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Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: National Economic Council

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Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 17395

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[February 10, 1997 - Work in Progress - This Week with America's Unions - AFL-CIO] [loose]

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THIS WEEK WITH AMERICA'S UNIONS

AFL-CIO WORK IN PROGRESS -- February 10, 1997

ORGANIZING FOR GOOD HEALTH -- The Maryland Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals have jumped into the drive to organize Maryland's state workers. The AFT affiliate will campaign for the right to represent 2,120 state health care workers. Md. FNHP made it over the first hurdle when the State Mediation Service certified authorization cards. An election date is to be set this month. In addition to AFT, AFSCME and the Teamsters have organizing drives under way for other sectors of the state work force.

CWA WIRES UP WINS -- The Communication Workers in Houston and Austin, Texas, have 155 new brothers and sisters thanks to an agreement between the union and Southwestern Bell Communications. Meanwhile, workers at cable companies in Michigan, New York and California voted for CWA representation. They are the inside technicians at Comcast Cable in Detroit, workers at Chambers Cable Television in Chico, Calif., and the tech unit of TCI Cable in Smithhaven, N.Y.

SMOOTH LANDING -- Flight Attendants at Executive Airlines, based in San Juan, P.R., landed a first contract providing pay increases for its 113 crew members. Attendants at the American Eagle regional carrier joined AFA in 1995.

UNPLUG ELECTRIC DEREGULATION -- Utility Workers Locals 369 and 387 led 2,500 people in a rally in Boston Feb. 1 to decry the headlong rush to deregulate and restructure the electric utility industry. AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka closed the rally with a rousing speech reaffirming for the workers that "we will not go gently into the long, dark night of rapid, radical, destructive utility deregulation."

GOP AIMS AT OVERTIME -- While President Clinton and the Democrats want to expand the Family and Medical Leave Act, Republicans in both houses want to let bosses substitute comp time for paid overtime. Workers certainly want more control over their time at work, but the GOP bills "will mean more control for employers --and less money for working people," Karen Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Department, told House and Senate committees last week.

AVONDALE WORKERS STAY AFLOAT -- The National Labor Relations Board ordered Avondale Shipyard to count a final group of 550 ballots to decide a long-postponed certification ratification for some 4,000 workers. The union needs less than 20 votes to win at the Metairie, La., yard, where management has used a succession of loopholes since a June 1993 election to deprive workers of their rights.

TWIN CITIES' CLEAN UP -- Some 3,500 Service Employees working in the Minneapolis-St. Paul cleaning industry have a new three-year master contract that provides full-time employees with wage increases and part-time workers with paid holidays. The deal covers workers employed by 18 janitorial companies.

NO-FLY ZONE -- In the wake of USAir's use of an employer-dominated employee association (AKA company union), the Communications Workers will challenge the results of a representation election for nearly 10,000 passenger service workers. Although 3,973 ballots were cast in favor of CWA out of 4,190 cast and deemed valid, the Railway Labor Act requires a majority of all eligible voters. "It was