

# OPEIU CONNECT

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UNITED WE STAND





# Let’s Make Our Voices Impossible to Ignore

By Tyler Turner  
President

With the 2026 midterm elections around the corner, working people are once again in the crosshairs. Billionaires, corporations and special interest groups are now attempting to drown out workers’ voices by seeking to further weaken the rules limiting their influence. Masked under the banner of “free speech,” these interests are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to weaken campaign finance laws protecting our democracy from being sold to the highest bidder.

On Dec. 9, the Supreme Court heard arguments in *National Republican Senatorial Committee v. Federal Election Commission*. The case, brought by the Republican Party’s national committees, former U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot and former Senator and current Vice President JD Vance, asks the Supreme Court to overrule its 2001 decision upholding federal limits on coordinated party expenditures. At its core the lawsuit seeks to eliminate limits on how much political parties can spend in direct coordination with their own candidates.

These limits exist for good reason. The law regulates this kind of campaign spending because it directly benefits a candidate and thus poses a risk of quid-pro-quo corruption. Without these limits special interests and wealthy donors could avoid individual contribution caps by funneling money through party committees to curry favor with candidates, further suppressing the voices of working people. Congress put these safeguards in place more than 50 years ago through the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA), and the Supreme Court has upheld them multiple times.

This case threatens to undo those protections, however, by following a familiar pattern. In 2010, the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United v.*

*Federal Election Commission* decision held that restricting the political spending of corporations and unions violated their First Amendment rights. It allowed unlimited spending in the form of independent expenditures, which are money spent on political communication advocating for or against a candidate without any coordination with the candidate, their campaign or a political party. While unions spend money advocating for fair wages, retirement security and safer working conditions, the same cannot be said of corporations. Instead, they promote harmful rollbacks to labor law and the dismantling of commonsense workplace protections, prioritizing profits over people.

Since that decision, we have seen elections increasingly shaped by anonymous donors and corporate interests with no accountability to working people or their communities. By taking up this latest case, the Supreme Court seems to signal a willingness to overturn precedent and further weaken campaign finance regulations. If the Supreme Court allows unlimited coordination between parties and candidates, it will further tilt the political landscape away from workers and in favor of the billionaire class already holding economic power.

Weakening campaign finance laws does not strengthen free speech; it concentrates power in the hands of a few, making it harder for

working people’s voices to be heard. What is at stake is not just election law but whether our democracy works for working people or becomes a marketplace where influence goes to those with the deepest pockets.

We may never match the financial influence of those pushing an anti-worker agenda, but together we can out-organize them, out-work them and make our voices impossible to ignore.

This year we are going to ask more of you, because the stakes are higher than ever. As a union our greatest strength is our collective power and ability to organize. In the months ahead we will be reaching out with a survey to hear directly from you about the issues that matter most to our members. You will also see educational materials focused on key policy priorities and the importance of getting out the vote.

*We may never match the financial influence of those pushing an anti-worker agenda, but together we can out-organize them, out-work them and make our voices impossible to ignore.*

We are asking you to stay engaged and motivated. That means phone banking, block walking and volunteering through your local union and area central labor council. It also means talking member to member about issues affecting you and your families.

# Medicare Cuts Threaten Working Families

## New law will cause health insurance costs to rise, services to fall

Welcome to the first of a new OPEIU Connect feature, Legislative Update, where we will review the biggest legislative and policy news and how it impacts working families.

Our first update is bad news. The ongoing affordability crisis looks to get worse this year on the heels of a new law passed by Congress in July, known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.” The cumulative impacts of the broad-ranging law will allow the highest 10 percent of earners to see a 2.7 percent increase in their income, while the lowest 10 percent of earners will see a 3.1 percent *decrease* in income.

The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” made significant cuts to Medicare, SNAP and Affordable Care Act programs to fund tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. Medicaid will be especially hard-hit, facing a 12 percent reduction in federal funding. Those cuts will disproportionately impact older Americans and those with permanent disabilities.

Nearly 11 million Americans will no longer be able to afford health insurance due to these cuts, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

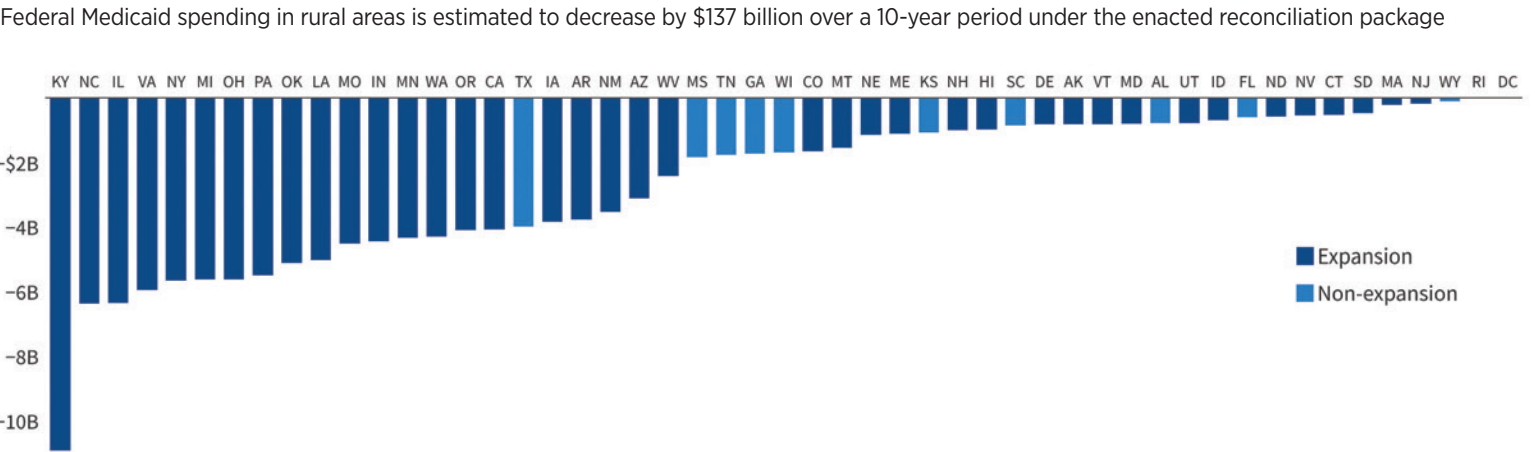
Those who are able to maintain their coverage will be left paying the bill. More people without insurance means higher costs for health care providers, which are then passed on to insured patients. Estimates suggest this could lead to job-based health insurance prices going up by hundreds of dollars per person annually, intensifying union contract negotiations and weakening health care coverage for nonunion workers. The budget cuts will also make it more difficult to receive care, as providers scale back less-profitable services in favor of procedures with a higher profit margin.

Federal cuts to Medicaid will hit rural areas especially hard, as Medicaid coverage is far more prevalent among rural Americans than their urban counterparts. According to one estimate, rural areas will see a net loss of more than \$100 billion in federal health care funding as a result of these cuts. Nearly half of all rural hospitals are already operating at a loss, so these cuts are likely to accelerate the ongoing trend of rural hospital closures.

Insurance and affordability aren’t the only problems facing working people. Federal agencies, such as the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), have long been hampered by short staffing and underfunding and will be less able to deliver for workers as a result of further reductions in budget and the installation of anti-worker political appointees. The courts, meanwhile, grow more hostile to the concerns of working people with each passing year.

The history of the union movement shows we don’t have to take these problems lying down. Organizing is the only way to guarantee dignity for working people in an unjust system. Talk to your co-workers about the impacts of these budget cuts; bring a delegation from your local to the next protest; and, alongside your union siblings, hold your elected officials accountable to working people, not billionaires.

## Largest Declines in Federal Medicaid Spending in Rural Areas Would Occur in States That Expanded Medicaid and Have Higher Shares of Rural Residents



**Notes:** The analysis uses T-MSIS data to estimate the percentage of Medicaid spending that paid for services used by rural enrollees within each state. Those percentages are then applied to state-level estimated reductions in federal Medicaid spending from KFF’s broader analysis of federal Medicaid spending reductions. Spending data in 2021 for Mississippi and West Virginia was unusable according to the DQ Atlas, so 2020 data was used instead.

Graphic courtesy of KFF, a nonprofit health policy research, polling and news organization. Learn more at [kff.org](https://www.kff.org).



INSIDE



**On our cover:** After three years of bargaining, an ownership change, multiple informational pickets and two unfair labor practice strikes, Local 40 (Region VII) nurses and radiology technologists have ratified new contracts at Henry Ford Rochester Hospital in Michigan. See pg. 10 cover story, *Local 40 Members at Henry Ford Hospital Ratify Two New Contracts*, for more details about how these members stood united and are now celebrating significant wins directly enhancing patient care and improving working conditions.

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Identifying and Mentoring New Stewards



By Paulette Vasu, RN  
Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children  
Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/  
OPEIU Local 50 (Region VIII)

One of the most important and underappreciated aspects of being a steward is building your union's bench of potential leaders. As chief steward at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children in Honolulu, Hawai'i, where I have worked as a registered nurse for 28 years, I have found recruiting new stewards is a challenging, but necessary, part of the role.

Identifying potential stewards can be tricky, but one common thread between all of our stewards is they ask questions and take time to learn their contract. Specifically, when I learn members have a go-to person within their unit to ask contract-related questions, I know that person might be a good steward. It signals they have built up trust with their colleagues and have already developed a working knowledge of how the contract works.

My path toward stewardship began 12 years ago, when I agreed to join the hospital's labor-management committee. There I began to see the dynamics at play behind the scenes. They helped me recognize how problems get solved, which is one of the major aspects of stewardship. Mentorship from more tenured stewards was critical in helping me to build the base of knowledge I now strive to share with the next generation.

Once I identify a potential new steward, I make a point to encourage them to become more involved. Inviting them to join the bargaining committee or labor-management committee can be a good first step in gauging their interest and helping further develop their skills. As an ongoing process, I make myself available to them as a mentor. Sharing the knowledge I have accumulated in my nearly three decades at the hospital is a meaningful way I am working to

pass the torch to the next generation of union leaders, ensuring they have all the institutional knowledge they need to be effective advocates for their co-workers and defenders of our contract.

*Mentorship from more tenured stewards was critical in helping me to build the base of knowledge I now strive to share with the next generation.*

Stewards come in many shapes and sizes with different skill sets, backgrounds and areas of expertise. One thing they all have in common, though, is a deep understanding of their union contract and how it was won. Stewards everywhere should be thinking about how to keep the fight going by identifying, recruiting and mentoring the next generation of union leaders.



# Towing Benefit Keeps Members Moving!

The OPEIU Towing/Service Calls benefit is helping keep members and their families safe and on the road all year.

The program, provided by your union at no cost, gives all members and family living in the same household up to two tows/service calls annually, valued at up to \$100 each (\$80 call plus a \$20 administrative fee).

The 24-hour plan includes free hookup and towing up to 15 miles. But the program provides much more than towing! The benefit also includes 24-hour roadside assistance, battery and lockout service, delivery of certain supplies, emergency tire service, travel discounts and more.

To utilize the service, you must call the OPEIU Towing/Service Calls benefit dispatch service at 800-617-2677 and provide OPEIU's Producer Code 74046 and Plan Letter B.


A full description and a copy of your towing card can be found at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) under the Member Resources tab or by scanning the QR code.

You can also get all the information you need about the program and the host of other OPEIU benefits you are entitled to on the OPEIU app, available for free download on the App Store and on Google Play by searching OPEIU.




*The program, provided by your union at no cost, gives all members and family living in the same household up to two tows/service calls annually, valued at up to \$100 each (\$80 call plus a \$20 administrative fee).*

✂ Clip and save!



**Towing/Service Calls  
Benefit Program**



The bearer of this card is a member of an OPEIU Local Union, Guild or Directly Affiliated Group entitled to the Towing/Service Calls Benefit.

Up to two towing/service calls per year, per household, valued at up to \$100\* each through Nation Safe Drivers (NSD). The benefit applies to all OPEIU members and family members living in the same household as the member.

For service, please call the OPEIU designated toll-free number:  
1-800-617-2677

Provide your name (or the name of the OPEIU member)  
Producer Code: 74046 Plan Letter: B  
\*\$80 call plus \$20 administrative fee

# Student Debt Reduction Recipients Announced

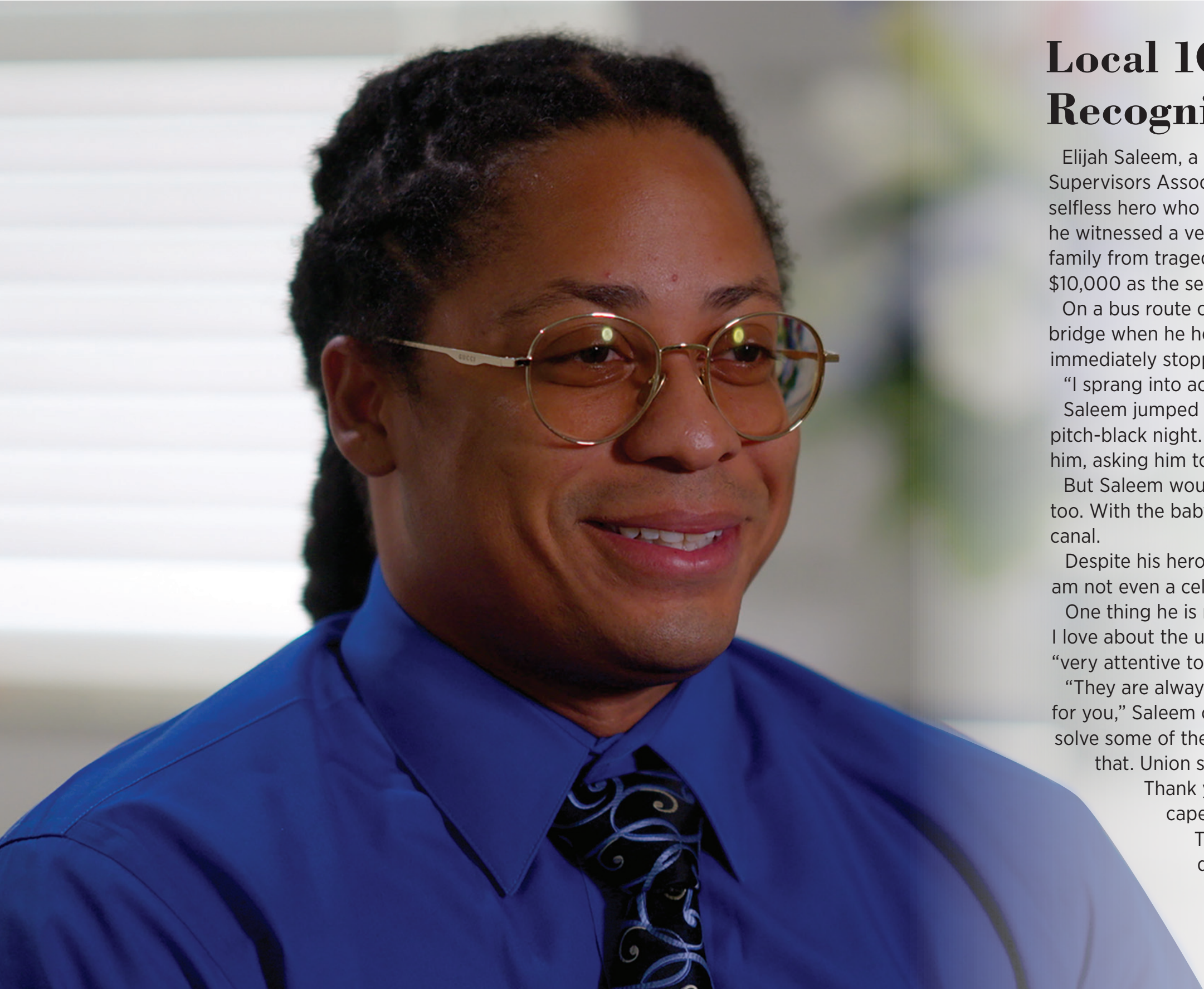
OPEIU provides five awards annually of \$2,500 each to help members reduce student debt through the OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Program.

The 2025 recipients are **Angela Olejarz**, Local 6 (Region II); **Katie Carpenter**, Local 8 (Region VI); **Diana DiCostanzo**, Local 153 (Region II); **Julie Hrabak**, Local 792 (Region VII); and **Stephan Smith**, Local 2002 (Region VII).

OPEIU members with at least \$10,000 in student debt can apply each year. For more information about this and all your other OPEIU membership benefits, visit [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) or scan the QR code.







# Local 100 Member Elijah Saleem Recognized for Heroism

Elijah Saleem, a bus operations instructor and member of the Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF)/OPEIU Local 100 (Region III), is a selfless hero who did not hesitate to help strangers in a moment of crisis when he witnessed a vehicle drive off a bridge. His act of heroism saved an entire family from tragedy. To recognize his courageous act, Saleem has been awarded \$10,000 as the second prize winner of the Union Plus Hometown Heroes Contest.

On a bus route one evening, Saleem was traveling northbound over a bridge when he heard a car traveling at high speed plunge into the canal. He immediately stopped the bus and called 911. That’s when he heard screams.

“I sprang into action,” Saleem recounted. “My heart took over.”

Saleem jumped into the canal even though he was unable to see anything in the pitch-black night. As he rushed toward the car, the parents threw their baby at him, asking him to take the child to safety.

But Saleem would not leave the baby’s parents without helping them to safety too. With the baby in one arm, Saleem used his other arm to pull them out of the canal.

Despite his heroism, Saleem is staying humble. “I am being celebrated, and I am not even a celebrity,” he joked.

One thing he is not joking about is how important his union is to him. “What I love about the union is their support,” Saleem said, noting his union reps are “very attentive to what our needs are, and they are just present.

“They are always there to help and tackle some of the issues and be that voice for you,” Saleem continued. “They have the ability to assist, facilitate and help solve some of the problems you have. You cannot ask for anything better than that. Union strong!”

Thank you, Elijah, for proving not all heroes wear capes. In fact, many wear their union pride!  
To learn more about the Union Plus discounted benefits and services available to you as an OPEIU member, visit [unionplus.org](http://unionplus.org) or scan the QR code.





# Local 40 Members at Henry Ford Hospital Ratify Two New Contracts

Local 40 (Region VII) members at Henry Ford Rochester Hospital in Michigan ratified two successor collective bargaining agreements covering registered nurses and radiology technologists with the not-for-profit hospital. The contracts secure pay increases for both groups and groundbreaking scheduling language for the nurses, among other highlights.

The dual ratification votes came after more than three years of bargaining, an ownership change, multiple informational pickets and two unfair labor practice (ULP) strikes at the hospital.

Registered nurses at the Michigan hospital secured a two-year agreement featuring a wage increase averaging 11 percent in the first year and the addition of scheduling language for the first time in the local’s history. Senior nurses will receive pay increases and an additional lump sum bonus to reflect their tenure at the hospital.

“Local 40 nurses stood united through three years and four months of bargaining on our successor contract,” said Local 40 Vice President Danielle Drouillard, RN. “Our nurses, radiology technologists and allies are celebrating significant wins that will directly enhance patient care and improve working conditions for health care professionals.”

The radiology technologists’ three-year contract features pay increases between 6 and 15 percent. Senior radiology technologists, like the nurses, will receive pay increases in addition to a lump sum payment to reflect their longevity. The agreement also includes enhanced shift differentials, premiums for shifts worked on weekends and on-call pay.

Local 40 President and OPEIU Vice President Dina Carlisle, RN, celebrated the victory but cautioned “both units had to fight hard with two administrations and multiple ULP strikes to secure basic protections for patients and medical staff.

“We hope this is the beginning of a productive relationship with the Henry Ford administration, built on mutual respect and the shared goal of excellent health care,” Carlisle said.

*“Our nurses, radiology technologists and allies are celebrating significant wins that will directly enhance patient care and improve working conditions for health care professionals.”*  
*Danielle Drouillard, RN, Local 40 vice president*



Local 40 registered nurses at Henry Ford Rochester Hospital conduct an unfair labor practice strike.



# Seattle is 13th IRC Office to Unionize with OPEIU

Ninety-six staffers for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Seattle won voluntary recognition of their union with Local 8 (Region VI), joining IRC offices across the country in bargaining for a fair first contract with one of the world’s largest humanitarian nonprofits.

“It was time to join the fight,” said Haronid Javier, a social service navigator who serves on the IRC Workers Unite (IRCWU) bargaining committee.

Workers at IRC Seattle are bargaining a first contract alongside 12 other unionized IRC offices from multiple OPEIU local unions. Major bargaining priorities include better wages, job security and flexible work arrangements accounting for the nature of the work. IRC workers play a pivotal role in helping immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers transition to life in the United States, providing support and assistance in navigating housing, social services and health care services, among other areas of expertise.

“With everything happening in our government and prices soaring in all areas of life, our wages have to reflect those changes so that many of us are not working ourselves to the bone with multiple jobs,” Javier continued. “Even if we do decide to take on another job, we won’t have to work another full-time job.”

Many IRC members were spurred to unionize to better advocate for their clients. Migrant justice and economic justice “go hand in hand,” Javier said. “You can’t fight for labor organizing and believe that immigrant justice has nothing to do with it. Labor organizing has always been the fight for the disenfranchised for equal rights, and it is the same with immigrant justice. This country was founded by and has been sustained by immigrants.”

## CONTRACT UPDATE!

After two years of negotiating, IRCWU members reached a tentative agreement with their employer. The tentative agreement is the result of more than 700 IRCWU members across 13 offices uniting together to make IRC the workplace they and their clients deserve. The members will now vote on the agreement.

Look for more details in the next issue of OPEIU Connect.



IRCWU Seattle members at an event in May announcing their unionizing effort.

# Queen’s North Hawai'i Nurses Secure Contract

*Following a strike threat, HNA/OPEIU Local 50 nurses overwhelmingly ratify agreement with raises, staffing ratios*

Nurses at Queen’s North Hawai’i Community Hospital ratified their contract, becoming the fourth hospital in the state to secure safe staffing ratios with the Hawai’i Nurses’ Association (HNA)/OPEIU Local 50 (Region VIII).

Ninety-eight nurses working throughout the hospital — in the emergency room, operating rooms, post-anesthesia care, family birthing, intensive care, home health, infection control, oncology and medical-surgical units — voted overwhelmingly to ratify the successor agreement. The contract includes a 15.5 percent raise over three years, plus additional wage differentials for longevity.

“The safer we feel coming into work, knowing we are staffed and having resources at our disposal for our patients, the more we feel that we can accomplish and do what we do best — care holistically for our community,” said Chaden Shimaoka-Bello, a registered nurse who served on the union’s bargaining committee.

Nurses received significant support from community members and local establishments, who petitioned the hospital and posted flyers in their storefronts in support of the nurses’ fight for a fair contract. The contract win comes on the heels of an escalation campaign culminating in a strike authorization vote. That vote played a major role in pressuring the hospital to reach a final agreement. In the end, the strike was averted with a tentative agreement just days before nurses were scheduled to walk off the job.

“Knowing the community was behind us was the most fulfilling feeling,” Shimaoka-Bello said. “We don’t do this job to be recognized or praised. We do it because we know it is worth it to be able to see our family, our friends and our community come in [to the hospital] on some of the worst days of their lives and feel they are safe and receiving the best care available to them.”

The contract expires March 31, 2028.



HNA/OPEIU Local 50 nurses at the Queen’s North Hawai'i Community Hospital hold an informational picket May 17.



# Kickstarter Workers Win Longest Tech Strike in History

*After 42 days on strike, Kickstarter workers ratified a new contract, codifying a four-day workweek*

Workers at the crowdfunding company Kickstarter ratified a three-year contract following a 42-day strike—the longest strike in the history of tech unions. Their union of approximately 60 members, Kickstarter United (KSRU), is organized with Local 153 (Region II) in New York City. The contract features several bargaining unit priorities that spurred the strike, including a codified four-day workweek, protections against artificial intelligence replacing workers and an \$85,000 minimum salary that grows throughout the length of the contract as the cost of living continues to rise. “I think it’s fair to say that fighting for this contract is the closest most of us will come to making history, which has been a massive responsibility,” said Arleigh Atkinson, a senior software engineer at the company for nearly five years. “This contract won’t just better the lives of present and future members of Kickstarter United. Hard-won union contracts like this are the precedents for other contracts in the tech industry.”

Throughout the strike, KSRU members received support from across the Kickstarter community, including creators and users of the platform, as well as local elected officials such as former NYC Comptroller Brad Lander. Support from creators, whose projects the platform supports, were “key to getting our demands met,” Atkinson said. “As far as the larger Kickstarter community, this strike has put me so much closer to the folks who use what I build every day. I heard stories of the lives we have changed. Our creators reaffirmed that we, the workers, are Kickstarter — not management. I get to carry these stories back to my code cave, and I’m a better engineer for it,” Atkinson said.



Kickstarter members at a rally in New York City in October.

# TNDC Staff Win Recognition of Their Union with Local 29

**Workers at the largest nonprofit provider of affordable housing in San Francisco, the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC), won their union with Local 29 (Region V) in October. About 330 employees working in more than 40 buildings — including janitors, accountants, desk clerks, maintenance workers, office staff, project managers, social workers and more — will now begin bargaining for a first contract.**

Major bargaining priorities include improving workplace safety, bolstering job security, raising pay to a livable wage and securing more manageable caseloads so workers there can better provide services for their tenants. “It was a huge relief to officially win our union,” said Alice Lee, a part-time desk clerk at TNDC since April 2024. “I have seen desk positions eliminated at two properties and serious workload increases for those remaining, not to mention an unacceptable increase in safety risks for tenants and staff at both.” Many staff members report being overworked. In some cases, social workers at the organization are responsible for more than 100 tenants at a time. “Historically, unions have helped change so much in workers’ lives for the better, even if it takes time and collaboration to make workplaces better, safer and places where we can come together as a community to empower those we serve,” said Gina Rivera, a social worker site supervisor who has worked at TNDC for two years. “I am very excited to be a part of this effort and know this will help develop relationships with other staff that I don’t know very well,” she continued. “For me, that is a win to help build community within the workplace because we have so much more power that way.” Bargaining is expected to begin soon.



Local 29 members at the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation celebrate their union victory.

# Unanimous Vote to Ratify Disney Contract with Local 174

Local 174 members (Region V) at Disney in Burbank, California, voted unanimously to ratify a successor agreement with the global entertainment company. The contract features a 14.5 percent wage increase over three years — a significant increase compared to previous contracts, which have typically averaged 9 percent. The contract covers about 105 members in an array of job roles, including accountants, researchers, cashiers, computer operators, payroll specialists, participations/residuals administrators, secretarial office staff, production department secretaries, customer service representatives, mail center staff, department clerks and data control clerks, across different departments and Disney productions. “I’m very excited about the gains this year in the contract and what it could mean for contracts in the future,” said Madi Morgan, a production department secretary who serves as a steward.

*The contract features a 14.5 percent wage increase over three years.*



## Local 277 Member Sworn in as Texas Labor Federation Secretary-Treasurer

Local 277 (Region IV) member Lorraine Montemayor was sworn in as secretary-treasurer of the Texas AFL-CIO in early December. Alongside new president Leonard Aguilar, their leadership marks the first time two Latinos will lead the state’s labor federation.

“I am here to empower rank-and-file members, as well as worker leaders, stewards, business agents and organizers to think of themselves as leaders and to see they can impart their vision into a bigger vision for the Texas AFL-CIO,” Montemayor said.

Before ascending to the federation’s No. 2 role, Montemayor served as the federation’s training and leadership development coordinator, where she became a Local 277 member. In that role, Montemayor spent five years training a new generation of union leaders in the Lone Star State.

Prior to her work at the Texas AFL-CIO, Montemayor worked as a researcher at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where she joined the Texas State Employees Union (TSEU-CWA Local 6186). She later accepted a full-time position as an organizer with the American Federation of Teachers Local 2260 in Dallas. From there, she grew to see how organizing, electoral work and political efforts intersect.

Montemayor says her major priorities as secretary-treasurer include creating infrastructure to streamline coordination within the federation, centering the needs of rank-and-file union members and expanding on the legacy of Rick Levy, who recently retired as the federation’s president.

“His legacy will always be building a Texas labor movement that is bigger, bolder and broader,” Montemayor said of Levy. “Looking forward, my vision is to put that into action.”



Local 277 member Lorraine Montemayor, the new secretary-treasurer of the Texas AFL-CIO, with President Leonard Aguilar. Photo courtesy of the Texas AFL-CIO

## Local 494 Members Celebrate 25 Years of Union Membership

Several UAW International Union employees represented by OPEIU Local 494 (Region VII) in Detroit, Michigan, are celebrating 25 years or more of service to OPEIU.

These hardworking members in the Motor City recently celebrated their milestone anniversaries at an event with UAW President Shawn Fain and Local 494 President Dana Soltis, Secretary-Treasurer Cheryl Ford, Vice President Tia Darden and Trustee Anthony Cardamone.

Congratulations to Mary Leake, Antoinette Troup, Kelly Tarpey, Roseanne Scott, Karen Unruh and Nova Schollenberger!



Congrats to Local 494 members celebrating 25 or more years of service!

## Working Women of the World, Unite!

OPEIU members joined more than 400 union women from across the country at the 23rd Biennial Convention of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) in San Diego to collaborate, strategize and build collective power around the issues that matter most in our workplaces and communities.

With the theme “Women of the World, Unite,” the convention showcased CLUW’s ongoing mission to amplify the voices of working women and strengthen the labor movement through education, activism and collective power.



To learn more about CLUW, visit [cluw.org](http://cluw.org) or scan the QR code.



At the CLUW Biennial Convention, left to right, are Local 2 member and CLUW Metropolitan D.C. Area President Chelsea Bland, Local 30 Executive Board Members Denise Valle and Jeannie Shim, Local 42 President and OPEIU Vice President Lisa Blake, Local 30 Trustee Sylvia McKenzie and Executive Board Member Tamua Newton, Local 277 Trustee Tonia Stonum and Local 30 member Catherine Chacon.



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 is 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 nonchargeable 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 nonchargeable 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 nonchargeable expenditures. In the past, approximately 34-40 percent of the International Union’s expenditures have gone toward these activities. The percentages of local union expenditures on nonchargeable activities have generally been higher.

As you consider whether to object, you should remember 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, 80 8th Ave., Suite 205, New York, N.Y. 10011, 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, 80 8th Ave., Suite 205, New York, N.Y. 10011. 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).

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