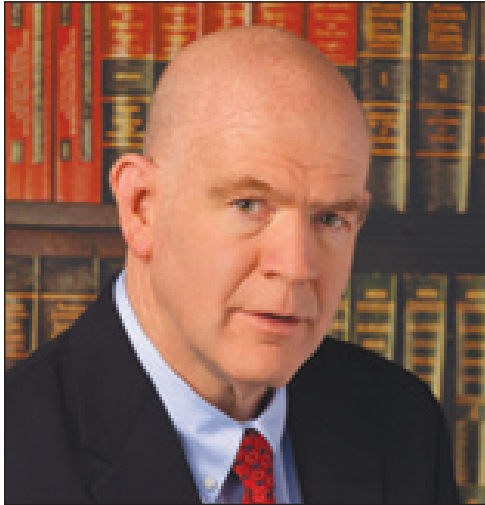


# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC ISSUE 545 | SUMMER 2021



Building Back with the PRO Act



## Why We Need Labor Law Reform Now

By Richard Lanigan  
President

You drive to work every day, parking in the lot across the street from your workplace for \$35 a day. One day, you're late and the lot is full, forcing you to search for parking on a nearby street. But, everywhere you look there are "No Parking" signs. So, you park the car and decide a ticket is a necessary risk. When you return to your car the parking ticket waits for you under the windshield wiper. "Plead guilty and send a \$20 fine to the Parking Violations Bureau," the ticket reads. It strikes you breaking the law is actually cheaper by \$15 a day than doing the responsible thing and parking in the lot.

For far too long, paying the fine is something more and more corporations have been willing to do rather than be responsible employers.

During the mid-1970s, union organizers from the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union attempted to organize employees of J.P. Stevens, which at the time was the nation's second largest textile manufacturer. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) was about 40 years old. It was the first time in those 40 years a large American company analyzed whether the cost of the penalty under the NLRA would be less than the cost of a change in working conditions and decided to take on the cost of the violations. J.P. Stevens was charged with nearly 100 unfair labor practices. After the charges were heard before an administrative law judge, the National Labor Relations Board found J.P. Stevens had violated the NLRA more than 20 times. The company paid millions of dollars in fines and millions more to union busters rather than improve working conditions.

In 1978, after seeing the flagrant violations committed by J.P. Stevens, the Senate took up a bill to make it easier for employees to join a union and strengthen penalties when an employer violated a worker's rights. Conservative Republicans proposed more than 500 amendments and filibustered the bill out of session. The law never passed. Forty-three years have passed since the Senate last considered labor law reform.

**With nearly 65 percent of all Americans supporting unions, and about the same number saying they would join a union if they had an opportunity, it is time to reform the law and protect workers' right to organize and bargain.**

Employers facing organizing campaigns, such as Boeing in South Carolina, Volkswagen in Tennessee, Nissan in Mississippi and, most recently, Amazon in Alabama, have all been accused of NLRA violations. Companies faced with a union organizing campaign regularly engage in surveillance, harassment, discharge of union supporters, threats to move the employer operation and coercive interrogation of union supporters.

Many profit-driven businesses have used the same cost-benefit analysis used by J.P. Stevens to justify violating the law and workers' rights. In effect, the United States has developed a culture where it is acceptable to violate labor law as long as the employer pays the associated fines. The employer violates the law and then spins the facts, saying the workers never wanted the union. If the workers didn't want the union,

however, why would the employer commit unfair labor practices?

Since 1978, the percentage of the American workforce protected under a union contract has gone from 26 percent to less than 12 percent. With that loss of union density, the number of sick days, vacation days and holidays enjoyed by the average American worker has gone down. The number of people covered under a defined pension

has declined to less than 10 percent of the workforce. Also, during this period, the percentage of workers with employer-provided health coverage has declined and the quality of that health care has weakened. Retiree health insurance has all but disappeared and real wages, adjusted for inflation, have remained stagnant.

Today, for the first time in decades, the Senate is debating whether to enact labor law reform. The bill is called the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. With nearly 65 percent of all Americans supporting unions, and about the same number saying they would join a union if they had an opportunity, it is time to reform the law and protect workers' right to organize and bargain.

**For more about why we need the PRO Act, see the cover story, "Building Back with the PRO Act," beginning on page 6. ■**

## Oscar Winners Share Their Documentary '9to5' with OPEIU

In the 1970s, OPEIU members joined tens of thousands of women who took a stand for equality and fair treatment in the workplace, inspiring a movement — and the 1980 movie "9 to 5" starring Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton.

In standing up to their often chauvinistic male bosses by organizing inside their unions and on the streets, these brave women helped create better conditions for all women in the workforce.

But that work is still not finished. Some OPEIU members involved in the 9to5 movement joined an exclusive panel March 23 with Julia Reichert and Steve Bogнар, co-producers and directors of "9to5: The Story of a Movement." The new PBS documentary tells the true story behind the popular movie

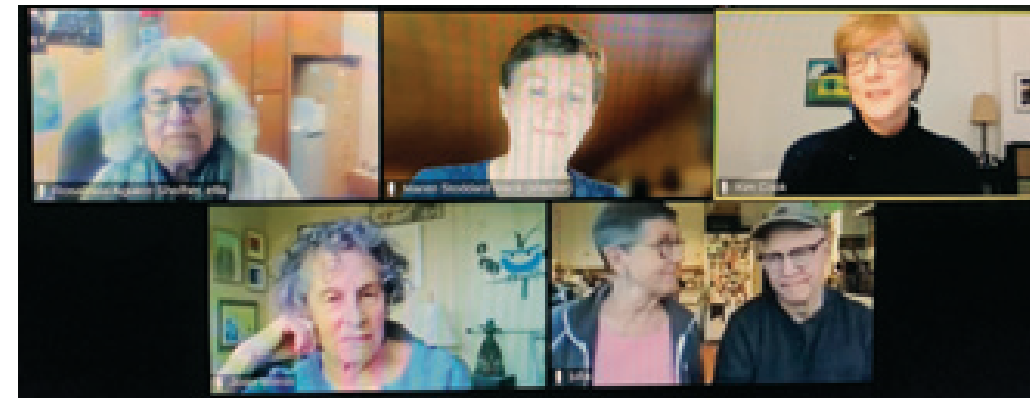
through vintage footage and interviews with the women involved in the movement. Reichert and Bogнар won the Best Documentary Oscar for their 2019 Netflix film "American Factory."

The filmmakers joined OPEIU members for an exclusive virtual panel sandwiched between three showings of the documentary as a part of the union's first-ever virtual OPEIU Movie Night. The panel, moderated by original 9to5 movement member Kimberly Cook, featured the filmmakers and OPEIU members across generations.

Maren Stoddard Mack and Deanna Davis, both members of the organizing committee



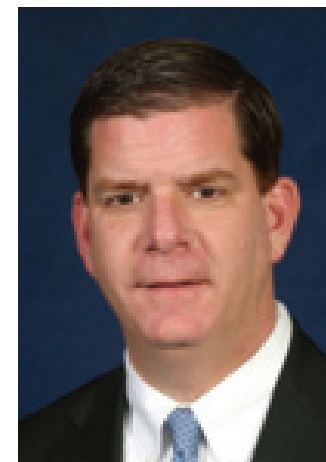
who recently helped win union recognition at Augsburg University with Local 12 in Minnesota, shared how the lessons from the 9to5 movement are impacting today's fight for women's and workers' rights. The panel also featured two longtime union activists and OPEIU member-leaders, Joan Weiss and Rosalinda Aguirre, who expanded on the interviews they gave in the documentary, sharing anecdotes and observations about the past, present and future of women organizing for equity and dignity at work.



OPEIU hosted a panel with Academy Award-winning filmmakers Julia Reichert and Steve Bogнар, bottom right, and OPEIU members who participated in the 9to5 movement that inspired the documentary.



To view the panel discussion, scan the QR code with your phone.



Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh.

## Labor Secretary Vows to Put Working People First

On a call with labor leaders throughout the United States, new Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh pledged to put the interests of working people ahead of those of corporate America, saying he'll work to lift up the middle class and strengthen the rights of all working people to join a union.

Walsh spoke of his plans for the future as head of the labor department, naming a laundry list of priorities he hoped to help the Biden administration accomplish — some legislative and others to be undertaken using his executive authority. These included passing the PRO Act — the largest labor law reform measure in decades — improving access to apprenticeships for women and people of color, creating good union jobs, tackling systemic racism in the workplace and providing a pathway to citizenship for undocumented workers.

"We can't be afraid to organize and get more members within our ranks," Walsh said, underlining how he views his role at the labor department.

Walsh, the former mayor of Boston and second-generation member of Laborers' Local 223, said he supports a \$15 minimum wage and thinks the \$11 proposal floating through Congress is too low, demonstrating his bold and unapologetically pro-labor stance.

"I'm going to do everything I can to lift up the American people and the middle class, union and nonunion," he said. "The window for organizing is wide open, and it's now."

Thanks for Free College Benefit

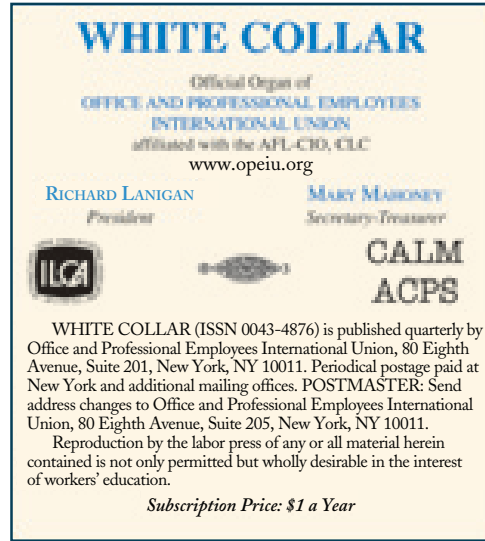
My name is Bernice Clemmons, and I'm an active member of Local 153. I just wanted to take the time to say how much I greatly appreciate the opportunity OPEIU provides all union members to further their education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic causing unprecedented disruption globally, having something else to think about (school) has been a blessing and a reward for me.

I would like to give a special thanks to [OPEIU staffers] Suzanne Fenech-Pascocello and Victoria Tirado-Roman, both of whom were excellent in answering all of my questions and concerns regarding my educational journey. Information you provide is vital to all of the members. Please continue all you do, because whether you realize it or not, someone is listening and being touched by it.

Thank you kindly,  
Bernice Clemmons  
Local 153  
Hempstead, N.Y.



**On the Cover:** On International Workers' Day, or May Day as it's often known, OPEIU members, including those at Local 29 in San Francisco, took to the streets to urge passage of the PRO Act. To learn more about why we need passage of the PRO Act now, see the cover story, "Building Back with the PRO Act," beginning on page 6.



Get the OPEIU app today, available for free download for iPhones in the App Store and for Android devices on Google Play by searching OPEIU.

INSIDE



Cover Story: Building Back with the PRO Act ..... 6



OPEIU Members Do Their Part to Help End Pandemic ..... 10



Employees Earn Historic Win at Secretly Group ..... 13



Local 6 Wins Termination Arbitrations, ULP at Massachusetts Trial Court ..... 15

ANALYSIS

This Time is Different: Opinion of Labor Unions Shifts from the Great Recession to the COVID Pandemic

Americans' approval of unions is way up. Knowing why is vital to understanding how working people can use their power to affect change.

In 2009, in the midst of the Great Recession, public approval for labor unions plummeted. Less than half of Americans that summer, just 41 percent, reported a favorable opinion of unions — down from 58 percent approval before the onset of the economic crisis, according to Pew Research Center.

Increasingly, Pew reasoned, Americans felt unions were exerting too much influence in policymaking in the wake of the recession, and thus blamed the poor economy, in part, on organized labor. (The bailout of the Big Three automakers, whose workers are represented by UAW, played a key role in this belief.) Approval of unions seemed to drop in tandem with approval of large corporations, banks, the federal government and Congress to an all-time low.

Today, we are recovering from a pandemic-fueled recession that impacted far more Americans and wiped out large swaths of the economy virtually overnight. Yet, Americans' approval rating of labor unions is skyrocketing, matching the highest approval seen since 1966. Approval was increasing even before the COVID-19 recession. But why?

During economic downturns, support for labor unions often suffers. Historically, it's because union wages are deemed "too high" for what a collapsed labor market demands, with the perception unions solely help their own members and not the economy at large. Union contracts are often seen as "impediments" to the rapid response demanded during economic crises.

Pew's Sept. 2020 poll shows 65 percent of Americans now view unions favorably, the highest approval rating the polling firm has recorded since the 1960s. The "public is divided in its assessments of the biggest U.S. problem," reads Pew's report, "with roughly one in five each citing the coronavirus, the economy, race relations and leadership."

Unions have led the fight for safer conditions and economic relief during the pandemic for essential workers who have continued to serve on the front lines, as well as for those who have lost their jobs or are refusing to risk their lives for poverty wages, while many of the largest employers in the U.S. continue to rake in more profits than ever.

Other factors can also explain this shift. Progressive, pro-union politics have been rewarded at the ballot box and in the public arena. President Biden has touted the widespread economic benefits of union membership, and Sen. Bernie Sanders' (I-VT) two campaigns for president have shaped public discourse. Bottom-up economic policies have become more palatable and politically possible after decades of austerity — which never works as promised by those at the top, who reap the benefits while working people are left in an increasingly precarious economic position.

We have to act now to aid the resurgence of organized labor and all it entails — higher wages, better benefits and less inequality...

Knowing how and why approval ratings of unions fluctuate is necessary to understanding how working people can wield their power in a political system dominated by a 24/7 news cycle, partisan politics and fair-weather friends in both chambers of Congress. We know unions didn't destroy the economy in 2007-08; Wall Street did. And we know the window of opportunity to enact real labor law reform is small, but within sight.

We have to act now to aid the resurgence of organized labor and all it entails — higher wages, better benefits and less inequality — while we have the chance. Working people, our families and our communities can't afford to wait until another economic crisis forces our elected officials to take action. We must do everything within our power now to see passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.

Turn the page to see how you can get involved and help make the PRO Act a reality!



# Building Back with the PRO Act

If we're going to build back our country and give working families a fighting chance as we emerge from the pandemic, then we're going to need real labor law reform. We're going to need the PRO Act.



Photo reprinted with permission by Brooke Anderson Photography.

## Why We Need the PRO Act

On March 9, 2021, the Protecting the Right to Organize, or PRO Act, passed in the House 225 to 206. It had the support of 220 Democrats and five Republicans. Now, it moves to the Senate where it has the support of 47 senators as co-sponsors. It also has the support of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris.

*Now is our moment to get it across the finish line in the Senate.*

The PRO Act would dramatically grow workers' power on the job by expanding union membership, reforming decades-old labor laws, banning so-called "right-to-work" laws allowing employers to pay less for the same work and ending employer intimidation or interference in union drives. It would give everyone stronger rights to organize and collectively bargain for their wages, benefits and other protections in the workplace.

If we all stand united in this demand, we can win!

*The stakes for all of us couldn't be higher.*

After nearly 100 years without positive labor law reform, we must work together to pass the PRO Act.

Visit [PassTheProAct.org](https://PassTheProAct.org) to learn more and get involved in the fight for our rights!

### Join the Pass the PRO Act Campaign!

Now that the PRO Act has passed the House, we must do everything in our power to get it across the finish line in the Senate. It will take all of us working together to get the first positive labor law reform signed into law in nearly a century.

Join the fight! Visit [PassTheProAct.org](https://PassTheProAct.org) to get involved.

## 10 Ways the PRO Act Can Transform Labor Rights in the U.S.

- 1** The PRO Act **prevents employers from interfering in union elections** and prohibits employers from requiring workers to attend anti-union meetings.
- 2** The PRO Act removes prohibitions on workers acting in solidarity with workers at other workplaces and **protects workers who engage in peaceful protest** actions with their fellow workers.
- 3** The PRO Act **creates a mediation and arbitration process** to ensure newly formed unions reach a first contract. Today, even when workers succeed in forming a union, nearly half of newly formed unions fail to ever reach a contract with the employer.
- 4** The PRO Act **prohibits companies from permanently replacing workers** who participate in a strike.
- 5** The PRO Act **prevents employers from misclassifying their workers as independent contractors** — a method employers often use to avoid paying fair wages and providing benefits and other employee protections.
- 6** The PRO Act **authorizes meaningful penalties for employers that violate workers' rights.**
- 7** The PRO Act requires the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to immediately seek an injunction to **reinstate workers who suffer retaliation** for exercising their rights.
- 8** The PRO Act **allows workers to seek justice in court** when employers unlawfully interfere with their National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) rights or retaliate against them for exercising NLRA rights.
- 9** The PRO Act **prevents workers from being denied remedies due to their immigration status.**
- 10** The PRO Act **requires employers to post notices informing workers of their rights** under the NLRA, and to disclose contracts with consultants hired to persuade employees on how to exercise their rights.

Source: [PassTheProAct.org](https://PassTheProAct.org)

## How the PRO Act Can Help Young People Do Better Than Their Parents' Generation, Again

Millennials are on track to be the first generation in American history to have a lower quality of life than their parents' generation. For the generations coming after, the student debt, housing and climate crises stand in the way of any hope of reversing this trend.

These three crises, however, have emerged from the same root cause: the profits-before-people mentality that has always, and still does, dominate our nation's politics. But we can change it and, in the process, create a brighter future. How? By shifting the balance of power between the employers, the landlords and big business to working people via the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.

If passed, the PRO Act would be the most impactful piece of civil and workers' rights legislation since at least the mid-1960s. Union membership among workers younger than 35 is outpacing any other age group. Young workers are forming unions in an array of developing industries with a young workforce: technology, nonprofits, record labels, etc.

But many young workers are employed in industries with high turnover in an economy defined by precarity. The PRO Act can help those workers, who overwhelmingly say they would vote for a union if given the chance, by enforcing the already illegal arsenal of union-busting tactics used by employers to intimidate employees. Research suggests illegal union-busting tactics, such as intimidation, surveillance and harassment by employers, are intensifying and becoming more sophisticated. Modern U.S. labor law does little to prevent employers from doing it anyway.

The PRO Act would institute real penalties for employers who break the law, which would reduce the risk for young workers who want to organize, but fear employer retaliation. Of course, the system was designed specifically to intimidate workers from forming unions, beginning with the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. But this legislation can change the system, significantly improving the prospects for young workers hoping to lead a dignified future.



Local 29 members march in San Francisco for the PRO Act.

*The PRO Act would institute real penalties for employers who break the law, which would reduce the risk for young workers who want to organize, but fear employer retaliation.*

By returning to an economy with widespread union membership, facilitated by "new," fairer rules — in many cases, a return to the rules governing union organizing that helped create the world's largest-ever middle class in the mid-20th century — we can provide younger generations the stability to start families and the foundation to buy their first homes. That's because **union members earn an average of 20 percent more than their nonunion counterparts**, and unions indirectly boost the wages of all workers in their communities by forcing employers to compete for employees with better wages.

The PRO Act, in tandem with forward-thinking proposals, like the canceling of at least \$50,000 of student debt, could make a massive difference in the lives of young people. Though it's not a catch-all solution and there's still plenty of work to be done across the board, it will mark a significant and historic first step toward restoring the balance between working people and employers by giving working people a real chance at building a better future through the power of a union contract.

# OPEIU Members Do Their Part to Help End Pandemic

OPEIU members throughout the country are rolling up their sleeves and doing their part to protect themselves and their communities by getting vaccinated against COVID-19.



Local 30 Administrative Assistant Mariana Almaraz, left, and Executive Assistant/Office Manager Maria Perez after getting vaccinated in San Diego.



Local 40's Cassandra Bell, a registered nurse and steward at Ascension Crittenton Hospital in Michigan, gets her vaccination.



Kelly Gschwend, secretary-treasurer/business representative of Local 29, gets her vaccination in the San Francisco area.



Local 40 President Jeff Morawski, RN, gets his vaccination at McLaren Macomb Hospital, where the local represents nurses and respiratory technicians.



Local 29 Apprentice Organizer Maureen Flaherman proudly displays her vaccination card.



Paige Yates, RN, president of Local 22 in Little Rock.



Local 30 member and recently elected secretary-treasurer of the Denver Area Labor Federation April Martinez, left, gets vaccinated with her partner, Sarah, who is a fellow union member of the American Federation of Teachers.

# Working Professionals Choose OPEIU

Working people throughout the country, like those at independent music label Secretly Group, are choosing OPEIU when deciding to form a union at work.



Warehouse workers at Secretly Group in Bloomington, Indiana, celebrate their organizing win. Left to right are Dakota Langdon, Reggie Provine, Zack Worcel, Becca Roberts, Emily Tucker, Ryan Ille-Potter, Joe Wood, Triston Runyon, Tom McGrew, Nate Lewis, Malik Benberry and Austin White, seated far right. Pictured on the hay bale, left to right, are Lina Yanson, Eric Deines and Mary O'Reilly and standing in the yard is Alex Swartzentruber.

## Employees Earn Historic Win at Secretly Group

Employees at Secretly Group, a family of American independent record labels based in Bloomington, Indiana, have organized with Local 174, which represents more than 1,700 people working in the entertainment industry at Universal Studios, Uni Music Group, Warner Bros. Studios and elsewhere.

The win was particularly important considering the employees formed their union without interference from management, who called the effort a “positive step for our company and the industry writ large.” This voluntary recognition by an influential independent music company could have far-reaching implications, setting a progressive, more union-positive standard in the industry as a whole.

“This agreement means company management acknowledges these employees’ right to organize a union and create a unified voice on the job,” said the newly unionized group in a statement. “We trust and expect the partners to bargain in good faith with the union as we work together toward a fair contract for all. As we head toward contract negotiations, we celebrate this moment of recognition as a first in our corner of the industry.”

The newly organized unit is composed of 84 members across various positions and locations around the country who create, promote and distribute independent label music worldwide. They are responsible for identifying new talent, designing album cover art, creating packaging and promotional materials, among many other roles behind the scenes crucial to the success of the artists, their music and the entire industry. The company represents several music labels, including Secretly Canadian, Jagjaguwar, Ghostly International, Numero Group and Dead Oceans. In addition to the Bloomington office, there are offices in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and worldwide in Canada, London, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin.

From the start, the employees took control of the campaign and credit much of their success to their specialized talents and experience

with social media, website design, public relations and press outreach. According to OPEIU Lead Organizer Andom “Nati” Kahsay, various committees were established to capitalize on this expertise and to engage members to build majority support of the unionization effort, create eye-catching and persuasive social media posts to generate support from the labels’ artists and

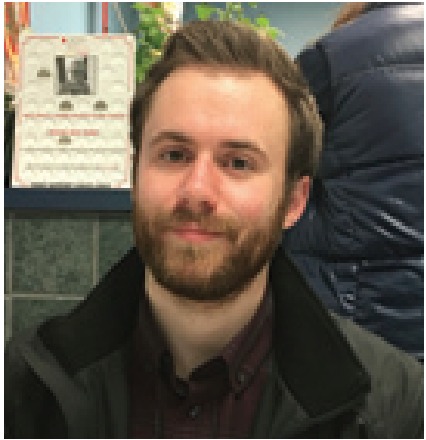
other key allies, and to work with journalists at industry publications to share what was happening at Secretly with the public. The multi-pronged campaign worked.

“We formed a union because we knew the only way to raise wages or quality of health benefits would be through a union-negotiated contract,” said Clayton Greenwell, an accounts receivable specialist at Secretly Group. He hopes their historic win will “inspire artists and workers in the music industry to organize and finally share in the profit the industry creates, as historically, the music industry has done a poor job compensating workers and creators.”

Harlan Kelly, who at the time the group organized was a radio promotions manager, says they formed the union because “we want Secretly to be a sustainable place to work. Too often people who work in creative industries feel like because they are working in a field they’re passionate about, they don’t have as much agency to ask for fair treatment. [We] wanted to find a way to make concrete changes in our workplace and to support each other.” They also wanted to address issues such as diversity at work and ways to achieve a better work-life balance.

Kelly hopes Secretly Group management continues to show they are “committed to their progressive values by meeting us at the bargaining table so we can ensure a fair contract.” As the group prepares for these negotiating sessions, Kelly says they intend to “share the specifics of the unionization process” with others who may be interested in learning more about what a union could mean in their workplace. “When we started, there wasn’t a playbook for how to unionize an independent record label,” Kelly says. “We’ve learned so much and we want to share what we’ve learned so others can build on it and [improve] the music industry.”

“No one is successful without a community,” he concludes. “We need to support each other.”



Clayton Greenwell, an accounts receivable specialist at Secretly Group.

# Working Professionals Choose OPEIU

## RepresentUs Employees Organize with Local 153



New members of Local 153 at RepresentUs.

The staff at RepresentUs, a nonprofit organization advocating for state and local laws aimed at avoiding political gridlock, have won their union with Local 153 in New York through voluntary recognition by their employer. Ninety-seven percent of the staff signed union cards, according to OPEIU Lead Organizer Grace Reckers.

The group, based in Northampton, Massachusetts, has 27 members who will now negotiate their first contract. Congratulations to the new group and kudos to the hardworking members of the union organizing committee. "All the staff members were very involved in this campaign," Reckers said. "We're thrilled to welcome them to OPEIU."

## NYC Anti-Violence Project Employees Say 'Union Yes'

Employees at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP) wanted a way to ensure they were best positioned to fulfill their mission to the community. Like so many other mission-driven nonprofit organizations, the answer for them was forming a union with OPEIU.

The new unit of attorneys, clinicians, paralegals, community outreach specialists and more has won voluntary recognition for their union with Local 153 in New York after a successful card check campaign.

AVP is a nonprofit organization providing education, advocacy and counseling to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected communities and allies. Employees began organizing their union last summer amid threats of layoffs during the pandemic, following several years of discussion about ways to improve their working conditions, according to Dana Kopel, a Local 153 organizer.

"Unionizing enables them to increase transparency, improve compensation and put in place support structures and professional development opportunities that will allow staff to better serve their communities," Kopel said.

"We are thrilled to win our union," said Elliot McCullough, a clinician and a member of the union's organizing committee. "We aren't just AVP employees. Many of us are part of the same community we work with and are survivors of violence ourselves.

"We cannot say we are committed to ending all forms of violence without starting in our personal spheres," McCullough continued.

Isaac Dwyer, a paralegal and another organizing committee member, agrees. "AVP is a mission-driven organization, and we work here because we believe in the necessity, the gravity and the urgency of what we do. We also believe we do our best work when we meet and hold space for our own needs.

"Unionizing with OPEIU will help us advocate for and fulfill those needs so we can do the work we are here to do at our best," he said.

As they prepare to negotiate their first contract, the staff are looking forward to building a more sustainable, equitable workplace for everyone, and one that better reflects the values of AVP and its employees. "LGBTQ and HIV-affected communities especially need strong labor protections, and we're excited to move to the bargaining table," McCullough said.

## Local 6 Wins Termination Arbitrations, ULP at Massachusetts Trial Court

### Victories Mean Reinstatement, Backpay for Members

Local 6 is pleased to report the successful results of three recent termination cases they fought on behalf of their members at the Massachusetts Trial Court.

Chief Field Services/Legal Officer Phil Basile worked with Local 6's outside counsel to seek reinstatements and make whole orders from an arbitrator during two recent separate termination arbitrations. Local 6 received notice within the past month that the arbitrators agreed with their arguments. The Trial Court had not established just cause to terminate the members in question and both were reinstated to their previous positions with make-whole orders.

Local 6 brought another termination case to the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations, arguing that a probationary member was terminated based on retaliation for her concerted and protected union activity. The labor department agreed at the initial stage, and a formal complaint was issued. With the leverage of a looming complaint in hand, Local 6 was able to successfully negotiate a generous settlement package on behalf of its member.

"Navigating through the pandemic has been complicated, but these results come as welcome news at the Local 6 office," Basile said.

## Local 6 VP Supports Striking St. Vincent Nurses



In a strong show of solidarity, Local 6 Vice President Lois Ciuffredo, far right, joined the line with nurses at Saint Vincent Hospital in Worcester, who are represented by the Massachusetts Nurses Association and are on strike for the first time in more than two decades.

The strike, which began March 8 and continued at press time, is the result of a contract dispute over safe staffing with Tenet Healthcare, the Texas-based health care company that owns the hospital. Two months into the strike, the hospital started hiring replacement nurses. After a year of sacrifice and hardship during the pandemic, the hospital's refusal to meet safe staffing requirements is viewed as a betrayal by these hardworking, overburdened health care professionals.

## New Boston Acting Mayor Meets with Local 6

Local 6 Business Manager George Noel and Executive Board member Yolanda Thomas recently met with Boston's newly appointed, acting Mayor Kim Janey to hear her plans to address the needs and concerns of the working families of the city.

The May meeting brought together labor officials from the Greater Boston Labor Council and the Boston Building Trades Council to share their questions and concerns with Janey, who previously served as the president of the Boston City Council and was tapped to serve as acting mayor when former mayor Marty Walsh was named President Biden's new secretary of labor.

Janey, the first woman and first Black person to serve as mayor, spoke of the positive relationship she shared with the labor movement when on the city council, and announced the creation of a senior level position dedicated to labor issues that will report directly to her. Noel, who serves on the Greater Boston Labor Council executive board, and Thomas, who works for Boston's Inspectional Services Division (ISD), discussed with Janey issues facing Local 6 members at ISD.

"As a union laborer, former mayor Marty Walsh is a tough act to follow," Noel said. "It's refreshing to see Mayor Janey work so early in her administration to strengthen her relationship with the working families of Boston."



Boston Mayor Kim Janey, left, Local 6 Executive Board member and Steward with Boston's Inspectional Services Division Yolanda Thomas and Business Manager George Noel.



## Local 30's April Martinez Elected Denver Labor Federation Secretary-Treasurer



Local 30 member April Martinez, with her granddaughter Avery Grace, has been elected secretary-treasurer of the Denver Area Labor Federation.

April Martinez, a member of Local 30, has been elected to serve as secretary-treasurer of the Denver Area Labor Federation.

The organization is at the heart of the labor movement, partnering with area local unions and state and community organizations to improve the lives of working families. The work Martinez and leaders like her do is central to carrying forward our shared agenda of economic and social justice for all working families. Martinez has the experience and commitment needed to help fulfill that agenda.

"I'm working to help the Denver federation gain financial stability and transparency so we can accomplish our goals and further the agenda for working families," Martinez says.

"The Denver Area Labor Federation is vital to our effort to strengthen our labor movement and build a powerful voice for workers in our communities," said Richard Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO. "The mission and goals of the AFL-CIO — new organizing, building political power, developing solid legislative agendas and strengthening the voice of working families in our communities — depend upon the grassroots efforts of strong and effective state and local labor councils. As secretary-treasurer of the Denver Area Labor Federation, [Martinez] will play a crucial role as we build a vibrant labor movement and a just society."

"We are so proud of April's commitment to the Denver federation," said Marianne Giordano, Local 30 executive director/CFO and International vice president. "I could not think of a better person to represent labor and OPEIU."

## Karyn Morrison is New Local 11 President

Karyn Morrison has been elected to serve as president of Local 11 in Vancouver, Washington, after former president Barbara Melton chose not to run for another term.

Morrison began working for Local 11 in 2018, bringing with her valuable experience gained as a union member and as an active steward and officer of AFSCME Local 307, where she administered member affairs, advocated on behalf of the members and oversaw budgeting and finances.

"Karyn is fully engaged with the union and someone who can think quickly in emergent situations, providing good assessments of many factors to make appropriate decisions," said Maureen Goldberg, Local 11 executive secretary-treasurer. "She illustrates ethical behavior and amplifies the highest standards through integrity, honesty and forthrightness. We are excited to work with her in the capacity of our president."



Local 11's newly elected president Karyn Morrison.

## Podiatrists Guild President Addresses Temple Grads

Speaking to the 2021 graduating class of the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine, the school's dean, John Mattiacci, DPM, congratulated them on the successful completion of their degrees under difficult circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mattiacci, who is also an International vice president and president of OPEIU Guild 45/The First National Guild for Healthcare Providers of the Lower Extremity, addressed the challenges faced by students completing assignments during a global pandemic, which drastically shifted the manner in which they completed their already challenging coursework.

He urged graduates to "join [their] communities' efforts to make lives better for others" after graduating. "Today, you enter a profession with unlimited horizons — horizons defined by your generation, not ours."



John Mattiacci, DPM  
Photo reprinted with permission by Legacy Photo.

## Local 494's New Contract Means \$21k Gains for Members



The Local 494 bargaining committee, clockwise from top left, are member Debra Armour, Vice President Beckie Bridgewater, member Gina Bruglio, Board Member-at-Large Nikki Smith, Sergeant-at-Arms Melissa King, member Tia Darden and President Janice Caruso.

Local 494 ratified a new contract with the UAW that brings with it gains of more than \$21,700 per member during the four-year agreement. "It is the most lucrative contract I have seen in my 26 years at the local," said Janice Caruso, president. "We also negotiated the highest signing bonus we've seen of \$6,000."

The committee also successfully bargained two paid days off lost in the 2009 concessionary bargaining, and made changes to the 401(k) plan, increasing the company match, reducing the limit on loans per year and allowing members the option to make payments on loans in retirement.

"Our bargaining committee had almost 200 years of experience at our worksite to bring to the table," Caruso said. "They fought tooth and nail to bring back the best contract possible. I'm proud to have worked with these fine people."

## Local 29 and 30 Kaiser Members Take to the Streets to Demand Nurse Recognition and Compensation

Members employed at Kaiser Permanente took to the streets to let their communities know that despite how health care workers such as them have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, putting themselves and their families at risk to care for their patients, they've yet to receive the recognition and compensation they deserve for their efforts and sacrifices.

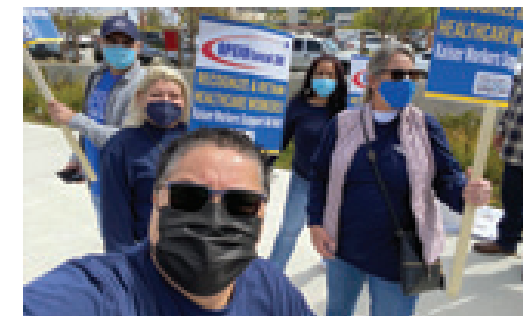
Despite making record profits during the pandemic, Kaiser Permanente has not fully paid what was negotiated and promised by the company. Local Unions 2, 8, 29, 30 and 50 all represent employees at Kaiser and bargain collectively through an entity known as the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions (CKPU).

California Locals 29 and 30 are also supporting the Health Care Worker Recognition and Retention Act (AB 650), which requires health care facilities with more than 100 employees to pay bonuses to all non-executive employees who work during the pandemic. The bonuses would be paid in 2022 after the law goes into effect.

Kaiser Permanente made \$6.4 billion in profits in 2020. While the corporation calls its nurses and other front-line employees "heroes," it claims it can't do more to help. These employees are demanding the recognition and support they deserve.



Local 29 stewards, left to right, Sandy Urvina, Tamra Decker, Alexandria Schlagel, Ebony Hughes and Cyreeta Smith.



Local 30 Executive Director/CFO and International Vice President Marianne Giordano, center in pink vest, and left to right, Trustee Manuel Santillan, Steward Sandra Solorio, Administrative Assistant Mariana Almaraz and Recording Secretary Margie Chavez.

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## Don't Leave Money on the Table!

Every year, OPEIU awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to OPEIU members and their families. Could you or your family members be eligible to receive one?

Find out more at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) under the Member Resources tab, and on the OPEIU app, which is available for free download for iPhones in the App Store and for Android devices at Google Play by searching OPEIU.

Scholarship opportunities include the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship, which awards 12 full-time higher education **scholarships of up to \$6,500 and eight part-time scholarships of up to \$2,650** to OPEIU members, associate members and dependents. The John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship awards **10 scholarships of up to \$3,250** for OPEIU members or

associate members who are pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in labor studies, industrial relations or union leadership and administration.

Check out the next issue of White Collar to see all the 2021 scholarship recipients. Applications for the 2022 scholarships will be available in January at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) under the Member Resources tab and on the OPEIU app.

## Earn Your Degree for Free Online

Thinking about going back to school? Through your union, you can complete your associate or bachelor's degree completely online for FREE with the OPEIU Free College and Bachelor's Completion benefits. Classes start Aug. 16.

Online learning is safe and can fit into your busy schedule. As always, you can earn your associate degree or certificates for FREE. Now, students enrolled in 2021 also can complete their bachelor's degree for FREE! The program is provided by OPEIU to all members and their families. For more information and a complete list of enrollment deadlines, visit [freecollege.opeiu.org](https://freecollege.opeiu.org).

More than 1,900 OPEIU members have saved more than **\$7.2 million** in tuition, e-books and other fees through the OPEIU Free College Program.

### Be Like DeAundra!

The flexible schedule and ability to attend classes from home afforded through the OPEIU Free College Program worked for DeAundra Cephus, vice president of Local 277 in Ft. Worth. She graduated in June with an associate degree in business management.

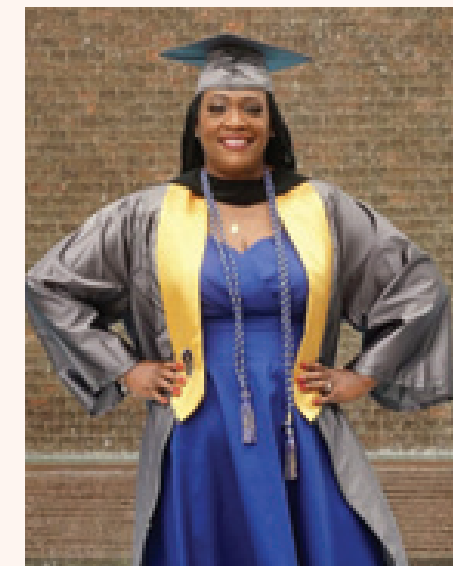
In fall 2018, Cephus took advantage of the Free College benefit, available at no cost to all members. June 5, she graduated with honors from Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC) with an associate degree in business management with a focus on labor issues.

Cephus felt since everyone else in her immediate family had at least one degree,

she needed to go back to college. She had tried several times taking classes at night, but often her job would interfere with her ability to take required classes only offered during the day. With the Free College benefit, Cephus jumped at the chance to finish her degree.

"It worked for me because I could work at my own pace and finish online at home," she said, all at no cost because of her union membership. According to Cephus, EGCC was so accommodating because they have special counselors to work specifically with union students. "You call them, and they are right on your problem or question," she said. She plans to further her studies through OPEIU's Bachelor Completion Program at Central State University, which is an HBCU.

"We're very proud of DeAundra for getting her associate degree," said Tyler Turner, Local 277 president/business manager and International vice president. "Her focus on labor studies has helped her in representing our members at American Income Life Insurance Company."



Local 277 Vice President DeAundra Cephus graduates with an associate degree in business management, with a concentration in labor studies.



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# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES  
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