



Leo W. Gerard
International President

November 5, 2008

President-Elect Barack Obama
233 N. Michigan Avenue, 11th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear President-Elect Obama:

It is with great pride and affection that I write this note on behalf of the more than 1.2 million active and retired members of the United Steelworkers (USW) to say congratulations to you and Vice President-Elect Joe Biden on your historic victory! The time for change has truly arrived.

As we celebrate this great victory, we also join with you to mourn the loss of your grandmother. Our deepest condolences to you and your family on her passing, but we know she is smiling down on you today, and is surely the proudest of all the angels in heaven knowing her beloved grandson just had a historic victory of the presidency of the United States of America.

You deserve an immense amount of credit for running one of the smartest, most constructive and positive political campaigns in the history of this great country. Your steady, but firm campaign refused to be distracted into the depths of the slash and burn politics of the other side, yet also did not stay silent in the face of personal attacks, lies and distortion, like those that affected the campaigns of many of our friends in past elections. When hit, you hit back, but did it with facts and grace that made us proud of you and your campaign.

Over the last eight years, hundreds of thousands of USW members have been thrown out of their jobs, many have lost their homes, many lost their health care, and many are suffering from the economic effects in other ways; and many have become immensely frustrated. It is the same in thousands of communities across the U.S. It is real suffering just like you encountered when you began your journey as a community organizer, helping our members and many others who were devastated by steel mill closures in south Chicago. You know the suffering they are experiencing, but you also understand the real sense of loss they feel as well as their deep desire for change.

Thanks to you, today they are optimistic and now have a fighting chance! We want you and Joe to know we will be with you every step of the way on this next leg of the journey to the future they dreamed of.



I am also very proud of the work our members have done to personally assist in this campaign for change. More than 10,000 USW members have worked on this campaign. They have sacrificed vacation time, personal time and family time. They have made more than one million phone calls to USW members and knocked on nearly as many neighborhood doors. They have also handed out hundreds of thousands of leaflets at thousands of USW workplaces – most of which have been in key “battleground” states where their actions were geographically critical and where they often lead the way for you.

Though the USW is known for its activist membership, I must admit our union has never before seen this amount of activity from Steelworkers for any candidate. They overwhelmingly trust their union, but they also deeply believe in you. This is a tribute to you, your promise to level the playing field for workers and your record of helping those most in need.

Steelworker members worked their hardest for you with no pay, no fanfare and without complaint. They followed their union and helped carry you to victory – that is their reward!

They worked for you to bring us the Employee Free Choice Act. They worked for you for your promise of health care reform. They worked for you for fair trade. They worked for you for a chance at a job that will help them raise their families. They worked for you for a strong social security system. But, most of all, they worked for you so their children and grandchildren can have a hopeful future full of optimism and opportunity.

As you now begin the work to implement the changes we so desperately need, please know this: The United Steelworkers are with you. We understand the challenges you face and the economic chaos you are inheriting. We will be with you every step of the way, and we stand ready to put as much energy into driving your agenda forward as we have put into helping get you elected.

The Bush Republican nightmare has ended, the time for change we believe in has come and America’s future is bright!

Congratulations again on your remarkable win. It is a victory for the ages and a victory like never before for USW members and all workers across America. This is our time – this is our opportunity to seize the moment.

Sincerely and with great admiration and hope,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

c: USW International Executive Board