

In 1949, Bob Lent began a career with the UAW that has spanned forty-nine years. He started as a spray painter at the Dodge Main plant of Local 3 in Hamtramck, Michigan. After serving his country as an Army paratrooper from 1951 to 1953, Bob returned to Michigan to become a millwright apprentice and a skilled tradesman at the Chrysler 9-mile Road Press Plant, Local 869.

While at UAW Local 869, Bob's strong leadership and vision were recognized and he was chosen by his colleagues to serve in a distinguished list of appointed and elected positions. He was an alternate chief steward, trustee chairman, vice president, president, education representative, and assistant director. His vast knowledge and experience made him a logical choice for director.

Bob was first elected to the UAW Executive Board as a regional director at the UAW's 27th Constitutional Convention in May, 1983, at Dallas, Texas. After his re-election to a third term, Bob was elected director of UAW Region 1 which covers Detroit's east side, Pontiac, Macomb and St. Clair Counties and part of the thumb area of Southeastern Michigan, and Canada.

Bob is not only an active union leader, but a community leader as well. He served on the Labor Advisory Committee at both Oakland and Wayne State University. He has been a Democratic precinct delegate. He is a lifetime member of the NAACP. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the United Way of Pontiac-Oakland County and Detroit Area United Foundation.

Few people have given to their community with the vision and commitment that Bob Lent has given to his. He is a person who has inspired the admiration of many. I am honored to call him a friend. I would like to congratulate Bob on his very distinguished career and I wish him and his family all of the best.

#### MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY

### HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 29, 1998*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, each year the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Ladies Auxiliary conduct the Voice of Democracy contest. This year more than 93,000 secondary school students participated in the contest competing for the 56 national scholarships which were distributed among the 54 national winners. The contest theme this year was "My Voice in our Democracy."

Hillary Anne Underwood is this year's Latin America/Caribbean winner. She is the recipient of a \$1,000 Roy Chandler VFW Post 762 and its Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship Award.

I want to congratulate Hillary on her accomplishments and her scholarship award. I would also like to share Hillary's award winning script with my colleagues.

1997-98 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION, "MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY"

(Hillary Anne Underwood, Latin America/Caribbean Winner)

Welcome! I'd like to thank each of you for attending choir tryouts. "Democracy" is the theme song for today.

Let's begin rehearsal by reciting the first of three verses.

FREEDOM. Isn't it amazing how just one word can hold so much? We live in a democracy, and HERE people are free to say what they please, ask what they may, and be whoever they want to be.

Our forefathers fought endlessly for freedom through the American Revolution and the Civil War. Through these two very significant wars, the government of the United States separated itself from the threshold of the church, developed the sovereignty of the people that still lives today, wrote the constitution, and have offered insights that have aided other countries in their quests for democracy.

Today, my voice for democracy can be heard through my greatest freedom . . . the right to vote.

Freedom is the core of democracy. Without the freedom of speech . . . press . . . and religion . . . Our society would sound like this: ----- Perfectly silent. No opinions, No thoughts, No voices, . . . ALL of our voices would be mute.

My Voice, Your Voice  
We are the voices of freedom,  
We are the Chorus of Democracy.

Excuse me, before we continue, you two, in the back, . . . tyranny and prejudice . . . I am going to have to ask you BOTH to leave. There is absolutely no room for you in a democracy.

Now, Let us continue with the second verse . . . EQUALITY.

In our Declaration of Independence and in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, "All men are created equal."

Some people are still struggling in their never ending fight for equality; where women are regarded as inferior. They are not acknowledged as equal human beings.

If you listen carefully, you can hear the desperate cries for help from the heart-broken little girls in orphanages, abandoned by their families.

Can you imagine living in a society like that . . . Where you are practically non-existent because of your gender or race? I consider myself fortunate, we've never had to experience a situation of this kind . . . Because we . . . live in a democracy. There is only ONE single race . . . HUMANITY.

My Voice, Your Voice  
We are the voices of Equality,  
We are the Chorus of Democracy.

Congratulations, you are all doing a wonderful job, and are all strong candidates for the choir. Now, let us continue with the final verse . . . JUSTICE. This . . . is the foundation of a government.

Thomas Jefferson stated: "Democracy is the only form of government which is not externally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind."

This is Justice. This is what people risk their lives everyday in search of . . . democracy, where "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law"; where we are "innocent until proven guilty"; where we are guaranteed "the right to a fair trial."

Imagine yourself, your children, your family, being used as an object. A human shield used to protect weapons, people, and their power. You are a pawn with no individual liberties, where a single person has taken your fate into their own hands. This is not justice.

My Voice, Your Voice  
We are the voices of Justice,  
We are the Chorus of Democracy.

Democracy is defined as a government in which the supreme power rests in its people. But in defining the word democracy, we are encompassing an endless wilderness of ideas within a tiny barrier of words. The Freedom,

Equality, and Justice in a democracy are enjoyed by all of us today.

This concludes our tryouts. All candidates have had an equal opportunity to become part of a democratic choir. The finalists have been chosen, and they are . . . ALL of us. Each of us is important to the choir, just as every citizen plays an important role in America.

We must always remember that Our America is unified and free. So raise your voices! Sing out America! Let our voices be heard! Let our song echo throughout generations, as we harmonize in the words of Gerald Lee

.. .  
"America is a single tune, and it must be sung together."

#### WELFARE REFORM JUST ENDS WELFARE

### HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 29, 1998*

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today's Washington Post article about Arkansas Governor Huckabee's flight from a group of welfare protesters confirms my greatest fear about the 1996 welfare law—welfare reform was about cutting caseloads, not about helping ex-welfare recipients become self-sufficient. In the first 13 months after welfare reform was signed into law in August 1996, welfare caseloads dropped 19 percent nationwide. Almost 2.4 million fewer people received welfare assistance in September 1997 than in August 1996. The rate of welfare reciprocity in the United States has reached its lowest level since 1969.

What's happening to these families and children? Olivia Golden, the Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary responsible for implementing the welfare reform law, told the Ways and Means Committee last month that "one of the challenges we face is to get better information about what is happening to families who are leaving assistance." The protest's in Little Rock complained that they haven't been able to find jobs. Ms. Golden confirmed that, when she reported that research from several states suggests that 50 to 60 percent of families leaving welfare are employed at follow-up. That means 40 to 50 percent were not employed.

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation recently released an interim report on its multi-year evaluation of Florida's Family Transition Program, one of the first programs to include a time limit on the receipt of cash assistance. Although claiming that longer-term follow-up is needed to track how people fare in the aftermath of reaching the time limits, MDRC found that only 52 percent of the FTP group were employed two years after entering the study despite an unusually generous array of support services and financial incentives. Nonetheless, almost everyone who reached the time limit had their benefits entirely canceled.

In the almost two years since passage of the Republican welfare reform law, a period of sustained economic growth and low unemployment, we have learned two things about the effects of the law—nearly one million families are no longer receiving welfare assistance and only about one-half of the families who have left welfare are working. Unfortunately,