

ROOFERtoROOFER

by International President Kinsey M. Robinson

Jobs...Jobs...Jobs

Jobs are on the minds of America's working men and women. More specifically, the lack of jobs. Currently the unemployment rate in the United States stands at an unacceptable 9.1 percent, and that does not count those whose unemployment benefits have run out or who have simply given up looking for work.

Just a few weeks ago on September 8th, in an attempt to jump-start the economy and reduce the unemployment rolls, President Barack Obama announced to joint session of Congress his "American Jobs Act." The President's plan calls for a \$447 billion package of spending initiatives and tax cuts. The plan consists of payroll-tax cuts for workers and employers, \$62 billion in spending to extend employment benefits through 2012 and \$140 billion in infrastructure spending, including modernizing schools and funding to rehire teachers and first responders.

During his announcement the President did not say how he was going to pay for the spending, but then on September 19th he laid out a plan to reduce the deficit by \$3.6 trillion through cutting payments to drug companies and long-term care providers by \$580 billion, winding down the war in Afghanistan to presumably save \$1.1 trillion, saving \$430 billion in interest payments and increasing taxes by \$1.5 trillion. It is not clear how a divided Congress will deal with the President's proposal or whether the \$447 billion jobs package would significantly reduce unemployment.

I don't know about you, but I suspect you're like me when it comes to all these mind-boggling numbers. They may mean something to the politicians in Washington, DC, but they don't mean much to mainstream America. Mainstream America wants to hear about the bottom line. And the bottom line, brothers and sisters, is jobs! Jobs that pay a decent wage so that hardworking men and women can pay their mortgages, send their kids to school and put food on their tables.

I believe that the American worker has had enough with the current political circus in the Nation's Capital, with its partisanship and never-ending gridlock. What we want is action—not crisis, impasse, partisan disputes or a government that faces shutdown because irresponsible politicians can't reach agreement on the debt ceiling. Any plan that promises payroll tax relief, extending unemployment benefits and funding to fix schools and roads, at the very least, should challenge lawmakers to stand up and find a way to help the engine that drives our economy, the American worker!



National Trust Funds Keep You and Your Family Secure

The lead article in this issue, written by Assistant Editor Erin McDermott, describes how Local 26 members use the National Roofing Industry Pension Fund to secure their futures. Through a long history of negotiating contributions into the Pension Plan (NRIPP) and the Supplemental Pension Plan (NRISPP), Local 26 has given its members the flexibility they need in selecting the proper form of pension at the time of a well-deserved retirement.

On page 24 the National Health and Welfare Fund rolls out an education campaign to help members save money and improve their health. The Fund has partnered with CIGNA in this campaign to assist members with better utilization of Fund benefits. The goal is to get you organized and engaged in making better decisions regarding your health and the health of your family.