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TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2009

Greg Blevins

I had very little experience with unions until I started organizing in Clovis, New Mexico. As soon as I arrived, I began to reach out to core Democratic constituencies, including the only local union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, Division 811. Clovis, like most of New Mexico, has a high poverty rate, and I was struck by the fact that union members had a much higher standard of living than most others in the community. I am indebted to Greg Blevins, the former chairman of the BLET 811, for making me more aware of local issues, and for the work he did for the Obama campaign in Clovis.

The BLET, and other unions, has been responsible for improved economic conditions for its members, and their communities. It has also fought to improve work safety conditions. Unfortunately, those conditions are still not perfect. Last month my friend Greg Blevins was [killed](#) in a train-yard accident. To some, he was just another number in a book. To me he was a living, breathing man who fought for a better life for himself and his brothers. In this country we think far too often of unions and their members from a corporate perspective.

I don't support EFCA because I'm a crazy socialist who wants to impose Armageddon (or, God forbid, French values!) on the United States. In fact, the legislation would not do anything of the sort. It would just make it easier for the BLET and other unions to push employers to improve safety and working conditions. Is that so wrong?

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