

September 1, 1993

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Bob Lewis  
Bob McAdam

FROM: Susan Stuntz *ms*

RE: "Labor Day" Promotion of Labor's Opposition to a Tobacco Tax

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Each Labor Day, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland releases his annual "state of labor" pronouncement which, given the traditionally slow news day, gets good coverage in the media.

This year the BC&T decided to launch a Labor Day program of its own, in the traditionally non-labor south. Press releases giving the details of their activities and including a Labor Day message from BC&T President Frank Hurt have been sent to television, radio and print media in the four manufacturing states (Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia).

In addition, Hurt has taped a radio message that will be sent to stations throughout the U.S.

Copies of the press releases and radio transcript are attached. As we track information on coverage, we'll keep you informed.

Attachment

cc: Sam Chilcote  
Cal George  
Walter Woodson

# *Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union*

10401 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20895-3961  
TELEPHONE (301) 933-8600 FAX (301) 946-8452

FRANK HURT  
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

For Immediate Release  
August 31, 1993

Contact: Lisa Merman  
502/778-3376

## **TOBACCO WORKERS FIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR JOBS AGAINST HUGE CIGARETTE TAX HIKES BC&T Members Launch Labor Day Offensive**

(Washington, D.C.) — A major offensive to fight threats of a sky-high tobacco tax to pay for President Clinton's health care reform package was announced today by employees of the nation's cigarette manufacturers and members of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union (BC&T).

"This Labor Day, as we honor working Americans, thousands of tobacco workers face massive lay-offs if proposals for a sky-high tobacco tax to fund health care become a reality. The goal of the Labor Day offensive is to urge Congress to push strong cost containment measures and progressive financing instead of the tobacco tax," said BC&T International Union President Frank Hurt. "Otherwise, the cost of health care reform will be borne by working Americans and others who are least able to afford it."

"If a \$1.00 per pack tax increase were approved, it is estimated that over 23,000 jobs would be lost in Kentucky alone, in addition to the loss of over \$443 million from our economy," said Wayne Purvis, a worker at the Philip Morris plant in Louisville and President of BC&T Local 16T.

"What few people seem to understand is that our entire community relies on the tobacco industry. Tobacco dollars earned by members of our union pay for groceries, automobiles, college educations and much more. There are a number of related industries that depend on tobacco as well -- paper mills and trucking companies would suffer right along with us," Purvis said.

"We realized that the only way to protect our jobs was to stand up and fight for them ourselves," he added.

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According to Purvis, activities planned for BC&T workers in Kentucky include:

- Meetings with their Members of Congress while they are at home for the district work period.
- Meetings with other union members and community groups to explain the potential devastation and outline options available to those who would like to join in the fight.
- Petition drives to show the number of people in their community who are opposed to tobacco taxes.
- Resolutions passed by union locals and other community groups to solidify support in the fight for their livelihoods.
- A postcard campaign to encourage Members of Congress from tobacco states to oppose the tax.

"As members of my community celebrate Labor Day, we want to make sure that they know it's more than just a day off from work. We want them to appreciate the value of having a job to take a day off from, and we want them to know just what the loss of our jobs, and thousands of others could mean to our community," said Purvis.

As part of the national campaign, BC&T President Hurt is releasing a Labor Day radio message in conjunction with the efforts of local workers.

"If the price of health care reform is the loss of thousands of high-paying, productive union jobs and the destruction of countless tobacco producing and manufacturing communities throughout the South, then the cost is too high. We must find a progressive financing alternative," Hurt said.

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For Immediate Release  
September 1, 1993

Contact: Lisa Merman  
202/452-9531

## **TOBACCO WORKERS FIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR JOBS AGAINST FEDERAL CIGARETTE TAX HIKES BC&T Members Launch Labor Day Offensive**

(Washington, D.C.) -- A major offensive to fight threats of a "monster" tobacco tax of \$1 a pack or more to pay for the administration's health care reform package was announced today by employees of the nation's cigarette manufacturers and members of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union (BC&T).

"This Labor Day, as we honor working Americans, thousands of tobacco workers face massive lay-offs if proposals for a sky-high tobacco tax to fund health care become a reality. The goal of our Labor Day offensive is to urge Congress to push strong cost containment measures and progressive financing instead of a tobacco tax," said BC&T International Union President Frank Hurt. "Otherwise, the cost of health care reform will be borne by working Americans and others who are least able to afford it."

"If a \$1.00 per pack tax increase were approved, it is estimated that over 44,000 jobs would be lost in North Carolina alone, in addition to the loss of over \$976 million from our economy," said Robert Mack, a worker at the Liggett plant in Durham and president of BC&T Local 176T.

"What few people seem to understand is that our entire community relies on the tobacco industry. Tobacco dollars earned by members of our union pay for groceries, automobiles, college educations and much more. There are a number of related industries that depend on tobacco as well -- paper mills and trucking companies would suffer right along with us," Mack said.

"We realize that the only way to protect our jobs is to stand up and fight for them ourselves," he added.

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According to Mack, activities planned for BC&T workers in North Carolina include:

- Meetings with their Members of Congress while they are at home for the district work period. Several BC&T representatives have already traveled to Washington to meet their Congressmen. They want to follow up on those visits.
- Meetings with other union members and community groups to explain the potential devastation and to outline opportunities available to those who would like to join in the fight.
- Petition drives to show the number of people in their community who are opposed to tobacco taxes.
- Support for resolutions passed by union locals and other community groups to solidify support in the fight for their livelihoods.
- A postcard campaign to encourage Members of Congress from tobacco states who have already done so to oppose the tax, and to thank those who have committed their opposition.

"As members of my community celebrate Labor Day, we want to make sure that they know it's more than just a day off from work. We want them to appreciate the value of having a job, and we want them to know just what the loss of our jobs, and thousands of other jobs could mean to our community," said Mack.

As part of the national campaign, BC&T President Hurt is releasing a Labor Day radio message in conjunction with the efforts of local workers.

"If the price of health care reform is the loss of thousands of high-paying, productive union jobs and the destruction of countless tobacco producing and manufacturing communities throughout the South, then the cost is too high. We must find a progressive financing alternative," Hurt said.

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FRANK HURT  
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

For Immediate Release  
September 1, 1993

Contact: Lisa Merman  
202/452-9445

## **TOBACCO WORKERS FIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR JOBS AGAINST FEDERAL CIGARETTE TAX HIKES BC&T Members Launch Labor Day Offensive**

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"This Labor Day, as we honor working Americans, thousands of tobacco workers face massive lay-offs if proposals for a sky-high tobacco tax to fund health care become a reality. The goal of our Labor Day offensive is to urge Congress to push strong cost containment measures and progressive financing instead of a tobacco tax," said BC&T International Union President Frank Hurt. "Otherwise, the cost of health care reform will be borne by working Americans and others who are least able to afford it."

"If a \$1.00 per pack tax increase were approved, it is estimated that over 10,000 jobs would be lost in Georgia alone, in addition to the loss of over \$296 million from our economy," said Michael Gardner, a worker at the Brown and Williamson plant in Macon and financial secretary of BC&T Local 362T.

"What few people seem to understand is that our entire community relies on the tobacco industry. Tobacco dollars earned by members of our union pay for groceries, automobiles, college educations and much more. There are a number of related industries that depend on tobacco as well -- paper mills and trucking companies would suffer right along with us," Gardner said.

"We realize that the only way to protect our jobs is to stand up and fight for them ourselves," he added.

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According to Gardner, activities planned for BC&T workers in Georgia include:

- Meetings with their Members of Congress while they are at home for the district work period. Several BC&T representatives have already traveled to Washington to meet their Congressmen. They want to follow up on those visits.
- Meetings with other union members and community groups to explain the potential devastation and to outline opportunities available to those who would like to join in the fight.
- Petition drives to show the number of people in their community who are opposed to tobacco taxes.
- Support for resolutions passed by union locals and other community groups to solidify support in the fight for their livelihoods.
- A postcard campaign to encourage Members of Congress from tobacco states who have already done so to oppose the tax, and to thank those who have committed their opposition.

"As members of my community celebrate Labor Day, we want to make sure that they know it's more than just a day off from work. We want them to appreciate the value of having a job, and we want them to know just what the loss of our jobs, and thousands of other jobs could mean to our community," said Gardner.

As part of the national campaign, BC&T President Hurt is releasing a Labor Day radio message in conjunction with the efforts of local workers.

"If the price of health care reform is the loss of thousands of high-paying, productive union jobs and the destruction of countless tobacco producing and manufacturing communities throughout the South, then the cost is too high. We must find a progressive financing alternative," Hurt said.

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"If a \$1.00 per pack tax increase were approved, it is estimated that over 21,000 jobs would be lost in Virginia alone, in addition to the loss of over \$612 million from our economy," said Jerry Sprouse, a worker at the Philip Morris plant in Richmond and president of BC&T Local 203T.

"What few people seem to understand is that our entire community relies on the tobacco industry. Tobacco dollars earned by members of our union pay for groceries, automobiles, college educations and much more. There are a number of related industries that depend on tobacco as well -- paper mills and trucking companies would suffer right along with us," Sprouse said.

"We realize that the only way to protect our jobs is to stand up and fight for them ourselves," he added.

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According to Sprouse, activities planned for BC&T workers in Virginia include:

- Meetings with their Members of Congress while they are at home for the district work period. Several BC&T representatives have already traveled to Washington to meet their Congressmen. They want to follow up on those visits.
- Meetings with other union members and community groups to explain the potential devastation and to outline opportunities available to those who would like to join in the fight.
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BC&T International Union  
NEWSFEED™ 9/93  
:60 RADIO SCRIPT  
INTERVIEW: FRANK HURT

STATIONS: The following is a news announcement from Tobacco Workers throughout the South..

Suggested lead in 3,2,1...

Time magazine recently reported that the Clinton Administration will propose a federal cigarette tax beginning at one dollar per pack to pay for health care reform. As Americans gear up to celebrate this Labor Day weekend, honoring working citizens, industry spokespersons estimate that if such a tax increase is approved, nearly four-hundred thousand people will lose their jobs. Frank Hurt is president of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union:

(HURT)

**TOBACCO WORKERS, LIKE MOST AMERICANS, SUPPORT HEALTH CARE REFORM. BUT WE ALSO WANT TO KEEP OUR JOBS -- JOBS THAT HAVE ALLOWED US TO RAISE FAMILIES AND EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN.**

**INCREASING TOBACCO TAXES WON'T SOLVE OUR NATION'S HEALTH CARE PROBLEMS. BUT IT WILL COST THOUSANDS OF JOBS, DEVASTATE COUNTLESS COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE SOUTH, AND PLACE AN UNFAIR TAX BURDEN ON WORKING MEN AND WOMEN.**

**THIS LABOR DAY JOIN US IN URGING LAWMAKERS TO OPPOSE HIGHER TOBACCO TAXES, AND SUPPORT A PROGRESSIVELY FINANCED -- AND A FAIR -- HEALTH CARE PROGRAM.**

**AS WORKING PEOPLE, WE CAN'T AFFORD ANYTHING ELSE.**

(CLOSE)

Stations, for more information, contact Lisa Merman at (202) 452-9531

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