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INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES, AFL-CIO, CLC

September 8, 2004

To: All U.S. House Members

Dear Representative:

Tomorrow, the House may consider an amendment to the Labor-HHS Appropriations bill that is clear in its intent to protect workers and the right to overtime pay that they have enjoyed for decades. Yet another opportunity for lawmakers to stand on the side of working Americans will present itself when the Obey amendment is offered for a vote. On behalf of the 140,000 working families of the IUPAT, I **strongly** urge you to support and vote in favor of the Obey amendment.

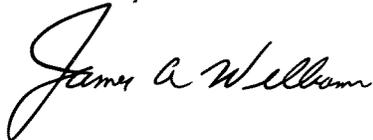
On April 23, 2004, the Labor Department published new overtime eligibility rules that became effective on August 23. While the DOL has claimed throughout this process that this will be a benefit to workers, a recent report by three former DOL officials (the Fraser report) found that "all of the substantive changes to the overtime regulations take away workers' overtime rights". Further, the Economic Policy Institute estimates the number of workers who will lose federal overtime protections under the new regulation at 6 million. Regardless of stated intentions, the proposed regulation is **not** a benefit to workers who rely on overtime not as a luxury, but rather as a necessity to make ends meet.

The amendment to be offered has a clear goal of ensuring that no workers will lose their overtime protections. The Obey amendment would protect workers' overtime rights by forcing DOL to rescind the harmful changes to the overtime eligibility rules, while leaving in place the one change that actually benefits workers, the upward adjustment of the salary threshold to \$23,660. The Obey amendment would not take overtime rights away from any worker, period.

Further, despite claims that the Obey amendment would prevent any federal enforcement of the law, legal analysis by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service (CRS) found that the Obey amendment would not only *allow* DOL to immediately rescind changes to the overtime rules other than the non-controversial salary adjustment, but would also make it a *requirement*, consistent with the intent of Congress. It is my sincere hope, and that of the 140,000 families represented by the IUPAT, that the intent of Congress should be to unequivocally protect millions of workers' right to overtime pay.

This is not the time to cut overtime pay. This is the time to support working families by supporting the Obey amendment. The working families of the IUPAT thank you in advance for your support of this most critical issue.

Sincerely and fraternally,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James A. Williams".

James A. Williams
General President

cc: GVP Bill Candelori, Eastern Region
GVP Raymond Price, Central Region
GVP Raymond Sesma, Western Region
GVPL Sean McGarvey
GVPL Al Monroe
AGP Jack Hayn
All U.S. District Council BM/STs

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f/PAT-Overtime