

# LABOR NEWS

## Union Update

### Time to Check Out of These Hotels

The Buffalo (N.Y.) International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 17, has requested boycotting the Buffalo Adams' Mark Hotel.

The Hotel and its owners have a long history of being antiunion and antiworker. Local 17 is locked in a battle with owner Fred Kummer to obtain a first contract. Those discussions began in September 2000 and continued until April 2003. During this time, the hotel was found guilty of violating the National Labor Relations Act by committing bad-faith bargaining. In April 2003, the hotel made a final offer and left the table.

Local 17 members have picketed regularly twice per week as well as during special events. The local AFL-CIO and the national AFL-CIO have voted to support a boycott of the hotel. Organizations that have declined to use the hotel have included labor as well as private businesses on both the local and state levels.

According to UNITE HERE, the following hotels are also on strike or locked out and under boycott:

**Struck or locked out:** Chicago—Congress Plaza Hotel; New York—Crowne Plaza La Guardia, Hampton Inn New York JFK, Holiday Inn JFK

**Boycott:** Atlanta—Hotel Indigo Atlanta Midtown, InterContinental Buckhead; Boston—Hyatt Regency Boston Financial District, Hyatt Regency, Cambridge; Chicago—Four Seasons, Intercontinental Hotel; Los Angeles—Glendale Hilton, Hyatt Regency Long Beach; Miami—Hotel InterContinental Miami, Hyatt Regency Miami; Monterey—Monterey Bay Travelodge (Fairgrounds); Sacramento—Hyatt Regency Sacramento; San Francisco—

Argent Hotel, Comfort Suites San Francisco Airport, Crowne Plaza Union Square, Fairmont San Francisco, Four Seasons San Francisco, Grand Hyatt, Hilton San Francisco, Holiday Inn Civic Center, Holiday Inn Express (FW), Holiday Inn Fisherman's Wharf, Hyatt Regency San Francisco, Mark Hopkins



InterContinental, Omni San Francisco Hotel, Palace Hotel.

Additional information about the listed hotels can be found at [www.hotellaboradvisor.info](http://www.hotellaboradvisor.info).

### DOL, Wal-Mart Support Union Bashing

Add the U.S. Labor Department and Wal-Mart to the backers of the anti-union propagandist who trumpets the so-called "Center for Union Facts."

Using the federal Freedom of Information Act, the nonprofit nonpartisan Center for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a group noted for exposing congressional campaign finance scandals, released 108 pages of documents in late June detailing ties between the Labor Department and lobbyist Richard Berman, founder and creator of the so-called Center for Union

Facts, which has placed full-page ads in major newspapers, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The ads were filled with anti-union accusations and innuendoes.

Meanwhile, WakeUpWalMart.com, citing the *Detroit News*, reported that the retail behemoth, known for its virulent labor-law-breaking and anti-worker attitudes—plus its poverty wages and lack of benefits for workers—is "exchanging information about unions" with Berman's Center.

The U.S. government's help came not in cash, but via Labor Department participation and research for Berman's stunts and ads, all paid for by taxpayer dollars. CREW had no estimate on how much the Labor Department has spent to aid Berman's antiunion campaign.

CREW found that Labor Secretary Elaine Chao agreed to be profiled for one of Berman's groups, the First Jobs Institute. Citing confidentiality, the Labor Department did not release any more correspondence involving Chao, even after losing a suit that CREW filed—it is still suing for the documents.

A check of the Labor Department's website found no response to the information that CREW uncovered about the agency's ties with Berman.

WakeUpWalMart.com's probe found that senior Wal-Mart officials Bob McAdam and Lee Culpepper worked with Berman on some of his "special projects," including defending corporate pollution of U.S. waterways with mercury, a poison.

The group found that McAdam worked with Phillip Morris at the Tobacco Institute at the same time the firm gave \$900,000 to Berman's pro-tobacco-company campaign. And Culpepper worked at the National Restaurant Association, whose members contributed to Berman's campaign in favor of mercury poisoning. Culpepper admitted that Berman was "a lightning rod," but said "he helps the industry." ☘