THE CONVENTION MAY BE OVER, BUT WE’RE JUST GETTING STARTED

Resolutions have been passed, officers elected, and the push to organize has begun. But first, we need to elect a worker-friendly president to lead the country. (See page 14)
Recently, two OPEIU members, George and Marsha, were catching up after not seeing each other for a while. Marsha mentioned she was looking for a new job. George, with great interest, asked, “Have you had any interviews?” George further asked with curiosity about the interview process. Marsha mentioned that after an interview and discussion with one of her friends on Facebook, she learned the following about the employer with whom she interviewed:

- The employer had publicly humiliated former employees over their weight and physical appearance.
- The employer was using or had used large numbers of undocumented workers in its businesses, when it could have hired Americans.
- The employer frequently used foreign workers employed in the United States on visas in its business practices, when it could have hired Americans.
- The employer fought its employees’ construction unions over contributions on the employees’ behalf to the unions’ retirement plans, to the point where the union was forced to sue the employer over the contributions. The union won the lawsuit, and the employer finally settled.
- The employer had taken most of its production lines out of the United States and into low-wage countries rather than manufacturing in the United States and employing American workers.
- Since 2008, the employer had constructed two buildings in the United States and chose to use steel manufactured in China, rather than steel manufactured in the United States by American workers.
- The employer filed for bankruptcy several times.
- The employer publicly announced recently that it believes its employees’ wages are too high.
- The employer had a modeling business and chose to employ foreign models rather than American models.
- The employer had a television show and a number of other businesses where former employees have said this employer made remarks about having sex with other employees.
- The employer fought one of its employees’ unions over health care contributions on behalf of its employees. The union was forced to pursue the matter in court. The employer finally settled and made contributions to the plan.
- The employer has been sued by numerous small businesses, workers and their unions because of its failure to pay the full amount of the compensation agreed upon. In one location, the employer was sued by drapery makers, glaziers, carpet installers, cabinet makers, etc. Many of those who sued were forced to settle for much lower amounts than initially agreed upon.
- The employer is on record as having employed more than 1,000 workers from foreign countries.
- The employer owned most of these businesses outright and did not have a fiduciary duty to shareholders to return the highest dividend on the shareholder’s investment, which means that these decisions were driven by a desire to increase personal profit rather than sharing any benefit with American workers.

George said to Marsha, “With that track record, why would you ever want to go to work for this employer?” Marsha said, “Because he is promising to make my work experience a ‘great’ one.” George asked, “Who is this employer?” Marsha said, “I don’t know, but I think he’s running for president.”
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jean Adams, wife of former OPEIU Verizon Strikers Are Back to Work

The outpouring of support, both financial and on the picket line, boosted strikers’ spirits and helped put pressure on Verizon. With your help, striking workers and their families were able to last one day longer than this very wealthy company. That made it possible for us to achieve our goal of keeping good jobs in our communities and standing up for working families. CWA could not have won this fight alone.

On June 1, after 45 days, 39,000 strikers walked back into work at Verizon having faced down the 15th-largest corporation in America. We are proud of the contract we negotiated that protected job security and pensions, kept call centers open, added 1,500 new call center and technician jobs, brought jobs back from overseas, and won a historic first contract for 75 Verizon Wireless retail store workers.

Between our strike fund and the contributions collected, we were able to assist the members most in need with critical bills. We appreciate your support and your solidarity.

Because the strike ended sooner than we expected, I am returning your contribution of $25,000. Thank you.

In unity,
Christopher M. Shelton, President

Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO Washington, D.C.

Former Vice President
Billie Adams’ Family Expresses Thanks

Thank you so much for all ... you have done for me and the family. It is appreciated. OPEIU has done so much for us. Bill was always proud to work for and be associated with OPEIU, and we wish you all continued success. God bless you all.

Sincerely,
Jean Adams, wife of former OPEIU Vice President Billie D. Adams Montrose, Illinois

OPEIU Supports Training Efforts in Texas

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I would like to personally thank OPEIU for your generous contribution of $10,000 toward our Capital Campaign for a New Education and Training Center in Forest Hill, Texas. We look forward to working with OPEIU.

Local 277 President/Business Manager Becky Turner and our community partners to transform this old facility into our new “Expanding Opportunities Now” Education and Training Center. This center will allow unemployed and underemployed workers in the North Central Texas area to receive the technical skills necessary to become employed in high growth careers in the aerospace, logistics and other advanced manufacturing industries.

Again, thank you for your interest in our Capital Campaign. Without your support, this new facility would not have been possible.

Fraternally,
Pat Lane, President
Community Learning Center
Fort Worth, Texas

Labor Steps Up to Combat Flint Water Crisis

Thank you for your generous contribution to the Rochester & Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation. AFL-CIO’s effort to help the community of Flint, Michigan, during their current and ongoing water crisis. There are poisonous amounts of lead in Flint’s water, and residents have had to drink, cook and bathe out of a bottle. It should be our human right to [have] drinkable, clean water.

Your contribution made this effort a reality. Thank you.

In solidarity,
Dan Maloney, President

Rochester & Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation
Rochester, New York

Thanks for Needed GOTV Support

Please let me express our wholehearted appreciation on behalf of myself and the officers and members of the San Antonio AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. I want to thank you for your generous donation of $3,000 for our primary election GOTV project. I cannot tell you how grateful we are for your generosity. Because we are a small labor council, it is very difficult for us to fully operate our political agenda here in San Antonio. Your financial assistance helped us elect and re-elect public officials in our primary election who have constantly been supportive of our issues.

On a very personal basis, please accept my most grateful appreciation for your friendship and faith that OPEIU has had for our work here in San Antonio.

In solidarity,
Linda Chavez-Thompson
Executive Vice President Emerita
National AFL-CIO

Organizations like us have taken on the task of filling in where the local government has left them out. It is our duty as union members and local organizations to help when our brothers and sisters are in need. Together, our 19-county jurisdiction raised $34,117 for this effort.

On May 1, a small delegation of volunteers traveled out to Flint to unload the Teamsters Local 118 truck filled with more than 40,000 bottles of water [pictures]. In addition, we supported United Way in their Water for Flint Fund, which has helped to install filters on faucets, purchase dollars for residents, and aid in health care and awareness of the situation. We cannot stand idly by as a city in our own country has no option but to drink, cook and bathe out of a bottle. It should be our human right to [have] drinkable, clean water.

Your contribution made this effort a reality. Thank you.

In solidarity,
Dan Maloney, President
Rochester & Genesee Valley Area Labor Federation
Rochester, New York

27th OPEIU Convention

Working Together to Chart a Brighter Future

Delegates left the 27th OPEIU Convention feeling inspired and empowered to make a lasting impact on the future of the union and the life of every American worker. As President Richard Lanigan put it, “This convention is just the beginning.”

Delegates heard from a number of speakers who offered concrete solutions to the 21st-century challenges facing the labor movement—starting with electing a president who puts first the needs of working people. Speakers included AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, Florida AFL-CIO President Mike Williams, NAACP Washington Bureau Director Hilary Shelton, Union Privilege Representative Brea Ellis and CNN political commentator Van Jones.

Trumka delivered a powerful speech about the American labor movement and what’s at stake in this election, urging convention delegates, “This November, let’s vote for an America that works for working people!”

He made it clear that the only way to do that is “to lead by example,” encouraging delegates to phone-bank, knock on doors and empower new activists to ensure Hillary Clinton and all pro-worker candidates win this November.

“This is organizing on a mammoth scale,” Trumka said. “We will stand together. We will fight together. We will win together.... We’re going to elect a worker-friendly president.”

Other speakers from the world of labor, such as North Carolina AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Mandee McMillan and AFL-CIO Organizing Director Elizabeth Bunn, spoke passionately about the need to find new and creative ways to organize in today’s anti-labor reality that has resulted in 26 right-to-work states.

“We need to be bold. We need to take risks, (and) we need OPEIU,” Bunn declared. She told delegates that collective bargaining and organizing are the keys to changing the system, and spoke to the importance of the upcoming election and electing the right candidate, jokingly remarking, “I’m sorry that none of your daughters will be the first female president.”
MaryBe McMillan: “Forward Together, Not One Step Back!”

MaryBe McMillan, secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina AFL-CIO, electrified the convention with an impassioned speech about the future of the labor movement and brought delegates to their feet with her encouraging words. McMillan spoke compellingly about how the anti-labor movement in the South has become a bellwether for the nation.

“With the Friedrichs case, with right-to-work-for-less, with attacks on collective bargaining, your states are counterintuitively, the hope that it provides. But I believe even the hope for our movement is the South, the South is where the hope is, the hope that it provides. The South is where the hope is.”

MaryBe McMillan, secretary-treasurer of the North Carolina AFL-CIO

Thea Lee Explains Economic Impact of Workplace Inequality, Praises OPEIU 401(k)

AFL-CIO Deputy Chief of Staff Thea Lee gave delegates an economic perspective on workplace inequality and the very real impact it has on family earnings, retirement, and our nation’s economy. She also pointed out that while the 1 percent may have most of the money, the rest of us have most of the people power. By working together, we can effect real change.

“One of the reasons unions have been under attack so viciously at the state level in Wisconsin, in Michigan, in Ohio, in Missouri, is because we’re so effective.”

Lee said. “They’re afraid of us because unions are the last remaining thing standing between the wealthy and the last of their goals.”

“We should be proud of the attacks, but we should fight back.”

Lee said. “We have critical mass to make big change.”

Lee, an economist, discussed the looming retirement crisis in the U.S., saying we need to strengthen and expand Social Security by raising the cap on earnings to 90 percent, protect our pensions and find innovative options for our members to save for retirement.

“I know that OPEIU is working on a new 401(k) program, and I think that’s a great idea.”

Lee said. “Retirement money is worker money…Workers need a voice, and the OPEIU 401(k) will give workers that voice.”

Hilary Shelton: NAACP Stands with OPEIU to Fight Inequality in the Workplace

NAACP Washington Bureau Director and Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy Hilary Shelton illustrated the parallels between the civil rights movement and the fight for workplace equality, noting that workplace equality is a civil rights issue.

“We’ve got to increase the minimum wage to a living wage.”

Shelton made it clear that voting pro-labor candidates into office is the key to that equality, saying, “You can’t make the changes, you can’t fix the problem, you can’t make America live up to its constitutional promises if you don’t deliver the vote.”

Van Jones Provides Insight into 2016 Election

CNN political commentator and activist Van Jones used humor, political acumen and personal anecdotes to shed a bright light on the seriousness of the November presidential election.

“We can’t sit back and just hope Donald Trump will lose. We have to make sure he loses.”

Jones said. “Let me tell you something: Donald Trump is going to go into neighborhoods and say, ‘I’m rich. I can make you rich.’ And people are going to believe it. We can’t let his lies become a reality.”

Van Jones

CNN political commentator and activist

“Donald Trump must lose.”

Van Jones

OPEIU Joins Fight Against Mondelēz

Ron Baker, strategic campaign coordinator for The Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM), addressed the convention as part of the Nabisco 600 Tour, a campaign supported by OPEIU. The campaign aims to spread the word about the 600 laid-off BCTGM Local 300 members from the Nabisco bakery in Chicago, whose jobs were offshore to Salinas, Mexico, by parent company Mondelēz. Learn more at fightforamericanjobs.org.
**OPEIU Podiatrists Say Union Equals Fairness**

John Mattiacci, DPM, president of Guild 45 Podiatry, and R. Daniel Davis, DPM, president of the American Podiatric Medical Association, spoke of the many challenges that come with being a small medical profession that has “not been treated equally with other medical professions” and the important role that OPEIU has played in their success.

“We recognize that, as the smallest medical profession there is, there is strength in unity,” Davis said. “Being in a union gives us something that we could not achieve in any other forum. We recognize that this alliance will not solve all of our problems. But it will get us to the table where these issues are discussed. And that is something we would not otherwise have unless we had the union behind us. “Make no doubt about it, health care is changing,” he continued. “Our affiliation with OPEIU keeps us in the forefront of those changes. They are beside us. They are working with us. “We have to go out and fight now in this health care environment,” he said. “We have to fight as a small group of people, because there is strength in unity. And if we have to go into a fight, I will tell you right now, as the president of the APMA, I would rather go into that fight with OPEIU and labor beside me. When we go into that fight with labor on our side, we know that we’re going to win, not just for members of our association, but we’ll win for the patients of this country to get better health care that they deserve, and that physicians should get the reimbursement that we deserve for the treatment that we provide.”

**Michael Goodwin Named International President Emeritus**

The convention paid tribute to former President Michael Goodwin, recognizing his more than 55 years of service to OPEIU and its members. President Richard Lanigan, Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney and, in a video message, U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), along with many others, shared their personal gratitude for Goodwin’s leadership of OPEIU and unwavering commitment to America’s workers.

Delegates unanimously passed an executive board resolution bestowing International President Emeritus status on Goodwin, who served as OPEIU president from 1994 to 2015.

Former International President Michael Goodwin has dedicated his life to OPEIU and its members, having served more than 55 years as a member and leader of the union, the resolution read. “The OPEIU officers, members and staff would like to recognize Goodwin for his many and diverse contributions to OPEIU and for his role in making it the strong and vibrant organization it is today. The delegates to this 27th OPEIU Convention hereby confer on Michael Goodwin the well-deserved title of International President Emeritus.”

Goodwin continues to serve the labor movement in his role as business manager of Local 153 in New York City.

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**New Membership Benefit Introduced**

A new identity theft protection benefit was introduced at the convention that will be available to all OPEIU members in good standing in 2017.

Adding to the substantial list of membership benefits—which includes a towing service that entitles all members and family living in the same household to up to two tow/service calls per year, and a $2,000 death and $2,000 accidental death and dismemberment benefit—all members will have, at no cost to them, access to a proactive, comprehensive defense against identity theft.

If you become a victim of identity theft, OPEIU’s identity theft protection solution, InfoArmor’s PrivacyArmor, and its trained experts will help to restore your identity to pre-theft status. This can save you money and hundreds of hours of your time.

The threat of identity theft is growing, and the OPEIU program will help protect our members against a crime that affected almost 13 million Americans last year, costing them $56 billion.

Further information about the identity theft benefit and when the program will be available to OPEIU members will be coming in the near future.

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**OPEIU’s Rising Stars Shine: Millennial Activists Represent Labor Movement’s Future**

Corinne Cosentino (Local 8), Dominique Prince (Local 393) and Carolina Aceves (Local 30), representing the next generation of OPEIU leaders and activists, shared how they have become or elected to be active in labor because they see the value in strong unions. Prince is a newlywed and expectant father, explained that despite recently being laid off, he continues to work as a volunteer organizer because he recognizes that a strong labor movement is the key to protecting his family’s future. These were truly inspirational messages from three young people who are proving that age is just a number.

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**The convention stressed the importance of education and training for our leaders, stewards and activist members—particularly at the local union level—and President Richard Lanigan said that emphasis will be placed on education in the coming year. “The International Union will partner with locals,” Lanigan said. “If you have active staff people, people who are on your executive board, people that you see in the wings, young people that are developing who you believe would be a candidate for the AFL-CIO, we’ll sponsor that person to be trained, and we’ll pay half the cost. And if the local needs more than that, we’ll talk about that. But anyone who wants to go to the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute is going,” he pledged.**

For a local union to receive this new educational subsidy, an organizing or AFL-CIO Commons Sense Economics component must be included in its program. Commons Sense Economics is a training and education program, conducted by and for union members and progressive allies, to educate working people on how the economy works and how actions and policies affect the economy.

The International reports that HNA/ OPEIU Local 50 in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, is the first local union to take advantage of the new subsidy and, with the assistance of the International, is hosting training for its leadership and stewards on the arbitration process.

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**“I’m so humbled and awed. I really have had a wonderful life at OPEIU.”**

—Michael Goodwin
Organizing and Political Action

Victories Recognized

The OPEIU’s highest organizing award, the 2015 Henderson B. Douglas Memorial Award, was presented to Walter Allen Jr., vice president and executive director of Local 30, San Diego, California, for his role in organizing three bargaining units in California. Two were at Sharp Memorial Hospital covering food and environmental service workers, and the third was at Bear Valley Community Hospital covering service employees and patient care providers.

Other organizing awards were presented to ITPEU/OPEIU Local 4873 (Gold); OPEIU Vice President and Guild 45 Podiatry President John A. Mattiacci, DPM (Silver); Local 8 in Seattle, Washington (Bronze); and Local 459 in Lansing, Michigan (Bronze). Special recognition awards were given to the Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT)/Local 153 for its show of unity during a series of rolling strikes and successful efforts to keep New York’s Catholic schools open; Local 306 for its participation in the longest strike in CNS/Pantex plant’s history in Amarillo, Texas; and to the Florida Nurses Association (FNA) LERC/Local 713 for its efforts to improve working conditions for nurses in the state.

The OPEIU also will provide its local unions with sample language to bargain tuition reimbursement into their contracts so that it “not only applies to people who are going to school in the present, but also people who went to school in the past.”

“The want to be a role-model union on this issue, and we want to show that we’re not only talking the talk, but that we want to walk the walk on these issues that affect young people,” Lanigan noted.

Focus On Young Workers

OPEIU Scholarships Will Help Pay Student Debt

The statistics are staggering. Approximately 43 million Americans owe more than $1.3 trillion in student loans. To put it in better perspective, the average 2016 college graduate is entering the job market with $37,772 in student loan debt.

To help members who are saddled with student debt, OPEIU is announcing a restructuring of the OPEIU scholarship program to include scholarships designated solely for the repayment of student debt. “OPEIU members who are going to school and parents of OPEIU members who are paying for their kids’ tuition will be able to apply for this program that will help them pay student debt,” said President Richard Lanigan.

OPEIU also will provide its local unions with sample language to bargain tuition reimbursement into their contracts so that it “not only applies to people who are going to school in the present, but also people who went to school in the past.”

Did you know?

You May Be Eligible for Student Debt Forgiveness

If you work in public service, you may be eligible for a federal student debt forgiveness program. Through a government program called Public Service Loan Forgiveness, all of your direct federal student loans could be forgiven, tax-free.

To qualify, you must have 10 years of qualifying on-time payments toward your debt and be working in public service at least 30 hours a week beginning after Oct. 1, 2007. To see if you qualify, visit forgivemystudentdebt.org for more information and eligibility requirements.

Millennials are the generation least likely to be covered by a union.

Only 5.9 percent of millennials are covered by a union contract at the age of 30, compared with 17 percent of baby boomers who were covered at the same age. And you Generation Xers? By age 30, 7.6 percent were covered by a union contract.
Congratulations to All OPEIU Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations are in order to the winners of the 2016 OPEIU Scholarships. Information and applications for the 2017 scholarships will be available in January at opeiu.org (click on the Member Resources tab). Winners are chosen by random drawing.

Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund—Full-Time Winners

Alejandro Reid  
DAG 2007A  
Region I

Edward Pan  
Local 2  
Region II

Ankur Kayastha  
Local 2  
Region II

Sean O’Keefe  
Local 6  
Region II

Kaylyn Wauthob  
Local 6  
Region II

Melissa Echenique  
Local 100  
Region III

Sabrina Apodaca  
Local 251  
Region IV

Nadia Ybarra  
Local 30  
Region V

Kasie Aso Takayama  
Local 50  
Region V

Jacob Fry  
Local 11  
Region VI

Kaylin Hare  
Local 12  
Region VII

Cade Dawn  
Local 12  
Region VII

Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund—Part-Time Winners

Jose Angel  
Local 153  
Region II

Pamela Jones  
Local 201  
Region III

Pamela Hansen-Hellweg  
Local 251, Region IV

Kenny Barlow  
Local 29  
Region V

Eliana McDaniel  
Local 30  
Region V

Nina Williams  
Local 6  
Region VI

Paige Dombrowski  
Local 393  
Region VII

John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund Winners

Myra Hepburn  
Local 153  
Region II

Keith Anderko  
Local 2  
Region II

Jacqueline Berg  
Local 8  
Region VI

Campers Learn About Labor Movement While Having Summer Fun

OPEIU summer campers enjoy learning about the labor movement and workers’ rights while participating in fun outdoor activities made possible through the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Fund. Each year, up to 20 scholarships are awarded on the basis of at least one per region. The camp, held each July at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri, is open to OPEIU members’ children between the ages of 13 and 16. Visit opeiu.org to learn more about the camp and how to apply for the 2017 scholarships.
**ELECTION 2016**

**PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2016—Your Vote Matters**

After a seemingly unending campaign, it’s decision time!

OPEIU has endorsed Hillary Clinton for president, believing she has the experience and steadiness necessary to bring people together, guide this country and get real results. Whatever your political affiliation, it’s important to consider the candidates’ qualifications carefully and then vote for the person who will be best for working families—not just for wealthy billionaires. Our country needs someone with the knowledge and temperament to be commander-in-chief. Above all, we need someone who believes we are stronger when we build an economy that works for everyone—not just those at the top—with good jobs and a good education available to everyone.

Compare where the two candidates stand on issues important to working families.

### WORKING FAMILIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A demonstrated strong advocate for working families.</th>
<th>A demonstrated strong advocate for one person—Donald Trump!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Trump</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinton believes that paid family leave, earned sick days, fair schedules, equal pay for women and quality affordable child care are critical for working families in today’s economy.</td>
<td>Trump says he loves right-to-work laws that drive down wages and benefits, undermine worker protections and safety, and have virtually eliminated unions in some states.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GOOD-PAYING JOBS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Believes unions are critical to providing safe, good-paying jobs for workers so they can provide for their families.</td>
<td>Believes American wages are too high.</td>
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<td>Clinton has said that labor will always have a champion in the White House and a seat at the table if she is president. She also opposes right-to-work and the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement because it will hurt workers’ rights and wages.</td>
<td>Refuses to recognize a union election at his hotel.</td>
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<td>Trump has said he believes American wages are too high and that he opposes raising the minimum wage. He thinks U.S. automakers should force workers to accept lower wages by threatening to move production to lower-wage states.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TAXES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Believes corporations and the wealthy must pay their fair share in taxes.</td>
<td>Trump’s economic policies would help millionaires like him, not working families.</td>
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<td>Clinton will close the loopholes that corporations use to avoid paying taxes and require millionaires to pay a tax rate at least as high as middle-class taxpayers pay.</td>
<td>(That is, if he even pays taxes!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent analysts say Trump’s tax plan would cut taxes for the wealthiest by an average of $1.3 million a year, paid for by cutting education and putting Medicare at risk.</td>
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<td><strong>PROTECTING RETIREES</strong></td>
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<td>Will fight to protect retirement security for workers and their families.</td>
<td>Throughout his career, Trump has enriched himself at the expense of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinton supports strengthening and expanding Social Security, and has fought against efforts to privatize it or raise the retirement age.</td>
<td>At his casinos, Trump walked away with millions while his company went bankrupt and thousands of workers were laid off. We know Trump University was a scam, and New York’s attorney general said the Trump Foundation violated state law and ordered it to stop fundraising.</td>
</tr>
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**ON JOBS**

**Clinton**  
"I’ll always have workers’ backs—because when workers are strong, America is strong.”

**Trump**  
"Wages are too high.”

**ON UNIONS**

**Clinton**  
"Unions helped build the greatest middle class in history.”

**Trump**  
"I like right-to-work. My position on right-to-work is 100 percent.”

**ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

**Clinton**  
"Human rights are women’s rights, and women’s rights are human rights.”

**Trump**  
"I think putting a wife to work is a very dangerous thing. ...When I come home and dinner’s not ready, I go through the roof.”

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

**Clinton**  
Her plan will create more than 10 million jobs.

**Trump**  
His plan will cost America 3.5 million jobs.

*Every vote counts! Consider that in 2004, George W. Bush won re-election by winning Ohio, and he won there by fewer than 14 votes per precinct.*
Putting People Back to Work by Ending Era of Noncompete Agreements

OPEIU is taking steps to combat noncompete agreements that leave workers unable to find employment, taking on corporate giants such as WeWork and others who enforce these clauses.

Noncompete clauses—whereby an employer imposes an agreement that for a certain amount of time after leaving their job the employee won’t work in any position that could be seen as competitive with the employer—have become standard practice among businesses large and small in the U.S., even in typically unskilled industries such as fast food where employees barely earn minimum wage. Even summer interns are being asked to sign such agreements.

The tide is beginning to turn against these agreements, though, as states including New York, Hawaii, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah, among others, recognize the impact they have on their economies and take steps to curtail them. As an example, the New York attorney general’s office recently scored a victory when it reached a settlement with Jimmy John’s sandwich shop to end the use of mandatory noncompete agreements at all of its New York franchises.

OPEIU Local 153 in New York also is taking direct action, filing unfair labor practice charges against WeWork concerning its nondisclosure and nonsolicitation agreements, as well as its mandatory arbitration agreements. The New York and Illinois attorneys general are investigating the union’s allegation that these noncompete agreements are too broad and restrictive.

OPEIU has called on other unions and state federation bodies to get involved and take a stand against such agreements, which limit people’s ability to find suitable employment to provide for themselves and their families.

“We have to do everything possible to fight this injustice and eliminate any means designed to limit a worker’s ability to find a job, change jobs or start a new business,” President Richard Lanigan said.

Baton Rouge Needs Our Help

OPEIU members in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, are dealing with the aftereffects of recent devastating storms and flooding in their area. To assist our brothers and sisters, OPEIU has established the OPEIU Relief Fund. Donations are most appreciated and can be sent to:

Mary Mahoney, Secretary-Treasurer, OPEIU, 80 Eighth Ave., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10011.

Cynthia Schu Named OPEIU Organizing Director

Cynthia Schu has been named OPEIU’s organizing director to help fulfill the union’s mission of bringing the benefits of union membership to working people throughout North America.

“I am so proud that Cindy has agreed to become our director of organizing,” President Richard Lanigan said. “Cindy brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and is respected throughout OPEIU and the labor movement for her many organizing accomplishments and knowledge of innovative and creative approaches to reaching working people.

“Cindy will help develop the organizing capacity of OPEIU by working with local union leaders, activists and volunteers, international and local union staff, and the OPEIU Executive Board,” he said.

“I’m thrilled at this opportunity to work with our diverse OPEIU membership and staff to build and enhance organizing programs that will continue to impact the lives of working people across the country,” Schu said.

“Coordinating our resources and energies will be key to ensuring organizing remains a top priority.”

The Irish Echo Honors Lanigan’s Contribution to Labor Movement

President Richard Lanigan received the Labor Champion Award at the 2016 Irish Echo Labor Awards on Sept. 16. The awards honor the contribution of the Irish to the U.S. labor movement. Founded in 1928, the Irish Echo is the oldest Irish-American weekly newspaper in the United States.

OPEIU President Emeritus and Local 153 Business Manager Michael Goodwin, left, was on hand to present the award to Lanigan.

Lanigan Stands Up to Trump

President Richard Lanigan addressed the more than 1,000 people gathered to demonstrate at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on July 21, the same night Donald Trump accepted the Republican Party’s nomination for president. Demonstrators protested the hotel’s low wages and lack of health insurance, and called for the hotel to negotiate a fair contract. OPEIU joined in support of the UNITE HERE Local 54 workers on strike against the hotel. After a three-month strike, the hotel closed its doors in October.

President Richard Lanigan, OPEIU’s organizing director.

Mary Mahoney, Secretary-Treasurer, OPEIU, 80 Eighth Ave., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10011.
NLRB Rules That Student Teachers Have Right to Unionize...

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recently ruled that student assistants working at private colleges and universities are statutory employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act and have the right to collectively bargain. Estimates are that more than 100,000 teaching and research assistants now will be able to unionize.

The case involved TAs and RAs at Columbia University who are seeking to join the United Auto Workers. The three-person board majority reversed an earlier decision, Brown University, that found that TAs and RAs were students, not workers, saying it “depended on an entire category of workers the protections of the Act without a convincing justification.” The board’s ruling sent the Columbia case back to its New York region to determine voting eligibility.

While the favorable decision is a victory for organized labor and for student teachers, the fight may not be over as Reps. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.) and Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), who chair the House subcommittee dealing with workforce rights and higher education, have vowed to “push back” against the ruling.

... And Makes Labor Law-Breaking More Expensive

An NLRB memo tells regions how to force employers to reimburse illegally fired workers for more than just net back pay. “If pro-worker decisions like these that drive home how important it is to elect a president who will put the needs of working people first,” President Richard Lanigan says.

For companies, labor law-breaking may get more expensive—unlike what happened to Alice Keyes 17 years ago, and since then.

Then, Nortech Lumber of Roseville, California, retaliated against Keyes, an Operating Engineers Local 3 activist, by shifting her—despite her carpal tunnel syndrome—to an arduous, isolated job of pulling nails from boards outdoors. And when she couldn’t do that because of rain, Nortech found other backbreaking tasks for her.

The jobs only made her ailments worse, and Keyes had to take time off, and spend a lot of money on doctors before she could return to work.

Keyes and Local 3 went to the NLRB with a labor law-breaking charge against Nortech, and it ruled for them, two years later. The NLRB gave Keyes net back pay and ordered Nortech to give her back her original job, on a lumber-sorting line.

But, unlike its judge back then, the board left her stuck with the medical bills.

Purcell’s memo does not go whole hog for workers, however. If the injured worker loses her house while being jobless because she can’t make the mortgage payments, the board won’t order the company to pay her enough to recover the house.

But a board regional director or administrative law judge can order the offending employer to pay her late fees on the mortgage payments, if she manages to hang onto the house.

“If an employee suffers an economic loss as a result of an unlawful elimination or reduction of pay or benefits, the employee will not be made whole unless and until the respondent compensates the employee for those consequential economic losses, in addition to back pay,” Purcell’s memo says. If an employee can’t pay their mortgage, for example, they should be compensated for any costs associated with that, including foreclosure expenses and moving costs.

Now, the board’s general counsel’s office—its enforcement arm—wants to change that scenario, and not just for medical bills, either.

In a July 28 memo, Associate General Counsel Anne Purcell tells regional offices how to file for reimbursement of workers’ other expenses, such as late fees for past-due mortgage payments or outlays for specific illnesses workers must pay out of pocket—expenses they get hit with when they lose jobs and health insurance due to company labor law-breaking. And Purcell goes into detail about which expenses can be covered and which can’t.  

“The board should not require the victims of unfair labor practices to bear the consequential costs imposed on them by a respondent’s unlawful conduct,” Purcell’s memo says.

Covering more of an illegally fired worker’s expenses—regardless of how much or how little—goes beyond labor law’s standard remedy: reinstatement of the worker with net back pay, which is what Keyes got 15 years ago when she won her case against Nortech.

Relief of the worker that labor law “empowers the board to grant is to be adapted to the situation which calls for redress,” Purcell adds. She cites the Nortech case as an example.

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First Contract Reached for Mechanics at Heli-One

After a three-year campaign, a final agreement has been reached for first contract for OPEIU mechanics employed at Heli-One/CHC’s helicopter maintenance facility in Boundary Bay, British Columbia, Canada.

The three-year agreement includes seniority provisions, six defined departments and adoption of a wage scale based upon each department and job family, layoff and “bumping” (staffing reductions based on seniority) provisions, severance pay for up to 52 weeks plus 4 percent paid into the member’s pension plan, and premium pay for lead positions. There are also two signing bonuses, one payable six months after contract ratification and the other two years into the agreement.

Red Cross Decision: A Big Win for Local 459 Members

In a long-delayed ruling, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recently upheld unfair labor charges against the American Red Cross (ARC) for conduct in 2009 negotiations. Local 459 members at the ARC have not had new contracts since 2009, but they held firm and enjoyed greater wages and benefits because of their solidarity. When the ARC/Local 459 contracts expired in 2009, negotiations were held for new contracts. The ARC demanded huge cuts in pay and benefits, thus no agreement was reached and the old contracts expired.

The ARC also violated a number of other labor laws by not bargaining in good faith. Local 459 filed charges with the NLRB, and a long journey began.

The regional NLRB agreed with Local 459 and issued a complaint, yet the ARC refused to restore the benefits. In 2011, an NLRB administrative law judge held a trial and upheld almost all the charges, but the ARC still refused to restore the benefits. Since 2011, ARC employees have been waiting for the NLRB—not the regional office, but the five people appointed by the president—to affirm the judge’s decision.

On Sept. 1, after a five-year wait, Local 459 finally received the decision: The NLRB agreed with the judge and added a couple of additional violations.

The decision is 40 pages, but a major part of the ruling is that, after a contract expires, an employer cannot rely on the old contract or a past practice to make changes. The NLRB noted that “unilateral changes to terms and conditions of employment, purportedly made pursuant to a past practice developed under an expired management-rights clause, are unlawful.” It may seem counterintuitive, but the rights of the employees to keep their benefits increased after the contracts expired because when the contracts expired, so did the management-rights clause and any wavers.

The NLRB ordered the ARC to rescind all of its unilateral changes and to make the employees whole for any losses. It also ordered the ARC to pay employees for any adverse tax consequences of receiving a lump-sum back-pay award.

While it’s difficult to calculate the amount of money owed to employees, the ARC previously offered around $500,000 to settle, so it’s clear the actual amount owed employees is much higher,” Taylor said.

“The fight doesn’t end there. The ARC is expected to appeal the decision to federal court. This could begin another long wait, but Local 459 members at the ARC have shown that they believe in solidarity, now and in the future. According to Taylor, they have a better work life because of this solidarity, and it will get even better when this is finally resolved.

“For now, the NLRB has agreed that our members were wronged,” she said.
Local 129’s JoAnne Andreport Retires After 41 Years of Service

A contract extension was reached with HealthNow New York Inc., doing business as BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York, on July 27 in Buffalo, according to Local 153 Business Representative Robert McLennan. The 454 bargaining unit employees, formerly Local 212, merged into Local 153 in 2003. There was a past history of conflict and strikes between the union and the employer, but that relationship has dramatically improved in recent years.

Local 153 is party to a collective bargaining agreement scheduled to expire in April 2017. At the suggestion of International President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan, however, the union and the employer met to discuss the possibility of a contract extension to avoid the usual pressures of contract deadlines.

Negotiation sessions were held in Buffalo, led by McLennan and a committee consisting of Grievance Committee Chair and Local 153 Board member Brenda St. John and members Roberta Kovack, Lynn Brooks, Donna Amos and Cristina Tortonze. Business Manager Michael Goodwin also attended the negotiations.

An agreement was reached providing 5.75 percent in additional wage increases for a two-year extension of the contract to April 25, 2019. The members received a 2 percent wage increase on April 25, 2016, bringing the total wage increases in the three-year period April 2016-2019 to 7.75 percent, the largest wage increase in any recent three-year contract period with the company. The contract also provides prorated step increases to all employees earning less than the top rate of pay for their respective job title and labor grade.

The additional wage increases negotiated were 1 percent effective Sept. 1, 2.25 percent effective July 1, 2017, and 2.5 percent effective July 1, 2018. In addition, the union won an agreement with the company to maintain and extend, without modification, the health care provisions of Article XIV for the full contract term, a major achievement. Data provided by the company indicated that 42 percent of the bargaining unit have less than five years of service and 35 percent of the unit have more than 20 years of service. The bargaining unit has grown more than 36 percent since 2011, increasing from 333 to 454. This growth is attributed in part to the company’s willingness to bring back work to Buffalo that was previously subcontracted out and the improved relationship between the company and the union. It was noted during the negotiations that union-represented employees earn substantially more than their counterparts in the surrounding market, such as claims processors who earn $21.22 per hour versus $15.86, service representatives who earn $19.49 per hour versus $15.30 and account specialists who earn $23.47 per hour versus $19.72.

The contract was enthusiastically ratified by the bargaining unit on Aug. 8 by a vote of 161 to 26. There were 440 people in the unit. Langang congratulated the bargaining committee on its great success in achieving the excellent extension agreement. The union will use this achievement to organize employees at other insurance companies in the Buffalo area.

JoAnne Andreport is expressing gratitude for her experiences as an OPEIU member and steward of Local 129 in Lake Jackson, Texas, saying that being an OPEIU member “has given me the opportunity to work in various departments, expanding my knowledge in the workplace. These opportunities allowed me to be of better service for my fellow union co-workers.”

After 41 years of service, Andreport now will enjoy her retirement, well-earned after a long and eventful career that began as an employee of CITGO Petroleum in October 1975. “I was hired temporarily to work in the traffic department, but ended up staying 41 years,” she says.

She joined OPEIU in the 1980s and in the ‘90s became a steward for what was then known as Local 87, which represented the CITGO employees. When the local experienced declining membership, Andreport and Local 87’s leaders worked with OPEIU to facilitate a merger with Local 129. After the membership approved the merger, Andreport became the job site representative for the Lake Charles Refinery Complex, where she participated in contract negotiations with Local 129 President Sherry Patton.

“It has been a pleasure working with President Patton, and I appreciate all that I have learned from her. I wish Local 129 and the OPEIU organization continued success,” Andreport said.
Local 40’s annual school supply and backpack drive was a big success again this year, collecting more than 200 backpacks fully stocked for the children in its community of Mt. Clemens, Michigan. But the even bigger news is that Local 40 soon will have established an official charitable foundation, the OPEIU Local 40 Nurses Charity Fund. Local 40’s nurses are very excited to take this step to formalize their many charitable endeavors, and are proving that OPEIU nurses are dedicated to helping others—in and outside of the workplace.

Local 459’s nurses are similarly doing good works in their community of Lansing, Michigan, recently conducting their own annual Stuff a Backpack project to help abused, neglected and at-risk children in the foster care system. “Most of these kids would be singled out and teased on their first day of school because they didn’t have the backpacks and supplies like the other children,” said Local 459 Chief Steward and OPEIU Nurses Council Vice Chair Julie Murray. “I set up collection bins at each of our hospitals and encouraged units to start a friendly challenge to see who can be crowned the ‘most generous unit.’ The kids definitely benefit from this project, but so does every person who contributed something and is able to see what can be accomplished when we come together as a union.”

Way to go, Locals 40 and 459!

Local 40 President Janice Czarnecki, left, Mount Clemens Community Schools Athletic Director Dawnte Hannah and Local 40 McLaren Macomb Unit Vice President Jeff Morawski with some of the many backpacks union members stuffed and delivered for needy kids in Mt. Clemens, Michigan.

OPEIU Nurses Join Rally for Safe Staffing Levels

The OPEIU Nurses Council (ONC) has made safe staffing levels a top priority and joined hundreds of nurses in a rally in Washington, D.C., calling for the passage of legislation that would make staffing ratios the law of the land. Nurses from Locals 40 and 459 in Michigan traveled to Washington to press for passage of S.864, National Nursing Shortage Reform and Patient Advocacy Act, and H.R. 1602, Nurse Staffing Standards for Patient Safety and Quality Care Act of 2015, both aimed at improving patient safety by implementing staffing ratios and addressing the nurse shortage.

Local 459’s Julie Murray, who also serves as ONC vice chair, addressed the crowd while dressed in the traditional white nursing uniform complete with cape and cap worn by the OPEIU Nurses Honor Guard, which recognizes and honors women and men who have dedicated their lives to the nursing profession. The honor guard pays tribute to individuals at the time of their death by attending the funeral or memorial service, reciting The Nightingale Tribute and presenting a white rose signifying the nurse’s devotion to his or her profession. To learn more about the safe staffing issue and the OPEIU Nurses Honor Guard, visit opeiunursescouncil.org.

Local 2’s Chelsea Bland is Strong Advocate for LGBTQ Rights

Local 2’s Chelsea Bland was awarded one of the Capital Pride Alliance’s annual LGBTQ rights awards for exemplary contributions to LGBTQ pride in the Washington, D.C., region, receiving the 2016 Bill Miles Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. Bland is a Local 2 steward and chair of its LGBTQ committee. “Chelsea is a young worker and proud union member working to leave her mark on the labor movement,” said the Capital Pride Alliance. “She is a strong advocate for LGBTQ rights and for supporting spaces of intersectionality within the labor movement.”

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New Government Study Reveals Flu Virus is Airborne

Have you ever had the flu? Are you potentially exposed to sick people at work?

Most seasonal flu activity occurs between October and May and peaks between December and February. Seasonal influenza causes an average of 36,000 deaths, mainly among the elderly, 200,000 hospitalizations, and 11 million lost workdays every year in the U.S. Flu is a higher risk for children, pregnant women, and people with medical conditions such as heart disease, asthma, immune system disorders and obesity.

The flu is different from a cold in that it comes on suddenly and typically includes a fever that lasts three to four days. People with the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms: fever or chills; cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle or body aches; headache; fatigue (tiredness); vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. That means people may be contagious before they are sick. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, they still may spread the virus to others. Flu is a workplace hazard for OPEIU members in health care and occupations where there is close contact with the public. Getting the flu on the job is no joke. While fever typically lasts three to four days, severe symptoms last a week. On average, people are contagious for a week, and the illness resolves in about two weeks. This can cause lost work time and lost wages, and disrupt family life and activities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that the flu is spread when a person who is contagious coughs, sneezes or talks, and droplets get into the eyes, nose or mouth of people in close contact. It also can be spread by contact with items contaminated by a person with the flu, including utensils, furniture and workplace environments.

A study by the federal National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reveals that flu is also an airborne hazard. In the study, 53 percent of the study participants tested positive for influenza A aerosols during coughing and 47 percent tested positive during exhalation. An aerosol is a suspension of tiny particles or droplets in the air.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has no standard protecting workers from influenza. The CDC recommends that all adults get the annual influenza vaccination; however, which is made from inactivated or killed flu viruses and does not cause flu illness. The vaccine formulation is changed every year based on the previous year’s influenza epidemic. For 2016-17, the vaccine will protect against three viruses: H1N1, H3N2, and influenza B/Victoria lineage. An additional vaccine is being produced that will protect against four viruses that include the addition of B/Yamagata lineage.

The nasal spray that uses a live attenuated vaccine was only 64 percent effective. In fact, the 2015-16 vaccine was only 64 percent effective. In fact, the 2015-16 vaccine was only 64 percent effective. Others have objected to being vaccinated year after year because it was ineffective.

Some health care employers have begun mandating annual influenza vaccine or requiring staff to wear surgical masks if they opt out. OPEIU and its OPEIU Nurses Council (ONC) have joined with many other unions and public health experts in objecting to these mandates. Flu vaccine should be an individual decision, not a condition of employment. A major concern has been that the vaccine often is not very effective. In fact, the 2015-16 vaccine was only 64 percent effective. Others have objected to being vaccinated based on medical, religious or personal reasons. Studies show that the vaccine is safe, and many who opt out do so based on fear of vaccine side effects, myths about the vaccine and inconvenience. The appropriate response to these concerns is education, not mandates.

Other workplace protections that should be in place include:

- Hand washing
- Use of an alcohol-based hand gel when hand-washing facilities are not available
- Signage instructing people with flu-like symptoms to stay away until they are healthy
- Providing tissues, with instructions for use
- Washing frequently touched objects, such as door handles, telephones, computers and keyboards
- Avoiding sharing utensils, such as glasses and spoons, and food
- Using barriers between patients
- Counseling patients with respiratory illness

With the new study revealing that flu may be transmitted by aerosol, it is even more important that employers implement prevention programs to protect the well-being of staff and clients. The use of respirators in health care and other industries where workers are in close contact with known or suspected people with flu should be part of the protective program. Note that surgical masks are not respirators and will not protect workers from breathing in small infectious particles.

Use of an alcohol-based hand gel for hand washing is in place in the interest of preventing transmission of the flu, including utensils, furniture and workplace environments. It also can be spread by contact with items contaminated by a person with the flu, including utensils, furniture and workplace environments.

Local 8 leaders at Group Health Cooperative (GHC) gathered to plan the transition to Kaiser Permanente, with assistance from International Vice Presidents Suzanne Mode (Local 8 business manager) and Walter Allen Jr. (Local 10 executive director and chief financial officer).

Kaiser is in the process of acquiring Group Health, and Local 8 will then join the 12,000 OPEIU members who are part of the unique Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions. Congratulations also to Local 8’s 900 members at GHC, who recently received the Tommy McLean Activist Award to honor their standing together during a 10-month contract campaign. Local 8 members took bold action to protect their pensions, provide successor language, gain wage increases and win on other core issues.

Darian Epherson has been awarded Local 37’s 2016 Maria Landa-Rios Memorial Scholarship, whose namesake was the president of Local 537 until her death in 2001. Landa-Rios’ passion was education and attending her final year at the University of California at Berkeley, after spending the summer interning at Pixar Animation Studios.

Local 537’s Darian Epherson Awarded Maria Landa-Rios Memorial Scholarship

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Local 8 to Join Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions

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