jobs and stabilize the industry.

We showed our collective mettle again a decade later when a wave of bankruptcies threatened steel once again.

USW members faced significant job losses with LTV's bankruptcy alone. But we returned our members to work with a new owner, International Steel Group (ISG), and an innovative contract that required the company to invest in a voluntary employees' beneficiary association (VEBA), saving the benefits of 70,000 LTV retirees and spouses.

Even better, this work served as a blueprint for rescues of other union-represented steel companies—including Georgetown Steel, Acme Steel and Bethlehem Steel—and the extension of VEBA coverage for those companies' retirees as well.

Sadly, we fight many of the same battles over and over.

The USW in recent years has supported workers' union drives not only in traditional sectors, like chemicals and metals, but in emerging industries such as electric vehicle and battery production. This kind of expansion ensures workers a seat at the table in an evolving economy where employers seek to cut corners on safety and maximize profits on the backs of those who actually create the wealth.

Winning these struggles also means building strength outside the workplace.

That's why so many USW members double as ardent activists, championing legislation and policies that create jobs, build the middle class and promote justice. I'm proud of Rapid Response, the union's member-driven advocacy program; NextGen, an initiative aimed at raising up the next group of union leaders; and SOAR, our retiree activist network.

Whenever and however working people are threatened, USW members rise to the occasion.

I leave office grateful for all the USW has afforded me and confident about the future. I know the USW will remain a force for good and ready to face the **challenges** to come.

A Second Retirement for Bill Pienta



For most people, retirement means stepping back. For Bill Pienta, it meant stepping up. Over the past 13 years, he served as International President of the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) — leading the organization with the same energy and commitment that defined his career.

On March 1, Pienta stepped down as SOAR International President. He was succeeded by Ken Neumann, the former National Director of USW Canada, who takes the helm of an organization Pienta helped shape over more than a decade.

Pienta isn't disappearing from the scene — he's just calling it a second retirement. He continues to serve on the SOAR Executive Board and was appointed President Emeritus, a title that reflects the lasting mark he's left on the organization. At the March 2 Executive Board meeting in Pittsburgh, he was honored with a plaque commemorating his years of service.

Our newly installed International SOAR President Ken Neumann summed it up simply: "Congratulations on your second retirement, Bill. You are a treasure to our union and to SOAR."

The SOAR Store

Ball Caps!



SOAR ball caps for purchase!
\$20 each + the cost of shipping.
Contact the SOAR Office.
866-208-4420

\$20

T-shirts!



T-Shirts - Medium Ash
\$15 each + the cost of shipping.
Available in Size S - 3X
Contact the SOAR Office: 866-208-4420

\$15

New Item!



AKWA
Black Plaid Polo Shirts
\$55 each + the cost of shipping.
Available in Size S - 4X

\$55

New Item!



AKWA
1/4 Zip Micro Fleece Pullover—Charcoal Gray
\$65 each + the cost of shipping.
Available in Size S - 4X

\$65

Alliance Releases New Congressional Voting Record

By Robert Roach, Jr.



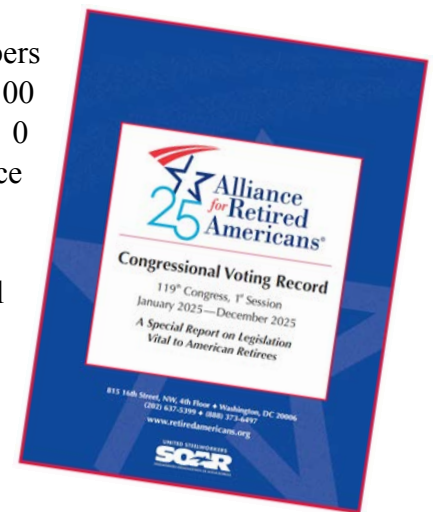
The Alliance released its 2025 Congressional Voting Record - which scores each U.S. Senator and Representative on important retirement security issues in March.

The report evaluates ten Senate and House floor votes in 2025. These include votes to prevent over 5 million older Americans from losing access to Home-and-Community Based Services that allow them to age in place, to prevent millions of Americans from losing their health insurance and access to nutrition programs, and to enact tax cuts for wealthy Americans and corporations.

Forty-seven members of the U.S. Senate and 211 members of the U.S. House of Representatives earned perfect pro-retiree scores of 100 percent. In contrast, 47 senators and 197 House members earned scores of 0 percent pro-retiree, one of the largest numbers of “0%” scores since the Alliance began publishing its Congressional Voting Record in 2001.

Most members of Congress pay lip service to protecting seniors. But our annual voting record shows which House and Senate members back up their words with actions and vote in older Americans’ best interests.

The votes members of the House and Senate take in Washington have real consequences for retirees and their families. Our report provides a tool for older Americans to get the information they need to hold their elected officials accountable.



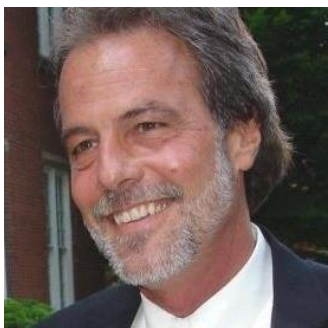
Download the national report or a state report by going to <https://retiredamericans.org/voting-record/>

Robert Roach, Jr. is president of the Alliance for Retired Americans. He was previously General Secretary-Treasurer of the IAMAW. For more information, visit www.retiredamericans.org.

“Leaders must be tough enough to fight, tender enough to cry, human enough to make mistakes, humble enough to admit them, strong enough to absorb the pain, and resilient enough to bounce back and keep on moving.”

Reverend Jesse Jackson

Protecting America's Auto Market



Chinese automakers are applying a full-court press to gain entry into the American auto market. The Alliance for American Manufacturing feels it is important for President Trump to rebuff these Chinese overtures and protect the domestic auto industry.

Trump may be guaranteeing American automakers' extinction if Chinese companies gain market access through joint ventures, transplants, or imports. The President takes pride in his dealmaking abilities but the Alliance for American Manufacturing urges him to resist cutting a deal with Chinese state-sponsored manufacturers.

Today, Chinese vehicles are extremely rare on American highways because of tariffs and regulations that are acting as a deterrent into the U.S. marketplace. China has an export-inducing overcapacity of vehicles and Americans are always looking to lower costs. This is, indeed, a dangerous combination.

In Mexico, one in five vehicles sold is made by a Chinese company. In Europe, it's already one in ten. Chinese automaker BYD has sold more EVs worldwide than Tesla and an entry into the American auto market is the crown jewel for China to dominate global auto manufacturing.

The domestic auto industry is the heartbeat of American manufacturing, supporting job-rich supply chains in steel, aluminum, glass, auto parts, electronics, and rubber. Forcing it into competition with vertically integrated rivals that are focused on seizing market share would, from an employment perspective, trigger a disaster on par with the China Shock of the 2000s.

China's auto export platform was virtually nonexistent but in 2025 it exported 7 million units. China's production capacity now exceeds its combined exports and internal demand by 19 million units, almost double what the U.S. produces in a year.

We should maintain exclusionary tariffs and regulations on Chinese autos. We should reject joint ventures and transplants. And we should also invest heavily so the American auto industry can conduct the R&D necessary to deliver quality and affordable vehicles to market. Letting in China will not strengthen American automakers. It will inevitably weaken them.

Jeff Bonior is a staff writer at the Alliance for American Manufacturing

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

SOAR Member Offers Glimpse Into the World of Organ Donation Through New Book



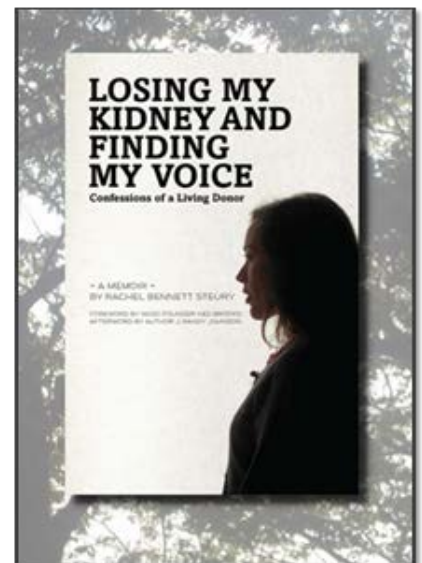
Rachel Bennett Steury's memoir *Losing My Kidney and Finding My Voice: Confessions of a Living Donor* has recently been released. Rachel was a member of USW Local 634L in Auburn, Indiana and USW Local 3657 in Pittsburgh before her role as Midwest Field Coordinator with the Alliance for American Manufacturing. She has been a SOAR member for more than a decade. In her memoir, Rachel shares her experiences donating a kidney to a stranger. She counters myths with facts and answers the pressing questions she had along the way. It's a story that will resonate with many as kidney disease is such a common health crisis.

A mix of kidney tales and union tales, Rachel's memoir also recognizes SOAR members and union members who were active in her life during that time. She credits her working-class values, coupled with decades of experience in her union with inspiring her activism after donation. From advocating within the halls of Congress to walking in the Rose Parade on behalf of living donors, Rachel discovered the key to living her life with purpose.

"I've had the privilege of working for and being a product of the labor movement, where family-supporting wages and benefits were foundational to allowing me to live meaningfully within and beyond the factory walls," Rachel explains. "To my Granite City friend and fellow SOAR member, Jeff Rains, who mailed me a twenty-dollar bill to reserve his signed copy of this memoir five years ago, check the mail, brother!"

Author and retired Steelworker, J. Randy Johnson wrote the Afterword in Rachel's memoir, reflecting on their time in the union together. Discussion questions are included for support groups or book clubs. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to support living donor education efforts. The memoir is published by BC Books and available via Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other popular outlets.

For more information visit: <https://www.bennettsteury.com/memoir>



Rachel Bennett Steury

"When everyone is included, everyone wins."

Reverend Jesse Jackson