

AFL-CIO Executive Council Statement
Washington, D.C.
June 17, 2020

ON THE RETIREMENT OF LEO W. GERARD

We congratulate our brother and friend, President Leo W. Gerard, on his recent retirement as president of the United Steelworkers (USW) and from his position on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO.

Gerard's first job as a copper puncher, one of the hottest and dirtiest in a steel mill, helped to prepare him for a place in the history books as someone who's not afraid to play with fire in order to make progress. He used that spirit of toughness, grit and fortitude to eventually rise to the highest ranks of the USW and the labor movement, and oversee some of the largest and toughest mergers in modern union history.

As a longtime member of the Executive Council, he also made his mark on improving and expanding global unionism and fighting tooth and nail against some of the worst trade deals ever written. Gerard championed international alliances, knowing that America's workers would benefit if these alliances helped raise living standards and enshrined workers' rights worldwide. Under Gerard's leadership, the USW worked with unions from around the world to create the IndustriALL Global Union. Today, it represents 50 million workers in 140 countries in the mining, energy and manufacturing sectors.

Throughout his incredible career, including 18 years as USW president, Gerard's top priority never faltered: to support, strengthen and serve working people. As someone unafraid to confront reality and speak the truth, he was an unapologetic champion for social and economic justice.

Working people are better off because of Leo Gerard. The AFL-CIO Executive Council sends our congratulations on a well-deserved retirement.