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UNION
STRONG!

The Labor Response to COVID-19

I am my brother's & sister's keeper

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Overview

- NYS 2.5 million members
 - NYSUT-600,000 members
 - CSEA-300,000 members
 - Building & Construction trades-200,000
 - PEF-54,000
- Finger Lakes CLC-17,000 members
- Majority of union members are “essential” workers
- Increased public interest in unionization

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Advocating for workers during a pandemic

- Safety became #1 priority for every worker
- Rapid problem solving among unions & management to protect workers
- Agencies & unions advocating together
- Innovation between unions & businesses
 - Hickey Freeman masks
- Worker safety enforcement
 - masks & testing
- Increased union spending
 - hotels, masks
- Protecting union staff
- Supporting workers who traveled to high risk areas
- Member engagement & training innovations
- Telecommuting

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Group Homes-OPWDD

- PEF/CSEA/NYSCOBA
- These are people's homes-can't require masks
- Challenges:
 - Difficulty quarantining residents
 - Shared bedrooms
 - Hands-on job
 - Staffing-staff working 24 hours straight, unable to move staff around
 - No day programs
 - No way to enforce mask wearing for COVID + residents
 - Staff in Covid + home can only travel back and forth to work
 - Ontario ARC & other agencies budget overruns
 - Cleaning supplies short supply

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Schools

- “Learning to fly while simultaneously flying the plane”
- Remote from March-June
- Currently, no single approach to school districts-full remote, hybrid, in-person
- Not yet a cohesive response to masking
- Challenges:
 - Teachers had to very quickly rethink teaching
 - Limited internet access in rural areas & students only having access to cell phones
 - Schools lacking funds for added costs: technology, PPE
 - Family situations
 - Special ed students left behind-relationship building
 - Threats of 20% cuts to school budget
 - Remote schooling may mean cuts to paraprofessional jobs
 - New testing requirements
 - School districts allowed “freedom to fail”
 - Had to change timelines & standards
 - 20% testing-students & staff

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Building & Construction Trades

- Temporary work shutdown
- Ensuring mask compliance
- New work
 - Tessa plastics
- School construction season extended
- Adapting apprentice training
- Advocacy for infrastructure dollars

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NYS DOL

- Unprecedented number of unemployment requests
- Stressed out, vulnerable community members
- Old software
- Mandatory overtime
- Telecommuting

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Private Unions

- **Coach & Equipment-UAW**
 - 5 week furlough
 - Union & management work closely to maintain safety
 - Increased contracts
- **Finger Lakes Gaming & Racetrack-RRJB/Workers United**
 - Reopened in September
 - Reduced capacity/reduced staff
 - Reduced dues collection
 - 10pm closing time
- **Grocery stores-Tops, Wegmans, Walgreens-UFCW, Teamsters, BCTGMI**
 - Unions leading the way on safety-plexiglass barriers, masks, cleaning protocols
 - Hazard duty pay raises
 - Enhanced public appreciation for staff

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The work continues

- Heroes Act/Federal Funding
- President-elect Biden Transition Team
- AFL-CIO America's 5 Economic Essentials:
 - Keep frontline workers safe and secure
 - Keeping workers on payroll
 - Keep local and state governments solvent & working
 - Keep Americans healthy
 - Keep America Competitive-invest in infrastructure
- OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard to protect workers

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Federal/State legislation to secure & protect jobs in specific industries:

- Infrastructure
- Health Care
- National Security
- Food production

Local union coordinator program

Increased attention & support for essential workers

An injury to one is an injury to all:

Collaboration between community & unions