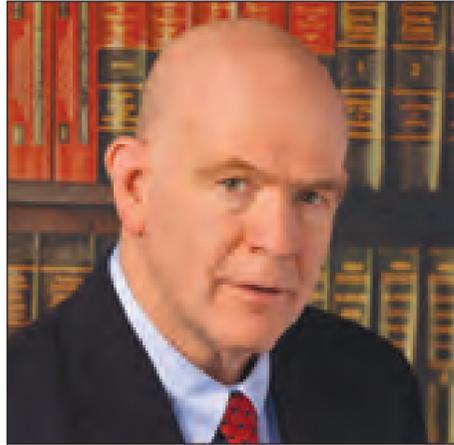


OPEIU **CONNECT**

Issue 550, Fall 2022

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of several white, circular 'I VOTED' stickers. Each sticker features a stylized American flag with a blue field of white stars at the top and red and white vertical stripes at the bottom. The words 'I VOTED' are printed in blue, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of each sticker. The stickers are scattered across the page, some overlapping, and are set against a light, neutral background.

**Make Your
Voice Heard**



Supreme Court Decisions Threaten Workers' Rights

By Richard Lanigan
President

The U.S. Supreme Court recently made some far-reaching decisions concerning reproductive rights, whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency may regulate power plants, the right to carry concealed firearms in public and whether a state may provide taxpayer funding to a religious school.

Pundits writing about these decisions ask whether the laws of the workplace will be the subject of the next transformative decision. These writers refer to the 1905 *Lochner v. New York* decision, which is widely regarded as one of the Supreme Court's worst. It was decided during an era when women did not have the right to vote, when Black people were separate but supposedly equal and consumers had few protections.

Lochner v. New York made it to the Supreme Court after the city of Utica, New York, enacted an ordinance prohibiting bakeries from requiring bakers to work more than 60 hours a week. The bakery industry appealed the case to the Supreme Court. The high court ruled Utica violated the 14th Amendment, which the majority opinion said protected the freedom of an employer and an employee to enter into an employment contract. The court reasoned if employees did not want to work 60 or more hours in a week and the employer did not agree to fewer working hours, the employees were free to take their services elsewhere.

An unexpected but positive outcome, the *Lochner* decision spawned a new era of workplace reform legislation.

One law enacted required working people be paid overtime if they worked more than 40 hours in a week. Another prohibited children from working in many industries. Yet another gave workers the right to join unions. Other laws protected against workplace discrimination. In the last several decades some of the most important workplace reforms were driven by class action lawsuits.

In 2018, more than 100 years after the *Lochner* decision, the Supreme Court, already tilted toward its current majority, issued a decision jeopardizing the ability of working people to band together and sue employers. Two groups filed lawsuits alleging they were not being paid overtime for working more than 40 hours in a week. One group worked at a gas station convenience store for Murphy's Oil. The other group were former employees of Epic Systems. Counsel for each group filed a class action lawsuit in court believing class actions to be the most effective way to represent the groups.

Both cases were appealed to the Supreme Court. Because of their similarity, the court consolidated the two cases. The employees made the argument their right to file as a class is protected under the National Labor Relations Act, which ensures the right of people to collectively address workplace issues.

Despite arguments made by the National Labor Relations Board supporting the employees' right to file as a class, the new

majority on the Supreme Court ruled employees may not pursue their overtime claims as a group or individually before a government agency or in federal court. The court reasoned the employees had signed employment contracts when first hired requiring any claim of a violation of employment or labor law against their employer must be brought as an individual case before an arbitrator paid by the employer. In other words, these employees, and the roughly 26 million working Americans who have signed such agreements, no longer have a right to take a workplace dispute to court or a government agency. Nor do they have the right to pursue these claims as a group.

How different is this outcome from the bakers in Utica who signed employment agreements more than 100 years ago? Considering its decisions on carrying concealed weapons, reproductive rights and the EPA's ability to regulate power plants, as well as the Epic ruling, is there any doubt which way the current majority on the Supreme Court would rule when there is a contest between a worker's rights and an employer's rights?

The answer is obvious. Working Americans have already suffered at the hands of the new majority on the Supreme Court and more damage to their rights is likely in the years ahead. It's all the more reason why the protection provided by union membership is more important than ever. And why political action in support of workers' rights is essential. ■

OPEIU Nurses Council Elects New Leaders

The executive board of the OPEIU Nurses Council (ONC) elected new officers to lead their organization for the next three years. The ONC was established by OPEIU nursing members to resolve issues affecting their practice and advance the professional image of the nursing profession.

Longtime union activist and leader Joan Craft, RN, was elected ONC chair. Craft is treasurer of the Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50 and an intensive care nurse at Queen's Medical Center in O'ahu. She was instrumental in the affiliation of HNA with OPEIU in 2010.

Marsha Martin, RN, CCRN, TNCC, was elected vice chair. Martin, a critical care nurse at UF Health Shands for almost 38 years, is a member of the Florida Nurses Association (FNA)/OPEIU Local 713. Since joining FNA in 1994, Martin has served in several different roles, including president, and now serves on its board of directors.

Kristen Silvers, RN, the council's new secretary-treasurer, is a member of Local 459 in Michigan. Silvers served as a

trustee on the local's executive board until becoming chief steward at her facility, McLaren Greater Lansing.

The new officers are working with the ONC Executive Board to develop a legislative agenda for the coming year, with safe nurse to patient ratios the top priority.

The ONC helps foster a climate of professionalism within the nursing community, promoting best practices regarding patient care, safety concerns and compensation issues. Through the council, OPEIU nurses advocate for legislation to improve working conditions and patient care and address safe staffing and violence against health care workers.



OPEIU Nurses Council Chair Joan Craft, left, Vice Chair Marsha Martin, center, and Secretary-Treasurer Kristen Silvers.



Stay Connected!

Keep up on news you can use about your union including info about free membership benefits, such as scholarships, student debt reduction and identity theft protection.

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Message and data rates may apply. You can cancel your participation in the OPEIU SMS service at any time. To unsubscribe, text "STOP" to 844-240-4114. After you send the SMS message "STOP," OPEIU will reply with an SMS message to confirm you have been unsubscribed. After you opt out, you will no longer receive SMS messages from OPEIU.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Appreciation for Disaster Relief

I received and deposited the check from the OPEIU Disaster Relief Fund. Thank you and our fellow union brothers and sisters for thinking of me and my wife. Given the countless expenses involved in rebuilding our home [after Hurricane Ida], it's encouraging to have the support of OPEIU Local 32. It does make the challenging process easier.

With much appreciation,
Ken Kaufman
Local 32
Somerville, New Jersey

Love the Magazine!

The OPEIU Connect looks great. Keep up the good work!
Marie Maulden
Retired member of Local 494
Ocean Park, Washington

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

On the Cover: There's a lot at stake for working Americans this November. Don't miss the opportunity to make your voice heard by voting in the important midterm elections.

State voter registration deadlines are fast approaching. See page 10 to make sure you meet registration deadlines in your state and make a plan now to vote Nov. 8!



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MARY MAHONEY Secretary-Treasurer

(ILCA) **CALM ACPS**

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Discover the Advantage of the OPEIU's Retiree Benefit Programs

Now's the time to get to know the OPEIU's Medicare Advantage PPO plans. Also known as Anthem Medicare Preferred PPO with Senior Rx Plus, these plans can't be found on the open market and are available only to retired union members and their spouses.

The health care benefits available go beyond original Medicare. **Services and programs include:**

<p>Nationwide access, allowing you to see any provider who accepts Medicare</p>	<p>PPO coverage, meaning you have the same benefits in and out of the plan network</p>	<p>Coverage for emergencies and urgent care services, both inside and outside of the United States</p>
<p>Brand-name prescription drug coverage, including Rx gap, or "donut hole" coverage, and a \$0 copay for select generics</p>	<p>Additional value-added programs and services, such as SilverSneakers® gym membership, telehealth, house calls, and more</p>	<p>Website tools and mobile app to check the status of claims, find care, view your membership card, access health records, and set reminders and goals</p>

Ready to start on your retirement journey?

Visit <https://retireehealth.unionplus.org> or call the Anthem First Impressions team at **1-833-371-1160 (TTY: 711)**, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, except holidays to learn more.

Out-of-network coverage is part of your Anthem Medicare Preferred (PPO) with Senior Rx Plus plan and you do not need prior authorization to obtain out-of-network services. However, we recommend you ask for a pre-visit coverage decision to confirm that the service you are receiving is covered and medically necessary. Out-of-network/noncontracted providers are permitted to refuse treatment to new and existing patients for various reasons, except in emergency situations. Anthem works with these providers to help them better understand the Anthem plan and encourage willingness to treat the member. Please call our First Impressions Welcome Team at **1-833-371-1160, TTY: 711**, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET for more information.

You have the right to get this information and help in your language for free. Call our First Impressions Welcome Team for help (TTY: 711).

This policy has exclusions, limitations, and terms under which the policy may be continued in force or discontinued. For costs and complete details of the coverage, contact Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

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You can also visit opeiu.org/retirees for more information.



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Recipients

Each year, OPEIU provides five awards of \$2,500 each to help members reduce student debt through the OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Program. The 2022 recipients are Nicole Kudrikow, Local 6; Nicolette Devish, Local 32; Darwin Raquel, Local 50; Lynnett Davis, Local 391; and Anne Stormer, Local 1794.

OPEIU members with at least \$10,000 in student debt can apply. For more information and complete eligibility requirements, visit opeiu.org, search the Member Resources tab and click the OPEIU Membership Benefits link.

Attention Public Service Employees: Take Advantage of Changes to Loan Forgiveness Program before Oct. 31

OPEIU members who work for public service employers, which includes many nonprofits, may be eligible to take advantage of temporary changes that make it easier to qualify for loan forgiveness under the Department of Education's Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

Be sure to check your eligibility before these changes expire Oct. 31 at studentaid.gov/pslf.

Building a Movement to Meet the Moment

Union leaders and activists from throughout the country, including a number of OPEIU local leaders, met recently in Philadelphia at the 29th AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention to discuss ways to meet the challenges facing today's working people and their unions.

With the theme "Building the Movement to Meet the Moment," the convention addressed the challenges working people endured through COVID-19 and the systemic inequities revealed by the pandemic. Working people are fed up, speaking up, employing new strategies and standing in solidarity for dignity, decency and a fair share of the wealth we create.

America's labor movement is meeting the urgency of this moment. That means restoring our voting rights and reclaiming our organizing rights so all working people can have the life-changing opportunity to join unions. It requires talking honestly with each other and knowing that, even when we don't agree, every working person can find hope in our unions. It means creating pathways for working people to grow and succeed. When we are united and move together as one, America's labor movement is the most powerful force for progress in this country.

OPEIU is on the forefront of this movement, seizing the unprecedented opportunity to build a bold, dynamic and inclusive movement for the future.



Josh Kleiman, a member of Local 153 at Wesleyan University, shares with the convention his experience as a member of the newly organized unit of undergraduate student advisors.



OPEIU leaders attend the 29th AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention. Left to right are Organizing Director Brandon Nessen, National Political Director Cesar Leyva, President Richard Lanigan, Local 277 President Tyler Turner, Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF)/OPEIU Local 100 President Fredricka Green, Local 32 President Mary Short, Local 100 Chief of Staff Greg Blackman and Local 8 Business Manager Suzanne Mode. Turner, Short, Blackman and Mode also serve as OPEIU vice presidents.



Local 12 member Natalie Jacobson participates in a town hall convened by AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler to hear from young worker activists and discuss their priorities for today's labor unions. As a runup to the convention, the town hall allowed young workers to share their concerns, such as having a voice on the job, transparency from employers, accountability of bosses and elected officials and a fair and safe workplace free from gun violence. Other goals include emphasizing unions' role in achieving racial justice and economic equity for all working people, particularly young workers of color.

Shuler has pledged to promote more young people, workers of color and women into leadership positions up and down the labor movement.

Biden Announces Student Debt Forgiveness

In late August, after months of internal negotiations, President Joe Biden announced he is authorizing the U.S. Department of Education to forgive at least \$10,000 of student debt per borrower earning under \$125,000 in an effort to combat the nation's student debt crisis. Students who received Pell Grants will receive up to \$20,000.

"Ninety-five percent of borrowers, 43 million, can benefit from this decision," Biden

said during his announcement. "When this happens, the whole economy is better off."

Sixty percent of those eligible for relief will receive \$20,000 in relief and millions will have their entire balance zeroed out. This historic announcement will help young workers start families, purchase homes and make other major life investments that have been hobbled by the \$1 trillion-plus student debt crisis.

"It's about giving people a fair shot," Biden said.

The president also announced an income-based repayment plan change that limits payments to 5 percent of take-home pay, which he said will save borrowers an average of \$1,000 per year. Payments will resume Dec. 31, ending the payment pause that began in 2020.



OPEIU leaders and staff gather in Chicago to examine their role in building local union power.

OPEIU local leaders and staff from throughout the country came together in Chicago and Oakland for development training aimed at building union power to best represent members in today’s challenging times.

The two-day intensive workshops, led by OPEIU staff, helped local leaders sharpen their skills in member mobilization, effective communication, advanced grievance handling, leadership development for stewards and other activist members among other training. Participants examined what it means to be a leader and their roles in building strength at the local level and the bargaining table.

“The training in Chicago provided a broad spectrum of how vital organizing is for unions to get stronger and to survive,” said Luiz Morizot-Leite, first vice president of the Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF)/OPEIU Local 100 in Miramar, Florida. “We must believe in ourselves and work together, helping one another, to find new paths to resolve the economic and non-economic problems affecting the working class.”

“We found the training to be very valuable and enjoyable,” said Dan Ross, RN, an OPEIU vice president and president of the Hawai’i Nurses’ Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50, who attended the training in Oakland. “It was great to be able to interact with activists from local unions across the country.”

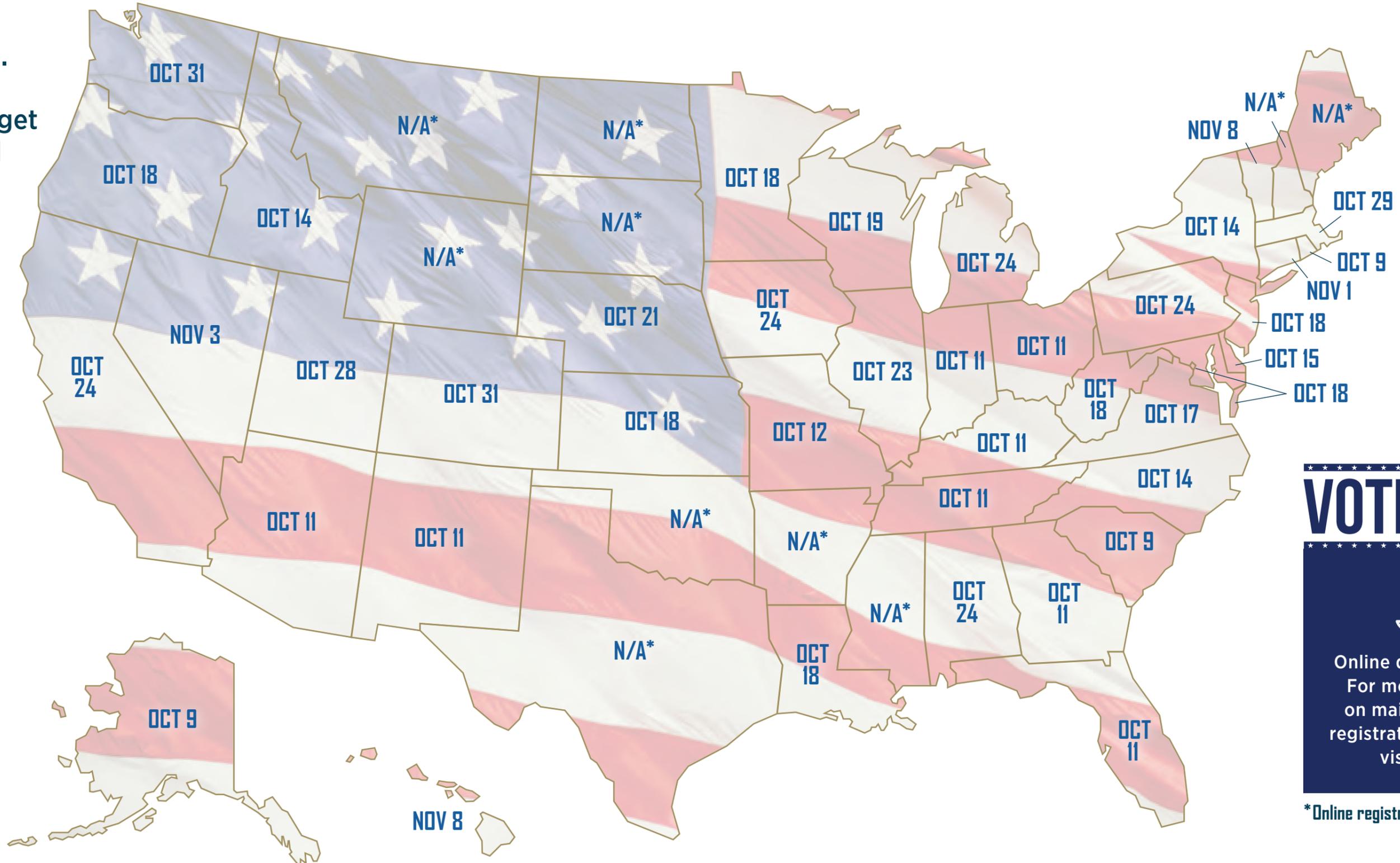
Building Back Better!



Participants in the two-day Oakland training, above, are excited to put what they learned into action.

Don't Miss Your State's Voter Registration Deadlines!

Midterms are Nov. 8. Find your state and get registered today.



VOTE 2022



Online deadlines shown. For more information on mail and in-person registration in your state, visit vote.org.

*Online registration unavailable.

Tech Workers Need Organized Labor to Reinforce Their Activism

Workers in the tech industry are standing up and speaking out about the inequality and unfairness they're encountering on the job. Without any worker protections, however, tech companies have been silencing them with retaliatory firings, non-disclosure agreements, anti-union consultants and other fear tactics.

It's time for all tech workers to have a voice in their workplaces. That's why OPEIU created Tech Workers Union Local 1010, a union founded and led by tech workers, who are organizing in places such as Kickstarter, Code for America, Nava and others. (Read about Kickstarter's historic contract on the next page.)

The following op-ed, penned by Local 1010, originally appeared in Crain's New York Business. In it, OPEIU explains why it will take labor-law reforms and meaningful antitrust regulations to keep Big Tech in check.

The biggest tech companies tend to talk the biggest game about their commitment to more than just profit and power, often describing themselves as "people focused." Employees of the massive companies are, however, increasingly willing to publicly question their employers' flowery statements.

It's one of many reasons tech workers are turning to organized labor. In January [2021], the Office and Professional Employees International Union, headquartered in New York City, launched Tech Workers Union Local 1010 as a first-of-its kind hub for tech workers. The centralized union for an increasingly decentralized group of workers was built after a historic win at Brooklyn-based Kickstarter. Recently, workers at Code for America, a mission-driven tech organization, received voluntary recognition of their union with Local 1010.

But voluntary recognition is rare, even among mission-driven companies, let alone tech giants, many of which are leading the fight against workers' rights. Companies including Amazon, Google and Tesla have taken drastic and often illegal steps to restrict their employees' rights. Rideshare companies Lyft and Uber claim they can't afford to provide their drivers health insurance, then spend hundreds of millions of dollars on a ballot measure exempting themselves from providing benefits to California drivers.

In 2020, when Facebook (now Meta) unveiled its Workplace platform, it was pitched as a tool to encourage free speech at work. But the presentation suggested "unionize" as a possible phrase for employers such as Walmart to censor.

In 2004, Google's IPO filing described "don't be evil" as one of the company's ideals. In 2018, it removed most references of that "core value" from its code of conduct, around the time reports revealed its controversial drone technology was being used by the U.S. military.

Employees working for tech giants — including those packing boxes at a backbreaking pace in dangerous warehouses, those building electric vehicles in markedly unsafe factories and those writing code in state-of-the-art offices — have had their rights violated time and time again when they chose to speak out.

Illegal firings, surveillance, threats and retaliation are routine tactics that have been used to suppress worker power for generations. Some of the most technologically innovative companies have written some of the darkest chapters in the long history of anti-worker animus in this country.

Major tech companies have proven themselves willing and able to stoop as low as they need to retain their power. Big Tech's steadfast resistance to relinquishing power is one of the reasons tech worker activism has skyrocketed recently, and why public trust in the industry is sharply declining.

Each day, we hear stories from working people who are fed up and running out of ways to make their voices matter at work. It doesn't take a remote employee surveillance application to find out that people, including those in the tech sector and those radically alienated from it, have had enough of the hypocrisy.

But it will take worker-led unions, labor-law reforms and meaningful antitrust regulations — not empty mission statements — to keep Big Tech from its most evil impulses.

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Kickstarter United Negotiates Historic First Contract

The members of Kickstarter United (KSRU), the first union in the United States to win wall-to-wall recognition at a tech company, voted overwhelmingly to ratify their first collective bargaining agreement with their employer. The unit, members of Local 153 in New York, negotiated major gains including guaranteed wage increases, no intrusive monitoring and limits on the use of contracted and temporary employees. Importantly, it put an end to geographic pay adjustments.

The ratification vote passed with 97.6 percent support, concluding KSRU's historic campaign for a first contract with the crowdfunding company that began when workers went public with their intent to unionize in January 2020.

"When I made the career change to enter tech, I never would have expected the opportunity to be part of something like Kickstarter United," said Liishi Durbin, a software engineer at Kickstarter. "For me, the contract is a reminder that fair labor practices are vital across all industries — not everyone in tech is an engineer, and not every engineer is paid equally.

"Because of mutual effort between Kickstarter workers and management, we are relieved to have many of our issues resolved through the collective bargaining process," Durbin continued.

The agreement puts an end to geographic pay adjustments, intrusive monitoring of workers and limits the use of contracted and temporary employees in favor of full-time jobs. It guarantees wage increases for all workers, ensures annual pay equity reviews, establishes grievance and arbitration procedures and the ability for workers to take comparable time off if they work longer than their normal hours.

"This contract enshrines a lot of the positives of our already good workplace, protecting it against destructive changes in senior leadership. It provides accountability for a lot of processes that previously lacked any sense of progress or accountability," said Dannel Jurado, a senior software engineer who served on KSRU's organizing and bargaining committees.

"What I hope it means for the industry at-large is that you don't have to wait until something bad happens to organize," Jurado continued. "You can use a collective bargaining agreement to lock in the already excellent but sometimes short-lived benefits your employer provides. It gives employees a reason to stay and continue building the companies they care about."

Recruiters, directors, software engineers, outreach staff, product managers, risk analysts, marketing managers, graphic designers, research coordinators and community support staff are all covered under the terms of this industry leading agreement.

"It's been one of my proudest professional accomplishments to contribute to the formation of this industry leading union, and to watch our incredible bargaining committee collaborate with Kickstarter's management to negotiate this boundary-pushing contract," said Oriana Leckert, Kickstarter's director of publishing and KSRU organizing committee member.

The successful organizing drive at the company inspired the 2021 creation of OPEIU's Tech Workers Union Local 1010, a union by and for tech workers. Through Local 1010 tech workers across the U.S. are able to leverage their collective power to transform working conditions in the tech industry.

"Every worker in every workplace deserves solidarity, compassion and protection," Leckert continued. "In short, every worker deserves a union. I hope it will reverberate throughout the tech industry and beyond, showing everyone what's possible when workers come together to prioritize mutual aid and support."



Kickstarter United members and alumni celebrate their first contract. Left to right, standing, are Tom Lum, former OPEIU Tech Workers Union Local 1010 Organizer Kate Stevens, Amy Ciavolino, Dannel Jurado, OPEIU Director of Bargaining Sandy Pope, who is holding a copy of the agreement, Janel diBiccari, Luke Thomas, OPEIU President Richard Lanigan, Oriana Leckert, Corin Cerami, Corey Farwell, Patrick Ellis, and kneeling, Brittany Fowler and Local 1010 Lead Organizer RV Dougherty.

Staff at Guttmacher Institute Win Their Union in a Landslide

On July 12, employees at Guttmacher Institute, one of the world’s foremost research and policy organizations committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, won their union with Local 153 by a landslide 61-2 vote. But the fight has just begun.

After months of organizing internally, workers at Guttmacher filed for their union election May 2. Hours later, the Supreme Court’s memo on *Dobbs v. Jackson* was leaked, signaling the imminent gutting of abortion rights and reinforcing the importance of the Institute’s work in protecting those rights. The leak solidified the 68 members of Guttmacher Employees United’s (GEU) dedication and drive to win their wall-to-wall union, believing workplace rights and reproductive rights are inextricably linked.

More than two months later, on July 12, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced GEU had won their union. An hour later, one of the lead organizing committee members, Sam Heyne, was pulled into a spontaneous meeting with her supervisor and department head, denied her Weingarten Rights and fired on the spot—left to watch as her laptop was accessed remotely and she was locked out of her email and all other projects and programs.

The outrage and shock put a damper on what should have been a celebratory day, but the group mobilized to support their co-worker. They immediately set up and distributed an email campaign directed at the CEO, Herminia Palacio, and Heyne’s department head, calling for immediate reinstatement and an end to union busting. This resulted in nearly 1,000 allies sending emails of support. GEU also filed two unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB for unlawful firing and denial of Weingarten Rights.

Management has still not corrected their actions, so the fight continues to escalate. On July 22, Guttmacher workers joined together with workers from Starbucks and Amazon who were also fired for their union organizing in Queens, New York, to make a united call for immediate reinstatement of all these workers and an end to union busting. This powerful act of solidarity brought together nearly 200 workers and allies, and reinforced working people must stand together to fight for our shared future.

GEU expects to begin bargaining soon. Their priorities are to pressure management to right its wrongs by reinstating Heyne, and lay out the roadmap to a union contract protecting employees by giving them the voice and respect they deserve at work.



Guttmacher Employees United holds a rally calling for reinstatement of employees fired for exercising their right to organize.



In a display of union solidarity, Amazon Labor Union members Gerald Bryson, left, and Jordan Flowers, right, join Jenny Sherman, an editor at Guttmacher and a member of the organizing committee, to rally on behalf of fired union organizers. Bryson and Flowers were both fired for their unionization efforts at Amazon.

What are Weingarten Rights?

Among the rights protected by Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act is the right of union-represented employees, upon request, to have their representative present during an interview the employee reasonably believes could lead to discipline.

These rights, enshrined by 1975’s NLRB decision in *NLRB v. Weingarten, Inc.*, are known as your Weingarten Rights. Cut out the card below to keep in your wallet. If a supervisor asks you to a meeting you believe could lead to workplace discipline, read the following out loud to them and contact your union representative.



My Weingarten Rights

“If this discussion could lead in any way to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions.”

Beto for Texas Campaign Staff Ratify First Contract, a Milestone in Texas Politics

Staffers on the Beto for Texas gubernatorial campaign ratified their union contract, becoming the first statewide campaign in the Lone Star State to do so.

The 129 staffers working in organizing, canvassing, press, scheduling, data, coordination, events, finance and other roles to elect Beto O’Rourke will join Local 277 for the duration of the campaign.

“We are proud to join the labor movement and to be the first Texas statewide campaign to unionize,” said Rocio Dumey, a campaign organizer. “Like Beto, we practice what we preach. We want to send a message that every worker in this state should have the right to demand better wages, benefits and working conditions. We want to join them in that fight.”

The contract introduces overtime pay, a five-day workweek, paid time off to vote early, severance pay, gas stipends

and an additional week’s salary as a bonus if O’Rourke wins in November. It also includes important clauses on safe working conditions, parental leave, protections for immigrant workers and establishes arbitration and grievance procedures.

“We are incredibly excited to represent the staff of Beto for Texas,” said Tyler Turner, Local 277 president and an OPEIU vice president. “Having a voice on the job is critical, and joining together to form a union remains the best way to accomplish that.

“When an employer respects their employees’ right to form that union, it’s a win for all involved,” Turner continued. “We appreciate Beto for Texas voluntarily recognizing this union and look forward to the partnership. We would also like to thank CWA District 6 for their hard work and collaboration throughout the process.”



Local 277’s Beto for Texas campaign workers and members of the organizing committee at the YALL (Young Active Labor Leaders) Conference in Round Rock, Texas. Clockwise are Rocio Dumey, kneeling, Gabriel Kirkpatrick, Rachel Sevenser and Holly Pendergrass.

Electoral Systems Staff Unionize With Local 2

Employees at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in Arlington, Virginia, won their union with Local 2.

The unit of 103 workers at the mission-based organization occupy a variety of roles in support of the nonprofit’s mission to “build resilient democracies that deliver for all.”

“One of IFES’ stated values is it believes in the power of people,” the organizing committee said in a statement. “Our union is just that: a demonstration of the power of people at IFES, solidarity and a passion for supporting each other that we believe will make IFES a stronger organization.”



International Foundation for Electoral Systems employees celebrate their union with Local 2.

Local 8 Celebrates Pride



This summer, Local 8 in Seattle celebrated LGBTQ+ Pride Month with a screening of the 2014 film, "Pride," the true story of a group of lesbian and gay activists who raised money to help families affected by the British miners' strike in 1984.

"I'm grateful my union showed this movie," said Misha Smith, a Local 8 board member employed at Kaiser Permanente who serves on the local's Race, Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) committee, which organized the event. "Pride" is an extraordinary movie that speaks to the strength of community and really celebrates solidarity!

"With events like this, Local 8 continues to promote a union where belonging, support, accessibility and camaraderie are available to us all," Smith continued. "I'm so happy to participate in the RESJ committee and to have attended this event."

"The film is profoundly inspiring," said Valarie Peaphon, a Local 8 representative. "Witnessing solidarity in action among oppressed, marginalized groups employing effective acts of radical resistance, Local 8 members cheered, laughed, cried and sang along as we learned about battles fought and contemplated challenges still to overcome."

"We were reminded of our intersectional and multifaceted fights for equality and justice and also of our shared interests and combined strength," Peaphon said. "We know we must march together, always uplifting and supporting one another. Our message to all our LGBTQ+ members and friends is you're welcome, you belong, and we're glad you're here."

Hawai'i Nurses Secure 18 Percent Raises

Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50 nurses at Queen's North Hawai'i Community Hospital conducted a successful contract campaign resulting in 18 percent wage increases over the three-year contract, including an impressive 10 percent in the first year.

The nurses at Queen's North Hawai'i, a critical access rural hospital on the Big Island of Hawai'i, were fighting for equity with their counterparts at Queen's facilities in the city of Honolulu. As a result of their campaign, which included informational pickets and other displays of solidarity, they were also able to secure increases to longevity pay rates, shift differentials, on-call pay, charge differentials, 401(k) employer match, post-maternity leave, a clinical ladder program and expanded nurse staffing language.

"The nationwide nurse staffing shortage has been particularly hard on smaller rural facilities that don't have the staff reserves the larger city facilities can draw from when needed," said Local 50 President Dan Ross, RN, who also serves as an OPEIU vice president.

"The high cost of living and remote location make it very challenging to recruit an adequate number of nurses to provide safe care," Ross continued. "We hope the significant increases won will help with recruitment and retention. Local 50 continues to advocate for increased staffing levels and other still unresolved safety concerns."



Local 50 nurses conduct an informational picket at Queen's North Hawai'i Community Hospital.

Local 102 Awards \$1,000 Scholarships to Members' Families

Local 102, based in Daleville, Alabama, and representing instructor helicopter pilots, academic instructors and support personnel, recently awarded five \$1,000 scholarships to help further the education of members' families.

Scholarship recipients are Eileen Majka (father Darick Majka), Amber Clouse (father Guy Clouse), Lydia Rich (father Robert Rich), Hannah Lewis (father Mark Lewis) and Ethan Kimball (father Jacob Kimball).

"Local 102 is so pleased to be able to provide this financial assistance to help make education goals possible," said Local 102 President Mark Souza. Four of the five scholarships are provided by Local 102, with the fifth provided by the local's partner, First Command, a financial counseling service for military personnel worldwide, and its First Command Education Foundation.

"Local 102 thanks Jeff Luther and the First Command Education Foundation for their support, as well as member Mark Kuhn, who served as scholarship committee chairman, for all his hard work," Souza said.



Scholarship recipient Hannah Lewis with her father, Mark, right, and Local 102 President Mark Souza.

Local 6 Courthouse Employees' Protests Pay Off

After years of exposure to unsafe conditions, Local 6 members employed at the Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts, fought back, demanding a safe place to work and for the public to conduct their court business. As a result, the Massachusetts Trial Court agreed to address all health and safety concerns at the courthouse, which has been the subject of health and safety grievances, complaints to the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards and a lawsuit related to the environmental conditions there.

"Our members have long been exposed to unsafe and unsanitary conditions at this courthouse," said George Noel, Local 6 business manager. "We think it's more than a coincidence there is report after report of serious illnesses suffered by our members and others. The Trial Court has a solemn obligation to provide a safe place for the public to seek justice and a safe work environment for its employees."

Local 6 demanded the courthouse be closed to protect the health and safety of court employees and the public until such time it can be safely occupied. "As a result of our members' efforts, in partnership with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds, the county bar and district attorney, we struck a deal with the Trial Court to clean the courthouse. The Trial Court has a lot of work to do to make the courthouse safe and Local 6 has a lot of work to do to ensure they do it," Noel said.



Local 6 members demonstrate against the unsafe working conditions at the Roderick L. Ireland Courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts.



Steward Cindy Palmer, center, dons a hazmat suit to illustrate the health and safety risks of working at the courthouse.

Massachusetts Unions Applaud Ruling Against Misleading Ballot Initiative Backed by Big Tech

Union members in Massachusetts are celebrating the state's Supreme Judicial Court ruling against a misleading ballot initiative proposed by Big Tech aimed at manipulating laws to line their own pockets.

"This is a real victory for working people in Massachusetts," said Mary Mahoney, secretary-treasurer of OPEIU and president of Local 6 in Braintree.

An alliance of unions, consumer advocates, civil rights organizations and racial and environmental justice groups worked to oppose the more than \$18 million campaign led by Big Tech companies, including Uber, Lyft and DoorDash. Through the proposed ballot initiative, the companies sought to avoid paying workers for unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, the hourly minimum wage for all hours worked up to 40 in a week and overtime for hours beyond 40, employer-sponsored health insurance, earned sick time, and paid family and medical leave as required by Massachusetts law. They also wanted to shield themselves from liability to the public and exempt themselves from the state's civil rights and equal pay laws.

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Retired Local 153 Member Katherine Massey Remembered

A victim of the horrific mass shooting at a Buffalo supermarket in May, retired Local 153 member Katherine Massey is fondly remembered by her union as a beautiful soul and advocate for all. She was 72.

Massey retired from Blue Cross Blue Shield in 2011 after 40 years of employment, last serving as a document processor in the communications department. She was a dedicated member of Local 153 for many years who is being remembered for her life and legacy of dedicated service to her union, workplace and community.

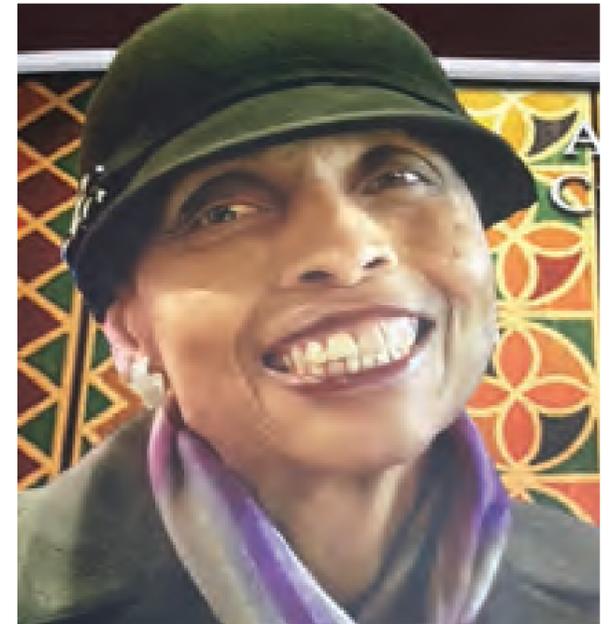
"Kat, as she was affectionately called, lived her life with purpose, concern and a willingness to be the voice of the underserved and was taken from us by a senseless racially motivated act," said Brenda St. John, recording secretary of Local 153 in New York.

"One of her favorite quotes, from Shirley Chisholm, was 'If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair,' and that is exactly what she did," St. John continued. "Kat was an active participant of the Buffalo Board of Education, believing everyone should have an interest in our children and their futures. She was also an exceptional writer and critical thinker who was co-editor of her union's newspaper, and who submitted articles to various news publications in the Buffalo area."

Massey was a supporter of the arts and president of her local neighborhood improvement club, believing all her neighbors deserved to have tree-lined streets and green areas to enjoy.

"She was a visionary," St. John said. "Take a stroll down Cherry Street in Buffalo and you'll be amazed by the African artwork on the walls of the expressway, which Kat proposed. She worked with City Hall until her vision materialized. On any given day, you might find her and her family mowing, weeding, picking up trash and planting flowers on the street."

"Kat believed in family and helping her fellow man," St. John said. "If you were fortunate enough to be called her friend, you were also her family. She never met



Katherine Massey

a stranger. Those of us who are left behind will miss her terribly and can only hope our lives will be half as meaningful and full of purpose as hers."

Massey was born July 30, 1949, and was the oldest of five children. She attended East High School and received a business diploma from Bryant & Stratton College. She is survived by a large and loving family and many friends.

Charter Oak Credit Union Secures 22 Percent Wage Increase



The Charter Oak Federal Credit Union negotiating team, left to right, front row, are member Lori Hayes, Trustee Patricia Mehlenbacher, Secretary-Treasurer/Steward Megan Grabel, and back row, President Paul Bruno, member Lucas Golart, Steward Jesse Colella and Trustee Edwin Cotto-Morales.

Local 106 in Groton, Connecticut, and the Charter Oak Federal Credit Union negotiating committee have bargained a new four-year agreement that includes a 22.5 percent wage increase over the life of the contract, while protecting members' seniority and health care coverage.

Effective Aug. 1 and covering 119 members at 16 locations, the contract provides a 7 percent increase in the first year, 6 percent in the second, 5 percent in the third and 4.5 in the final year. The contract also guarantees increases in minimum and maximum rates for all job titles, including tellers, underwriters, loan servicing, accounting and marketing specialists, and several other job classifications. Members also receive a \$2,000 ratification bonus and a \$5,000 and \$2,000 bonus the first and second year, respectively.

"This contract substantially exceeds the wage and benefits packages of the country's major financial institutions as well as major financial agreements negotiated nationally," said Paul Bruno, president of Local 106.

"As it often is in collective bargaining, all of our demands were not achieved," Bruno noted. "But at all times, the negotiating committee was unified and aware of its responsibilities to the membership, emphasizing the importance of general wage increases and increases in minimum and maximum rates of all job titles."

"Equally important, we believe this agreement will provide greater job security and stability for our membership," Bruno said. The negotiating committee was composed of Bruno and Trustees Patricia Mehlenbacher and Edwin Cotto-Morales, Secretary-Treasurer/Steward Megan Grabel, Steward Jesse Colella and members Lori Hayes and Lucas Golart.

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