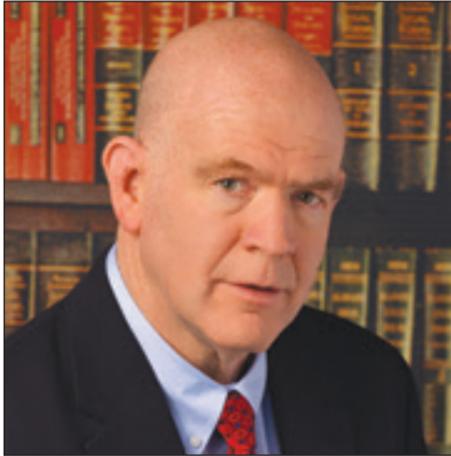


OPEIU CONNECT

Issue 552, Spring 2023

Strong Union Contracts Transform Our Workplaces





What is the Debt Ceiling Crisis and Why Does it Matter?

By Richard Lanigan
President

Let's start with a little history. When newly elected Republican President George W. Bush inherited a budget from Bill Clinton in 2001, it was the first time in generations the budget enjoyed a surplus. So, what did the Republicans do? They enacted a tax cut, which benefited the wealthiest Americans the most. They then immediately began running up another huge budget deficit. In other words, Republicans began spending far more money than the government received in taxes because of the tax cuts they enacted.

Barack Obama was then elected president, and his administration greatly reduced the huge budget deficits that were the norm under President Bush. Then along came Donald Trump, who said he was going to eliminate the deficit entirely in just two years. Unfortunately, he instead inflated the deficit. Taking a page out of George W. Bush's book, President Trump pushed through another tax cut for the rich. How badly did Trump inflate the budget deficit? One-fifth of the entire national debt, which has been accumulating over the last 200 years, was run up in just four years during the Trump administration.

This brings us to today. Now, because of the nation's \$31.5 trillion in debt, Republicans in the House of Representatives are refusing to raise the debt ceiling, meaning the United States could default on its debt. By refusing to raise the debt ceiling, House Republicans would be

refusing to pay the bills for already agreed upon budget items.

Republicans prop up their threats to hold fast on the debt ceiling by insisting the government is spending too much and big cuts are needed. Yet, they refuse to put forward a plan explaining the exact spending cuts wanted.

Government programs facing immediate cuts if the debt ceiling isn't raised include health care programs like CHIPS, federal school aid, funding for certain law enforcement programs, the CDC, national parks, food stamps, research and development programs and many more.

That is just the beginning. Interest rates for mortgages, car loans, student loans, credit cards and other expenses will go through the proverbial roof if the debt ceiling isn't raised. Since a default on the national debt would be a first-time occurrence, stocks are almost sure to collapse in value. Pension funds and individual 401(k) accounts could be decimated. Millions of jobs could be lost. A huge recession — and some say a depression — could occur. There could be a global economic crisis that could take a decade or more from which to recover. And, of course, two of the federal programs whose benefits will have to be drastically cut will be Medicare and Social Security.

Some of the same Republicans who are arguing against raising the debt ceiling voted in favor of the 2017 tax cuts for the

rich that steeply inflated the national debt! Many Republicans understood cutting the income tax paid by the wealthiest Americans would result in less money available to pay government expenses and increase the possibility of inflation. Now that the new tax rates are law, they want to reduce the benefits Americans have come to rely on and were in place when the tax cuts were approved.

If we really want to reduce the budget deficit, Congress should rescind the Trump tax cuts — the tax cuts that went to only the wealthiest Americans. They criticize and ridicule President Biden while ignoring the truth, which is Joe Biden, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama are the only three U.S. presidents in the last century who reduced the federal budget deficit. In fact, there has been a federal budget surplus the last two years of the Biden administration. The non-partisan Office of Management and Budget projects during the next 10 years the federal government will enjoy a \$10 trillion budget surplus.

If the Republicans succeed in refusing to honor the debt owed, and in which they played a part in creating, there could be economic chaos like this country and the world has never experienced. These Republicans aren't just refusing to pay for the services they agreed to pay when they passed these laws and adopted these budgets, they are threatening to damage the U.S. and world economies.

Apply Now for 2023 OPEIU Scholarships!

Applications are now being accepted for the 2023 OPEIU higher education scholarships. All eligible members and their families are encouraged to apply. The deadline is March 31.

Information and applications can be found at opeiu.org under the Member Resources tab, as well as on the OPEIU app, which is available for free download for iPhones on the App Store and for Android devices on Google Play.

Scholarship opportunities include the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship, which awards 12 full-time higher education scholarships of up to \$6,500 and eight part-time

scholarships of up to \$2,650 to OPEIU members, associate members and dependents. The John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship awards eight scholarships of up to \$3,250 for OPEIU members or associate members who are pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in labor studies, industrial relations or union leadership and administration.

Visit opeiu.org for eligibility requirements and applications.

Scholarships of up to \$6,500 are available for OPEIU members and dependents to pursue their education.

2022 Sees Second-Highest Youth Voter Turnout in 30 Years

Tufts University election researchers estimate 27 percent of young people (defined as 18-29) cast a ballot in the 2022 midterm elections. Since the 1990s, turnout hovered steadily at about 20 percent, researchers based in the university's Tisch College said.

That changed in 2018, when nearly 30 percent of young voters cast ballots in the midterm elections. The trend was surprisingly maintained in 2022, meaning young people may continue voting at higher rates in coming years.

The researchers estimated a group of nine battleground states showed an aggregate youth turnout of about 31 percent, making a major difference in maintaining a pro-worker majority in the Senate. Inflation, abortion rights, living wages and climate change were four of the top issues identified by researchers as integral to understanding youth voting patterns. The research provides important information on voter turnout to consider as the 2024 presidential election nears.



Members of Local 12's political action team conduct phone banks and knock on doors in their communities in Minnesota to help elect worker-friendly candidates during the November midterms.



Sara Jacob, a Local 459 Clinton Eaton Ingham Counties' Community Mental Health Residential Unit board member at-large, goes door-to-door to get out the vote in Michigan.



Land Stewardship Project (LSP) negotiating team members celebrate their first contract with Local 12 representatives. The staff at LSP, an agricultural nonprofit focused on assisting small- and medium-sized farms, is just one of many groups of nonprofit workers who've formed a union with OPEIU's Nonprofit Employees United in recent years.

► See next page for more about how nonprofit employees are turning to unions like OPEIU.

Nonprofit Employees Turn to Unions, Including OPEIU

Working people employed at many of the nation's nonprofit organizations are turning to unions to improve their working conditions. Union organizing at nonprofits has greatly accelerated in recent years. Nowhere is this more evident than OPEIU's Nonprofit Employees United (NEU), which now represents workers at 70 organizations. The reasons these groups choose to organize are as varied as their organizations' missions.

"Across a broad swath of the nonprofit world, more and more employees are turning to unions for representation," reports *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* in the article "Here Come the Nonprofit Unions," published in January, which tells the story of nonprofit workers who have organized with OPEIU and other unions in recent years. "Workers and managers battle over pay, benefits, and diversity and equity while they continue to work side by side to achieve their organizations' mission," the article states. "They find themselves stuck in a contentious process designed by for-profit companies that is often a poor fit with the nonprofit world, where leaders may not always oppose the union or employees' proposals."

Those who work at nonprofit organizations such as the ACLU Maryland, Compass Family Services, Defenders of Wildlife, Glide Foundation, La Casa Norte, Minnesota Youth Collective, MOVE Texas, and Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC, have all turned to OPEIU seeking improvements in their working conditions. These nonprofit employees are united together to improve their workplaces and strengthen their communities.

OPEIU's nonprofit unions have been raising wages to help members afford to live in the communities they serve. They've been securing better health care and paid leave benefits, creating systems for employee input and involvement to ensure more effective programs and services, negotiating for policies to make work safer and reduce burnout, pressing for greater racial equity and diversity on the job and much more. OPEIU's

NEU works to build strong labor standards to reflect the value of the work our members do for the greater good of society.

Conflicts over return-to-office mandates have also pushed some workers to unionize, including those at Compass Family Services, a 100-year-old San Francisco nonprofit serving homeless families, whose employees voted to join Local 29 in November. The *Chronicle* reports workers didn't feel their concerns about their health and safety were being taken seriously by management, but instead that management set up "an adversarial relationship from the beginning," Juliana Dunn, a bilingual after-school coordinator and after-care case manager and member of the organizing committee at Compass tells the *Chronicle*. The organizing effort has resulted in a "real feeling of camaraderie," Dunn says. The group is now bargaining for a first contract to address their concerns.

Nonprofits are rooted in a tradition of charity and service, and most have used that as an excuse to pay their employees less than they are worth. They often point to supposed budget constraints and the importance of the organization's mission as reasons to underpay and undervalue their employees, the article points out.

Yesenia Ramales, a senior legal assistant at the Florence Immigrant and Refugee Rights Project in Arizona, tells the *Chronicle* this issue was part of the reason she and her co-workers decided to unionize with Local 251. She says no one received raises for two years, while caseloads grew and everyone was expected to do more work. But when she asked for a raise, "she was told the group was there for the

community," reports the *Chronicle*, and was asked "aren't you here for the community?"

"I just want a raise," Ramales says in the article. "I just want to be compensated for the work I'm doing. I just want them to acknowledge that prices are rising, bills are getting more expensive, and I can't live off of the salary." The group's union was recognized by the employer in November 2021, and they are still negotiating for a first contract.

Organizing is just half the battle, though, as employees often encounter difficult tactics and delays when negotiating with nonprofits. "Rather than fight over recognizing the union, nonprofits are more likely to recognize unions voluntarily," notes the *Chronicle*. "They may even praise the unions for taking that step, which cements a positive public image. Then they drag out disagreements over everything, like who is eligible to be in the union and fine points in the contract. It is hard for the union to generate bad press over a disagreement about arcane contract provisions, particularly when the public and donors already know that the union has been recognized."

The tone can be set early in the negotiating process, though, says Brandon Nessen, OPEIU's director of organizing. If management voluntarily recognizes a union rather than forcing a vote, it doesn't always lead to difficult contract negotiations. Often, it results in a less acrimonious negotiation.

The rise in nonprofit union organizing coincides with the popularity of unions among all Americans, concludes the *Chronicle*. Approval of unions is at 71 percent, the highest since 1965, according to a recent Gallup poll.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



On the cover: Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50 registered nurses at Straub Medical Center in Honolulu stood strong and united in their fight for a fair contract. Their efforts paid off, as they secured a contract with substantial pay raises, workplace violence protections and other gains. See Local Union News on pg. 8 to read more about their experiences and those of other OPEIU members who have fought for and secured contracts that are transforming their workplaces and their lives.



Members Reflect on MLK's Legacy: 'The Fight for Social Justice and Freedom is Not Done' 7



Cover Story: Strong Union Contracts Transform Our Workplaces 8



Glide United Wins Election, Joins Local 29 15



Nick Galipeau Named Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer 17

OPEIU CONNECT

Official Organ of
THE OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION

affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC
opeiu.org

RICHARD LANIGAN
President

MARY MAHONEY
Secretary-Treasurer



CALM
ACPS

OPEIU CONNECT (ISSN 2771-6597) is published quarterly by the Office and Professional Employees International Union, 80 Eighth Avenue, Suite 201, New York, NY 10011. Periodical postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Office and Professional Employees International Union, P.O. Box 1761, New York, NY 10113.

Reproduction by the labor press of any or all material herein contained is not only permitted but wholly desirable in the interest of workers' education.

Subscription Price: \$1 a Year



Visit nonprofitemployeesunited.org for more about how OPEIU is helping nonprofit employees transform their workplaces for the better. And read the full article, "Here Come the Nonprofit Unions" in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* at philanthropy.com.

LCLAA Celebrates 50 Years of Advocacy, Growth and Empowerment

Lupe Valles, president and business manager of Local 174 in Burbank, California, has served as OPEIU's representative to the executive board of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) since 2021. She recently attended LCLAA's 50th anniversary gala, "Cultivando la Fuerza Laboral: 50 Years of Advocacy, Growth and Empowerment."

"It was an empowering event shared with many union leaders and advocates who have remained steadfast in the fight for labor rights, voter protection, comprehensive immigration reform and all the issues that impact our community, work and union," Valles said.

LCLAA is the nation's leading advocacy group for Latine workers and union members and their families. It was born out of the need to educate, organize and mobilize Latines in the labor movement and has expanded its influence to organize Latines in an effort to impact workers' rights and their influence in the political process. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization represents the interest of more than 2 million Latine workers in the AFL-CIO.



Local 174 President and Business Manager Lupe Valles, right, with, left to right, Senior Associate Director of the Human Rights and Community Relations Department of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Cesar Moreno Perez, Chief of Staff of the United Steelworkers Local 675 Xochitl Cobarruvias and AFT Vice President Juan Ramirez.

Members Reflect on MLK's Legacy: 'The Fight for Social Justice and Freedom is Not Done'

OPEIU members from across the country traveled to our nation's capital in mid-January for the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Conference on Civil and Human Rights. "It was one of the best conferences I've ever attended," said Lisa Blake, an OPEIU vice president and president of Local 42 in Farmington Hills, Michigan. It's clear, she said, the leaders of our labor movement "have a strong commitment to keeping the dream of Dr. King alive."



Local 100 President Fredricka Green, center, with First Vice President Luiz Morizot-Leite, left, and Treasurer Walter Clarit Jr. in front of AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C.



Local 32 President Mary Short, left, and Local 42 President Lisa Blake, right, with AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler.

The three-day conference, with the theme "Claiming Our Power and Protecting Our Democracy," featured a number of panels and speakers on topics ranging from racial justice unionism to gun violence. Unionists from OPEIU and throughout the AFL-CIO attended.

It's important the conference is held annually to not only honor Dr. King's legacy, Blake said, but because "the fight for social justice and freedom is not done." One of the keys to change, she said, is community involvement and a dedication to public service, a tenet of Dr. King's teachings. During the conference, a day of public service was set aside where OPEIU members worked on a variety of service projects with local organizations, such as making blankets for a homeless shelter and preparing meals at a Ronald McDonald House.

The conference also encouraged young working people to get more involved in their unions, to share their unique experiences and skills to make their unions and workplaces stronger and ensure all voices are heard.

Young unionists can benefit from the experiences and information shared at the conference, especially those who connect historical struggles to today's challenges, according to Fredricka Green, president of Local 100 in Miramar, Florida, who also represented OPEIU at the conference.

"The youth want to know what we are going to do for them today. They're tired of hearing about the past," Green said, reflecting on memorable moments at the conference. "And they're right."

Ultimately, the conference presented an opportunity to connect with other unionists committed to honoring Dr. King's legacy by continuing the fight for racial and economic justice, said fellow attendee Mary Short, an OPEIU vice president and president of Local 32 in Wall, New Jersey. "The unity between different unions is why it's so important to attend these conferences — all of us, getting together for one cause."

Strong Union Contracts Transform Our Workplaces



Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50 registered nurses at Straub Medical Center hold an informational picket as they campaign for a fair contract.



Straub registered nurses fought for and won across-the-board wage increases after working without a contract since November. The nurses are still concerned about safe staffing levels to ensure patient safety.

Local 50 Registered Nurses at Straub Ratify Three-Year Contract

Registered nurses at Straub Medical Center in Honolulu voted overwhelmingly to ratify a three-year contract with the health care provider. Of the more than 400 nurses represented by the Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50, 91 percent participated in the contract vote.

"Our efforts paid off," said OPEIU Vice President and Local 50 President Dan Ross. But, he noted, "the correlation between staffing and patient safety is still a major issue at Straub, and we will relentlessly strive to keep hospital management accountable for doing what's right for patients and the nursing staff."

Nurses at the facility had worked without a contract since their last agreement expired in November. Since its expiration, nurses organized a series of informational pickets and a march through Honolulu to build public support and to pressure management for a fair contract. Members from other unions, including UNITE HERE, IBEW and ILWU, joined with the nurses in a show of solidarity. Through it all, Local 50 nurses stood strong together!

The new contract includes 9 percent across-the-board wage increases, \$2,000 annual retention bonuses for the first two years, wage increases based on seniority to promote retention, on-call pay increases, workplace violence protection language and more.

Strike at Alta Bates Ends with Four-Year Contract

Clinical lab scientists at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center ended their strike in late December with a four-year agreement with the medical facility. They are represented by Local 29 in Oakland, California.

The strike was spurred by the below-market wage rates paid by the facility, said Desmond Tordsen, a clinical lab scientist and

bargaining team member. “I think striking sends an important message that we are not to be taken lightly, and that we understand our value,” Tordsen said.

Every member of the unit received at least a 6.1 percent wage increase in the first year of the contract and can expect at least 5 percent increases over the final three years of the agreement.

“We are not afraid to fight for a fair contract and fair wages,” Tordsen said.



Clinical lab scientists, represented by Local 29, strike for fair wages in December.

Two Contracts at Cougar Helicopters Ratified

Two groups of OPEIU members at Cougar Helicopters in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, ratified five-year agreements that include wage increases and other needed protections. Helicopter pilots and search and rescue (SAR) specialists at the company, which provides services to offshore oil fields, stood united throughout their respective bargaining processes.

The war in Ukraine, COVID-19, Canadian travel restrictions and industry fluctuations all posed a challenge at the bargaining table, according to OPEIU

Senior Representative Patt Gibbs. “Despite all the adversities facing us,” she said, “our OPEIU members held firm,” including wearing red in solidarity, regardless of which group was in bargaining.

Helicopter Pilots

The five-year agreement covering helicopter pilots was ratified with 82 percent in favor, with all 39 pilots in the bargaining unit participating in the vote.

Pilots, represented by DAG 110, secured more predictable scheduling timelines, updated wage scales, an increase to base wages, annual compounded wage increases, a ratification bonus of \$2,000 for

captains and \$1,000 for flight officers and other workplace protections.

Search and Rescue Specialists

Search and rescue specialists ratified, with 93 percent in favor, a five-year agreement that includes substantial wage increases. They are represented by DAG 110s.

The wage increases positively impact the total number of sick days, vacation days and long-term pension pay for each member of the unit. The agreement also includes a \$1,500 ratification bonus, which came in time for the holiday season.

McLaren Nurses Gain 23 Percent Salary Increases

Registered nurses at McLaren Greater Lansing Hospital in Michigan, represented by Local 459, overwhelmingly ratified a historic contract that makes their wages highly competitive in the regional market, improves staff-to-patient ratios and provides a staged approach to eliminating mandatory overtime.

Ratified with 85 percent approval, the contract covers approximately 400 RNs and includes a 23 percent average increase in wages — with general and step increases — over the life of the three-year agreement and ratification bonuses of \$1,000 for full-time and \$500 for part-time nurses. The contract also eliminates mandatory overtime after one year with limits on how many consecutive days a nurse can be forced to work in the first year. It improves staffing ratios, guarantees sign-on bonuses and referral bonuses to help recruit new nurses, and increases shift premiums, on-call pay and pay for temporary assignments. Importantly, the contract also includes new language to address workplace violence against nurses that holds the hospital accountable for protecting its employees.

As a result of the nurses standing strong and united throughout the negotiations, the contract contains no concessions.

“This is a pivotal moment for our profession and shows we are a force to be taken seriously and appreciated,” said Tim Zlomak, ICU RN and Local 459 bargaining team member. “Local 459 RNs at McLaren have proven that, together, we are strong.”

“We all work in our individual areas, with the needs of staff and patients varying from unit to unit, but we came together for this contract because we all need each other’s support,” agreed Ellen Angel, OB RN and another member of the bargaining team. “Through this process, I have learned so much and have gained even more respect for my colleagues from other units.”

Over a span of five months, RNs across the hospital wore gold shirts, bracelets, badge reels and other items to demonstrate their unity. More than 300 RNs — as well as hundreds of other Local 459 members at McLaren — signed a petition demanding an end to uncompetitive pay, short staffing and excessive mandatory overtime. OPEIU Vice President and Local 459 President Sharon Taylor and a delegation of union members presented the petition to McLaren President and CEO Kirk Ray on Sept. 30.

On Oct. 3, RNs held an informational picket in front of the hospital, standing alongside homecare and hospice RNs represented by the Michigan Nurses Association. Hundreds attended the picket, calling on McLaren to do what’s best for its employees and patients, attracting widespread media attention.

“We were broken before the pandemic. The pandemic just amplified the problem,” said Dawn Chapel, PACU RN and bargaining team member. “Being chosen to be part of this amazing negotiating team was an honor. I believed we could make a difference and we did.”

Chapel acknowledges, though, work remains to be done. “Things are still broken, but what we have achieved together gives us a pathway toward fixing the system. Our hope is to find joy in our work again, by making sure nurses’ voices are heard in the hospital.

“Together we can create the change,” she continued. “We will continue to work for change. This is just a start.”



Local 459 registered nurses at McLaren Greater Lansing hold an informational picket.



The bargaining team, left to right, are Steward Rachael Hanson, member Candy Higbee, Chief Steward Kristen Silvers, Service Representative Ben Curl, member Bea Yohannes, Stewards Tim Zlomak and Ellen Angel and member Sunny Yohannes.

Undergrad Workers at Wesleyan Achieve First Contract, a Milestone in Student Worker Organizing

Residential staff voted 40 to 0 in December to ratify their first collective bargaining agreement with Wesleyan University in Connecticut. It is the first union contract won by a group of undergraduate student workers at a private U.S. university.



Student resident advisors at Wesleyan, left to right, are Charissa Lee, Sophie Taubman, Ruby Clarke, Yohely Comprés, Sam DosSantos, Nigel Hayes, Robyn Wong and Violet Daar.

Highlights of the contract include just cause protections, health and safety improvements, base pay increases with seniority and additional per diem pay after working 20 shifts per semester.

“For us, this contract means mutual advocacy,” said bargaining team member Yohely Comprés. “It means respect for us as workers.”

The unit is represented by Local 153 in New York. Wesleyan was the first private university in the nation to voluntarily recognize an undergraduate worker union in March 2022. The workers’ voluntary recognition request was accompanied by rallies, sit-ins and demonstrations of community support — one of the reasons they won recognition so quickly. Physical Plant and clerical workers, also represented by Local 153, stood in solidarity with the undergraduate workers throughout the organizing and bargaining campaigns.

Tufts RAs Choose Local 153 in Landslide Election



Resident assistants at Boston-based Tufts University voted 99 to 3 to unionize as the United Labor of Tufts Resident Assistants (ULTRA) with Local 153 on Dec. 14. The landslide victory marks the third student worker union

to affiliate with Local 153 in 2022, following wins at Wesleyan University and Barnard College.

“This victory gives us a voice,” said Anisha Uppal-Sullivan, an RA at the university and organizing committee member. “We work hard every day for this community in unseen ways and the union is the first step to getting what we deserve,” she said, noting the need for better wages and working conditions.

RAs announced they were forming a union in November in a letter to the university administration requesting voluntary recognition of ULTRA. The university denied their request, even though 85 percent of RAs, 123 of 142, had signed union authorization cards. ULTRA then filed for an election with the National Labor Relations Board.



Student resident assistants at Tufts University in Boston set up an information table to garner support for their fight for a union. The RAs collected 1,340 signatures on a petition to the administration to recognize their union.



Augsburg staff rally for a fair contract outside a meeting of the University Board of Regents. A contract was reached later that day.

Augsburg Staff Secure Historic First Contract

Staff at Augsburg University, a large private university in Minnesota, overwhelmingly voted to ratify a historic first contract, the first of its kind for private university support staff in the state.

The two-year contract was ratified just hours after a successful rally outside the university’s Board of Regents, with 93 percent of voters in support. Members stayed strong during the protracted contract negotiations and staged a number of actions, including rallies, petition signings and a strong social media presence to help them reach the contract.

“One lesson I learned is that movement at the table starts outside the negotiating room,” said bargaining team member Michael Bloomberg, who works as a librarian at the university. “I believe our final agreements came after a rally that we held on campus during a board meeting.”

The agreement addresses the most significant issue facing workers at the university: soaring health care costs. Facing a 22 percent increase in health care costs, workers at Augsburg pressured the university to solicit bids from health care companies. That tactic led to an eventual 2.5 percent reduction in costs.

“While we can’t solve our broken health care system by ourselves,” Bloomberg said, “one of the important articles of our contract is the institution of a health benefits committee for all stakeholders to have input on decisions that impact our health benefits.”

Other contract highlights include a new six-week paid parental leave benefit, \$800 ratification bonus, annual raises, equity raises for Athletics and Residence Life staff, union security clauses and protections against takebacks via limited management rights clauses.

MAGE Secures 25 Percent Special Wage Increase for Medical Pros

The Michigan Association of Governmental Employees (MAGE)/OPEIU Local 2002 has secured a 20 percent pay grade and 5 percent wage increase for all registered nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, physician managers, corrections medical health professionals and other licensed professionals the local represents.

Michigan Civil Service Rules prescribe MAGE negotiate annually over compensation. For the past five years, MAGE has strongly advocated for special wage increases for its embattled medical professionals. Each year, MAGE provided incontrovertible proof of a drastic recruitment and retention problem. This lack of staff exacerbated the unit's ongoing mandatory overtime problems, resulting in many RNs being forced to work overtime two to three days per week. It also meant many RNs were forced to cover two units, placing patients in dangerous

environments and members' nursing licenses in jeopardy. Psychiatrists were forced to travel to distant hospitals to cover understaffed agencies.

"Many of our RNs would wake up at 4:30 a.m. to arrive at their shift, which would run from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.," said Peter Neu, MAGE legal counsel, "and then, right before their shift was scheduled to end and they were ready to go home to meet their children at the bus stop, they would be told they have to work until 10:30 p.m."

"Our members had been plagued with this mandatory overtime problem for far too long," Neu continued. "I am pleased our hard work has paid off and these professionals will finally be paid close to what their peers in the private sector, federal government and other states are receiving."

Although these raises are good news for a significant number of MAGE's licensed professionals, they do not include all of the unit's



Peter Neu

important professional classifications. MAGE, therefore, continues to advocate for wage increases for the other similarly situated employees and supervisors the employer failed to recognize, Neu said.

Contract Guarantees 14 Percent Wage, Benefit Increases for IATSE Local 600 Employees

Local 174 in Burbank, California, has successfully negotiated a contract containing wage and benefit increases of 14 percent over the life of the three-year contract and other significant increases for members employed at the International Cinematographers Guild Local 600, IATSE.

"We were also able to increase the entry level rates of clerical and administrative staff and increase the car allowance for business representatives, as well as secure language that establishes a labor-management committee," said Local 174 President and Business Manager Lupe Valles. The contract provides for at least 9 percent wage increases over three years and also adds Juneteenth as an observed holiday.



Local 174 members employed at the International Cinematographers Guild Local 600, IATSE, celebrate their contract with Local 174 President and Business Manager Lupe Valles, center in suit, and Organizer/Assistant Representative Michael Kanyer, far right in polo shirt.

Glide United Wins Election, Joins Local 29



Glide United celebrates their newly formed union with Local 29.

Teachers, case managers, office workers, food service workers and harm reduction staff at the Glide Foundation—a San Francisco-based nonprofit—won recognition of their union, Glide United, in a landslide vote in November.

After management refused the union's request for voluntary recognition in mid-October, Glide United quickly filed for an NLRB election. Eighty-three percent voted in favor of unionizing with Local 29.

A major issue they hope to address at the bargaining table is the organization's chronic understaffing issues, which leave employees overworked and underpaid. Understaffing has similarly prompted thousands of nonprofit workers across the United States to unionize.

"Staffing is essential to providing all of our services and avoiding staff burnout," said Joy Hmura, a research and systems analyst at the organization.

A union contract that addresses workers' concerns, she said, "gives our organization a chance" to put its founding principles of "inclusivity and mutual respect ... into tangible action."

Glide is a nationally recognized center for racial and social justice, dedicated to fighting systemic injustices, creating pathways out of poverty and crisis, and transforming lives.



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.

DON'T MISS OUT!
Sign up to receive texts from OPEIU.
Text **OPEIU** to 844-240-4114.

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



Jennifer Penzenstadler

Local 12 Member Invests in Students' Futures

Local 12 member Jennifer Penzenstadler was elected in November to the Chisago Lakes School Board. The Chisago Lakes School District is located northeast of Minneapolis with a student population of about 3,300.

The office manager of the Minnesota Pipe Trades Association in St. Paul, Penzenstadler said she credits her many years of being a Local 12 union member and the connections she made through the labor movement for helping her win the three-way election.

"Today's students are tomorrow's leaders and we need to invest in them," she wrote in her candidate filing statement, calling for collaboration between union apprenticeship programs and local schools.

Local 6's Karen St. Marie Wins Eugene Debs Award

Local 6 Executive Board member Karen St. Marie is the 2022 recipient of the Eugene Debs Award from the Vermont State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. The annual award recognizes union members who have gone above and beyond in organizing their co-workers to secure substantial gains in their workplace, courageously risking their livelihood to fight their bosses.

St. Marie is a registered nurse at Rutland Regional Medical Center in Vermont. "Karen is my go-to person at Rutland," said Local 6 Business Manager George Noel. "I can always rely on her to tell me what I need to hear, not necessarily what I want to hear. Our members always feel comfortable coming to her with any issues.

"Karen is the one who can see through frustrations and guide our actions to achieve the best outcome for our sisters and brothers," Noel continued. "Her trustworthiness has also extended to management, who frequently solicit her opinion before they take action in dealing with a member.

"Karen is essential to maintaining a strong OPEIU presence at Rutland," he said.



Local 6 Executive Board member Karen St. Marie, right, is presented the Eugene Debs Award by Liz Medina, executive director of the Vermont State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Nick Galipeau Named Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer

At the recommendation of Local 153 Business Manager Richard Lanigan, the Local 153 Executive Board approved the appointment of Nick Galipeau to the position of secretary-treasurer on Dec. 13.



Nick Galipeau

For 14 years, Galipeau has served the members of Local 153 in multiple roles, ranging from business representative to organizing director. "Nick has always shown strong dedication and has worked diligently on behalf of our union and its members," said Lanigan, who also serves as OPEIU president.

A 2004 graduate of Fordham University, Galipeau worked through college as a public school custodian and member of 32BJ SEIU.

In 2009, he began his career as union staff at Local 153, representing members employed at universities and hotels, among other shops. He is a graduate of Cornell University's Union Leadership program and sits on the board of the New York City Central Labor Council.

"I thank Business Manager Lanigan and the Local 153 Executive Board for this vote of confidence," Galipeau said. "I look forward to working with them and the union's entire administration in providing the best possible representation for our members and their families."

NLRB Gets Long-Awaited Budget Boost

Funding for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), a federal agency tasked with enforcing the National Labor Relations Act, has remained stagnant since 2014. Flat funding for nearly a decade has left the agency struggling to meet the demand of workers across the United States who are unionizing at a historic rate.

But thanks in no small part to an AFL-CIO-led pressure campaign in December, nearly 20,000 union members across the U.S. wrote to their senators, asking them to boost the NLRB's budget. In late December, the NLRB announced it had received its first funding increase in almost a decade in the omnibus spending bill.

"This much-needed infusion of funding comes during a surge in cases for the Agency," read an NLRB press release. "With the additional funding, the NLRB will continue to uphold our Congressional mandate of promoting collective bargaining and safeguarding employees' rights to organize, engage with one another to seek better wages or working conditions, and choose whether or not to have a collective bargaining representative negotiate on their behalf with their employer."

Notice to Employees Subject to Union Security Clauses

This notice is for all private sector workers in the United States working under an OPEIU contract containing a valid union security clause. Union security clauses require an employee to pay dues or other fees to a union as a condition of employment. The dues or fees amount you pay to OPEIU supports the costs of negotiating your contract and the broad range of activities we engage in to support you, your family and your co-workers.

Nonmembers may file objections to funding union expenditures that are not germane to collective bargaining, contract administration or grievance adjustment (“chargeable expenditures”) and instead pay what’s known as an agency fee. Examples of chargeable expenditures include: the costs of negotiations with employers; contract administration expenses; communication with employers regarding work-related issues; handling employees’ work-related problems through the grievance and arbitration procedure; and Union administration. Examples of non-chargeable expenditures include: expenses made for community services; expenses for political purposes; the costs of certain affiliation fees; and expenses for benefits available only to members and their families.

Note: The International Union’s J.B. Moss Voice of the Electorate (VOTE) fund is an independent, segregated fund that receives voluntary donations and contributes to political candidates who support the needs of working men and women. No money received from dues or fees goes to the VOTE fund. Accordingly, the VOTE fund is not considered in the calculation of the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses.

But if you choose not to join the union or if you resign your membership, and in either case file objections, the many rights and opportunities available to OPEIU members will not be available to you. For example, you will give up your ability to:

- Vote on terms of your contract;
- Participate in strike votes;
- Participate in the development of contract proposals;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as an officer of your local union or the International Union;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as a delegate to the International Convention; and

- Enjoy discounts and other benefits available only to members, including eligibility for OPEIU scholarships for you and your family.

Should you decide to give up all these rights and benefits and submit objections in accordance with the below procedure, you will receive a rebate of a portion of your dues or equivalent payments based on non-chargeable expenditures. In the past, approximately 32–38 percent of the International Union’s expenditures have gone toward these activities. The percentages of local union expenditures on non-chargeable activities have generally been higher.

As you consider whether to object, you should remember that the most important right you have at work is the right to be represented by a union. When workers negotiate together through the union and speak with one voice, they win higher wages and better benefits and achieve greater respect and dignity on the job than workers who do not have workplace representation. There is strength in numbers. The stronger your union is, the better your contract will be.

Objections Procedure

Individuals who choose to file objections must submit them in writing to the Office and Professional Employees International Union, P.O. Box 1761, New York, N.Y. 10113, Attention: Mary Mahoney, Secretary-Treasurer. Objections should include the objector’s name, home address, employer and local union number.

Objections must be postmarked during the month of June. New hires who choose not to join the union may also submit their objections postmarked within thirty (30) days of being compelled to pay dues or fees to the union or within thirty (30) days of the new hire’s receipt of a new employee letter from a local union. Newly resigned members may also submit their objections postmarked within thirty (30) days from receipt by the union of the resigning member’s letter of resignation. All objections will be deemed continuing in nature unless or until the employee requests a change in status. Timely submitted objections will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the objections were received by the union.

Challenge Procedure

An objector may challenge the International Union’s and/or the local union’s classification or calculation of expenditures before a neutral

arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Challenges may be coordinated or consolidated before a single arbitrator.

Objectors must submit written notification of any intended challenge to Mary Mahoney, Secretary-Treasurer, Office and Professional Employees International Union, P.O. Box 1761, New York, N.Y. 10113. Notifications must be received by the Secretary-Treasurer within thirty (30) days of the challenger’s receipt of a letter from the local union informing the challenger of the amount of the rebate, the basis for the calculation and the internal procedure for filing a challenge. That challenge should specify which classification and/or calculations of the International Union and/or local union are being challenged.

The union(s) shall bear the burden of justifying their classifications and calculations. If a hearing at which the parties or witnesses may be present is held by the arbitrator, it will be held at a location most convenient to the largest number of involved challengers. The cost of any arbitration proceeding will be paid for by the unions. Challengers, however, will not be reimbursed for lost time and will have to pay for their own travel expenses and the fees, costs and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

When a written challenge is received from an objector, the local union will place an amount equal to the challenged portion of the fee into an interest-bearing escrow account. It shall remain in that account until the appointed arbitrator issues a decision. Should the decision lower the percentage of chargeable expenditures to the challenger(s), the appropriate portion of the escrowed fees, plus the interest earned by that portion while in the escrow account, will be refunded. All objectors in each local union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will be responsible for the adjusted fee amount determined by the arbitrator. If the arbitrator approves all or part of the unions’ classifications and/or calculations, the escrowed money and interest allocable to that part of the fee will revert to the union(s).

The Union Plus Mortgage Program **WORKS FOR ME**



“I was searching different avenues to see who had the best rates, but I wanted to go to sources that I could trust. Through the Union Plus Mortgage Program, I spoke to someone at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and I felt very comfortable.”
— union member



See more at unionplus.org



Wells Fargo Home Mortgage has a services agreement with Union Privilege in which Union Privilege receives a financial benefit for providing agreed-upon services. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage encourages you to shop around to ensure you receive the services and loan terms that fit your home financing needs.

Wells Fargo Home Mortgage is a division of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. © 2022 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. NMLSR ID 399801



OPEIU CONNECT

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC

Get the OPEIU App Today

The OPEIU app is available for free download. It's a great way to stay connected to your union, learn more about your membership benefits, find links to OPEIU's social media networks and much more. Available for free download for iOS devices on the App Store and for Android devices on Google Play by searching **OPEIU**.



Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

