



Surrounded by family members, IAM Local Lodge 1930 member Laura Richardson, third from right, of Long Beach, CA is sworn in by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as the new Congresswoman for California's 37th District.

IAM Member Elected to Congress

Labor Day is a time to honor working Americans, but this Labor Day ended on a special note for working families when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi administered the oath of office to IAM Local Lodge 1930 member Laura Richardson of Long Beach, CA. Richardson prevailed in a tough 18-candidate primary battle last June and then a runoff election in August to fill the unexpired term of former Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald.

Richardson will represent California's 37th District, which includes Compton, Carson, much of the City of Long Beach and parts of South Los Angeles. Richardson first joined the IAM in 2000 as a

Long Beach City Council employee. She went on to win a seat on the Long Beach City Council where she served until her election to the California State Assembly in 2006.

Just days before her swear-

ing in, Richardson wowed a crowd of Machinists at the National Staff Conference in Orlando, FL. Wearing a Machinists shirt, Richardson displayed the heartfelt concern for working families that has marked her political career. "I'm proud to be a Machinists union member," Richardson declared. "It's a special day for me, but it's a special day for you as well."

The daughter of a union member, Richardson remembers vividly the tough decisions her single-parent mother had to make to keep the family afloat. After starting work at 12-years old and working her way through UCLA, Richardson grew up to be an outspoken champion for working people.



Congresswoman Laura Richardson

Richardson credited members of her local lodge, District 947 and the Western Territory who helped her through many tough races. During her primary bid, union volunteers made house calls, manned phone banks and distributed more than 160,000 pieces of literature.

Richardson is a strong advocate for reforming flawed trade laws, providing decent health care, creating good jobs, bringing back quality vocational education and getting the Employee Free Choice Act passed and signed into law.

“I want to talk about the war that is ongoing in America. And that war is happening because we don’t have people who have decent jobs that can take care of their families,” said Richardson. “We’re going to continue to raise the minimum wage, we’re going to bring back jobs and we’re going to make sure we have adequate and accessible health care.”

Richardson also pledged to co-sponsor the Employee Free Choice Act, which will



Just days before taking office, new Congresswoman Laura Richardson proudly displayed her IAM membership at the IAM National Staff Conference where she pledged to fight for working families.

strengthen workers’ right to organize. “Organizing is critical to all our successes,” said Richardson. “No one is going to give us anything. We have to reach out, we have to fight and we have to insist on the basic rights and principles that all working people deserve.”

After graduating from UCLA, Richardson earned a masters degree in business. A former job took her to China

where she saw firsthand the problems of unfair trade. “We’re reaping the [consequences] of these flawed trade deals. They are not working for the American people,” said Richardson. “We were told that these agreements would benefit us. Tell me, who have they benefited? I live in the Long Beach area and I certainly see more containers coming in than going out. It has to stop.”

“Laura Richardson knows the issues that matter to America’s families,” said IAM President Tom Buffenbarger. “She will be a strong voice for all of our nation’s working men and women.”

IAM members in the Western Territory helped Congresswoman Laura Richardson through many tough elections. From left, GLR Steve Cooper, Richardson, Western Territory GVP Lee Pearson and District 947 BR Janet Wright.



Bill Burke, Page One Photography

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