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‘Buzzing’ About Corporate Greed



Blue Collar Buzz, New York



By Joe Maniscalco

New York, NY – On last night’s episode of LaborPress’ Blue Collar Buzz, we heard four instances where corporate greed continues to tear down the lives of working men & women — and the rest of the nation with them.

What else do you call it but ugly, naked greed when efforts to improve safety following the deaths of more than 30 construction workers in the last couple of years — two on a single day just last week — are met with entrenched and intractable resistance?

Imagine the *chutzpah* it takes to claim that trying to find ways of preventing even more deaths will somehow limit construction job opportunities for minority workers who have been doing most of the the dying on NYC developments. It’s even more galling when resistance to the kinds of enhanced safety measures contained in Intro. 1447, is occurring in the midst of an almost unprecedented building boom in NYC.



LaborPress publisher Neal Tepel and labor attorney Neil Kalra on Blue Collar Buzz.

Last week, just two days before two construction workers fell to their deaths on separate job sites in Manhattan, the New York Building Congress reported that the city is in the midst of the biggest office building boom in three decades. At the same time, hard-pressed non-union construction workers all over the city go to work every day with their heads down and mouths shut, too afraid to speak out when they see things they know are dangerous.

“Most workers at non-union sites are afraid to bring anything up that they don’t like...they’re afraid to speak up because they want that paycheck; they have a family to feed and they want to come back and continue working,” attorney Neil Kalra told Blue Collar Buzz.

There’s more than one way to squeeze workers — and the monied interests bent on grabbing every last nickel and dime from each one of those workers, know them all. Which brings us to November 7, and the question of opening up New York State’s Constitution. Why do that? Well, it would sure be a great way of scrapping worker pensions and monetizing public education. But watch out.

“If you’re going to marginalize the State workforce and the municipal workers by getting rid of their pensions, you might as well start pushing to move to privatization. And that has not bode well for many states who moved in that direction,” Public Employees Federation President Wayne Spence told Blue Collar Buzz.

However, if you really enjoy lies and obfuscation aimed at undermining the working class, buckle up for the torrent of misinformation and horse hockey deep-pocketed corporations will begin spewing once the push for single-payer, Medicare-for-all really starts heating up.

Doesn’t matter that a single-payer system in line with what most of the other industrialized nations of the Earth now enjoy, will be cheaper and better than the tragic for-profit mess currently saddling the country — the big-money interests invested in that cynical, heartless enterprise will stop at nothing to attack it.

“People should know that the federal government is more efficient at using healthcare dollars to provide healthcare than insurance companies are that are actually denying us healthcare,” National Nurses United President Deborah Burger told Blue Collar Buzz.

After six months on the picket line, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo is coming to the aid of striking IBEW Local 3 workers and their fight to bring Charter/Spectrum to the bargaining table.

Surprise, surprise, the giant telecommunications giant is bent on scrapping healthcare and pension plans for 1,800 hardworking employees.

According to the governor, however, it’s the multi-billion dollar corporation and its \$98-million-per-year CEO Tom Rutledge that could end up signing the blues.

“If [Charter Spectrum] doesn’t get their act together and fulfill that agreement — they’re going to be out of the State of New York,” Governor Cuomo said at a recent trade unionist rally at Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told LaborPress that the assemblage was vital because it demonstrated the working class is “sick and tired of profitable corporations” fleecing them.

“We’re not going to take it,” the AFL-CIO leader told Blue Collar Buzz. “We’re not going to let them beat us one by one. We’re going to stand together in solidarity and push back.”