

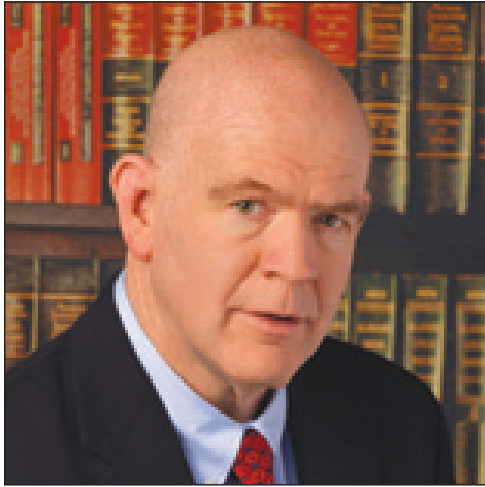
# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC ISSUE 542 | SPRING 2020



# The Year of the Nurse

**75**  
**OPEIU**  
1945 - 2020



## Striking for Things Most Americans Support

By Richard Lanigan  
President

Recently, nearly 50,000 autoworkers represented by the United Automobile Workers (UAW) ended their strike against General Motors (GM). It was the largest strike in the United States in many years.

There were three key issues in the autoworkers' strike. First, the union was negotiating to eliminate the company's rampant use of temporary employees. The union argued GM was labeling as temporary what was otherwise regular full-time work. The union held the position using the label "temporary" when referring to regular work allowed GM to pay some employees lower wages and benefits, in effect denying them the opportunity to start a career that would ultimately allow them to move into the middle class.

Most Americans favor full-time regular employment because it usually provides an opportunity for advancement, stability and more generous fringe benefits. While temporary work may always exist—and there will be some who prefer it or for whom it better fits their lifestyle—ongoing temporary work is different. Ongoing temporary work is not work that supports a temporary need of an employer, but instead the need and the work are constant. Ongoing temporary work raises a question about whether there should be more policy to encourage employers to use employees on a regular or permanent full-time basis, or whether the use of temporary employees should be discouraged where the work is ongoing.

Second, the union demanded GM produce more automobiles and trucks in the U.S. When an employer manufactures outside the country, it means less work done by American workers. With all the current talk about tariffs, trade wars and fighting to keep decent-paying jobs in the U.S., this is an important issue. Here again, U.S. tax policy after the 2017 tax cut supports U.S. companies that manufacture outside the country over those that manufacture domestically.

Lastly, GM insisted employees pay a larger share of their healthcare costs. The union asked why employees should be required to pay more for health care when the company is profitable and the country has already enacted a law making health care a right for all Americans.

Only a few years ago, GM received a bailout of taxpayers' money and wage and benefit concessions from the UAW, after which the company generated billions of dollars in profits. Following that, the 2017 tax cut reduced its corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent.

If Americans favor full-time regular work, health care as a function of employment and producing more goods in the U.S., why would American tax policy and accounting rules give

favorable treatment to companies that manufacture goods outside the U.S., especially if those goods are going to be marketed to American consumers?

In another recent strike, 25,000 teachers struck the Board of Education in Chicago, an equally strong show of solidarity. The Chicago Teachers Union negotiations broke down after the schools refused the union's demand

**These strikes show that more than 75,000 people risked their jobs, suffered a loss of pay and went to the picket lines to address matters of policy affecting the entire country.**

to provide a nurse in each school. Parents overwhelmingly supported the teachers on this issue of student safety. Whether to provide nurses in schools is a question of policy.

These strikes show that more than 75,000 people risked their jobs, suffered a loss of pay and went to the picket lines to address matters of policy affecting the entire country. Why would people have to go on strike to accomplish goals that a majority of Americans support and can be easily resolved with legislation? ■

## Support the PRO Act for Worker Power

**House Passes One of Most Significant Labor Law Reforms in U.S. History. Now What?**

Your help is needed to see passage of one of the most significant labor law reforms in U.S. history; legislation that will put power in the hands of union members and reverse decades of legislation intended to destroy unions.

In early February, the House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, and we need your help to push the Senate to do the right thing and make this into law. Contact Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and tell him to bring this bill to the floor for a vote, and urge your senators to vote yes on the PRO Act!

First, this pro-worker legislation deserves to be placed in context to understand why reforming American labor law is so vital to reversing the decades-long trend of rising inequality and stagnating wages.

Research suggests nearly half of Americans would join a labor union today if they had the opportunity. But as millions of union members know, that opportunity is often blocked entirely by employers who routinely deploy illegal, union-busting tactics and strategies with few, if any, penalties for doing so.

### So, what does the bill do?

We'll break the bill down to explain how it works, using language from the bill itself and an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

### Reign in Employers' Illegal Activity

More than half of union organizing campaigns are met with illegal resistance from employers, with few or no penalties for breaking the law. The PRO Act remedies this by establishing significant penalties for employers, in the form of back pay and damage remedies, regardless of their employees' immigration status.

The bill would also require the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to go to court to get an injunction to immediately reinstate workers who the Board believes were illegally retaliated against. "With this reform," writes EPI researchers, "workers won't be out of a job and a paycheck while their case works its way through the system."

Finally, if enacted, the bill would prohibit employers from forcing employees to waive

their right to class action lawsuits as a condition of employment—an increasingly sinister strategy employers use to insulate themselves from the consequences of their actions.

### Streamline Elections

The longer an employer delays an NLRB election—often by needlessly questioning workers' voting eligibility and chipping away at the size of the proposed bargaining unit—the more time they have to conduct one-on-one captive audience meetings and threaten workers' livelihoods. The PRO Act prohibits companies from forcing workers into mandatory anti-union meetings, taking away one of the tools employers use most to dissuade employees from voting for union representation.



Local 8 members meet with Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), third from left, to lobby for passage of the PRO Act.

Under the bill, employers interfering with the election process would then empower the NLRB to require the employer bargain in good faith "if it had support of a majority of workers prior to the election," EPI writes. The PRO Act would also reinstate an Obama-era rule requiring employers to disclose the names of and payments to union-busting firms they hire to squash the union effort.

### End "Right-to-Work" and Bargain in Good Faith

Perhaps the strongest feature of the bill is its provision to effectively end "right-to-work" laws adopted in 27 states where workers have been stripped of their power. So-called "right-to-work" provisions allow employers to divide-and-conquer its unionized workforce by allowing "free riders"—those who benefit from the security of a collective bargaining agreement—to avoid paying their fair share, despite earning on average 22 percent more than a worker without a union contract.

If you voted to join a union today, there's a 1 in 2 chance your employer will drag out the process, leaving you and your co-workers without a collective bargaining agreement by this time next year. Employers artificially lengthen the negotiation process, EPI notes, to avoid reaching agreement, creating a "discouraging situation for workers" by allowing employers to "foster a sense of futility in the process."

*Continued on page 4*

## Support the PRO Act for Worker Power

Continued from page 3

To balance the scale, the PRO Act creates a new process: first, the NLRB will require mediation when the process has stalled. Then, if necessary, it mandates binding arbitration to secure a first contract.

### Strike Protections

The PRO Act would end the right of employers to permanently replace workers on strike, making the right to strike an even more potent tool for working people. It also repeals the 1947 prohibition on secondary strikes, which would allow employees of a different employer to engage in a solidarity strike to pressure another employer to meet its striking workers' demands.

### Ending Misclassification

The remaining provisions of the law confront the rapidly evolving nature of work and workers in the U.S. As the "gig economy" has proliferated, and employers are as keen as ever to prevent workers from winning a collective bargaining agreement, the current legal definitions of "independent contractor" and "supervisor" have been intentionally stretched by employers seeking to deprive

employees of their rights (independent contractors and supervisors are not currently protected under federal labor law). The bill would codify more concrete definitions of these terms, thus giving more working people the right to form a union of their choosing.

Finally, the bill would provide clarity on the status of workers with more than one employer, recognizing that one job simply isn't enough for many working people, who often need to contract out their labor, take temporary jobs to make ends meet, or work for a franchised location of a larger company, e.g. McDonald's.

### What if it doesn't pass the Senate?

Even if the bill doesn't pass in the corporate-dominated halls of the Senate, its passage in the House is still historically significant and strategically relevant for anyone invested in the well-being of working people.

The weakening of working people's power is a concerted strategy undertaken by

corporations, the management class and their anti-worker conspirators in government. The bill's aims are clear: by strengthening labor unions and union members' bargaining leverage, working people will have the opportunity to reverse the wage stagnation and power imbalance that has kept more Americans than ever in a state of constant precarity, despite working longer hours and producing more than ever.

That's why it's so important that all of us reach out to our senators and urge action on the PRO Act. The bill's passage in the House highlights issues within our labor relations system, and our economy as a whole, that simply must be addressed if we have any hope of avoiding the perils of a remarkably similar economic situation — the lead-up to the Great Depression. That economic crisis prompted passage of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 which, in no uncertain terms, created the worker-friendly economy Americans had been longing for.

**On the Cover:** It's the Year of the Nurse, and OPEIU is celebrating our hardworking OPEIU nurses. Pictured left to right are Eric Mendonca, Brandon Chang and Courtney Martin, registered nurses at The Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and proud members of the Hawai'i Nurses' Association/OPEIU Local 50. See page 11 for more about our champion nurses and healthcare professionals.

## Opioid Abuse Hits Working-Class Families Especially Hard

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported opioid abuse is now responsible for two-thirds of all drug overdose deaths in the United States.

The intensification of the crisis — spurred by a combination of societal, economic and structural factors — is disrupting and uprooting working-class communities in all 50 states. But how did we get here?

Opioids are often prescribed to counteract chronic pain, which they do by reducing or blocking entirely the sending of pain messages to the brain. Although opioid addictions afflict every segment of U.S. society, research from the *American Journal of Public Health* suggests the brunt of the crisis is being borne by working-class communities, where the economy is dominated by blue-collar jobs, such as construction, mining, factory work, warehouse work and military service, with elevated physical hazards.

"When sustained over years," the authors wrote, "on-the-job injuries can give rise to chronically painful conditions, potentially resulting in a downward spiral of disability and poverty. Although opioid analgesics may allow those with otherwise debilitating injuries to maintain employment, individuals in manual labor occupations appear to be at increased risk for nonmedical use."

The crisis, they posited, "is fundamentally fueled by economic and social upheaval." That can explain why, in part, post-industrial communities in states like Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio are seeing the most significant increases in opioid-related deaths.

As factories closed and coal mines shuttered, left-behind employees — who, for decades, conducted back-breaking labor in exchange for decent wages and benefits — were now forced to confront life-altering physical ailments as they lost their jobs, the value of their homes plummeted and their communities were left in shambles. When the coal jobs went away, said one participant in a Bucknell study on the crisis, families fractured: "Some people started drinking heavily and abusing their children — who then went on to be traumatized themselves and sought the relief of OxyContin."

In November, researchers at the National Bureau of Economic Research published part of an ongoing study on the origins of the opioid crisis. In that paper, the authors revealed what they believe to be the precursor to today's epidemic: the introduction of OxyContin to American markets in 1999. The drug's producer, Purdue Pharma, strategically marketed its product where it was easier to prescribe. The authors said business strategy can "explain a substantial share of overdose deaths over the last two decades."

The crisis is compounded by the structure of the American economy and its for-profit healthcare system, which incentivizes short-term solutions to long-term problems. Though the average nonunion line worker with chronic back pain may need physical therapy and several weeks away from the factory floor for treatment, the pressure to provide for one's family paired with the ever-looming threat of losing one's job incentivizes a quick solution. Rather than treating the cause of the pain in the long-term, opioids manage it in the short-term, paralleling the short-term machinations of our economy.

Forty-six people die each day from overdoses involving prescription opioids, accounting for 35 percent of all opioid overdose deaths in the U.S. Since OxyContin was introduced, almost 400,000 Americans — more than the population of Cleveland — have died from prescription opioids.

Until we make significant changes to the way all working people are protected from serious injuries on the job, or the way our healthcare industry prioritizes short-term solutions and short-term profits over the sustainable long-term care working people deserve, there is good reason to expect more dangerous "solutions" from Big Pharma.

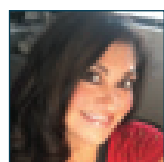
**Although opioid addictions afflict every segment of U.S. society ... the brunt of the crisis is being borne by working-class communities.**



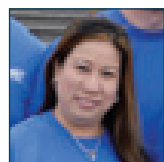
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## Apply Now for 2020 OPEIU Scholarships

Applications are now being accepted for the 2020 OPEIU educational scholarships, and all eligible members and their families are encouraged to apply. The deadline is April 30.

Information and applications can be found at [opeiu.org](http://opeiu.org) under the Member Resources tab, as well as on the OPEIU app, which is available for free download for iPhones at the App Store and for Android devices at 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 10 scholarships of up to \$3,250 for OPEIU members or associate members who are pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in labor studies, industrial relations and union leadership and administration. And the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Scholarship Fund offers 20 teens the chance to learn about the labor movement while enjoying the great outdoors.

Full details, rules and applications are available at [opeiu.org](http://opeiu.org) under the Member Resources tab. Apply today.

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### Attention OPEIU Teens!

Each year, OPEIU offers scholarships to attend summer camp for 20 children, ages 13 to 16, of OPEIU members or associate members. This year, the one-week camp will be held July 14-19 at the University of Missouri in Columbia and will teach how unions protect the interests of working people, all while providing fun summer activities, such as swimming, canoeing and volleyball. It's a great opportunity to make new friends and have some fun in the sun.

**OPEIU SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE**

**Your Union Can Help You Pay for College**

**APPLY BY APRIL 30**

## Earn Your Degree for Free — Only Through Your Union

Your union provides several options to further your and your family's education, for little or no cost at all to you.

Through **OPEIU's Free College program**, members and their families can earn their associate degree or certificates in a number of areas of study COMPLETELY FREE online through Eastern Gateway Community College in Ohio. Members in good standing, their children, stepchildren, grandchildren, spouses, domestic partners, financial dependents, parents, siblings, and sons- and daughters-in-law are all eligible.

Members are also taking advantage of the new **OPEIU Low-Cost Degree program** introduced in December, which enables members in good standing and their families to obtain their bachelor's degree at a very low cost.

OPEIU has partnered with Central State University, a public college near Dayton, Ohio, to bring members and their families an online bachelor's degree in business administration or teacher education (Pre-K to 5th grade) for no more than \$4,500 out-of-pocket per year for a full-time student. Often the costs are significantly less. These costs include all tuition, e-textbooks and other fees. Family members do not need to be financial dependents or living with the member to be eligible. An associate degree or 60 credit hours in the intended major is required to enroll.

Imagine what you can achieve with the **OPEIU Free College program**. Find out more by visiting [freecollege.opeiu.org](http://freecollege.opeiu.org).

### Free College Start Dates

- Summer: June 1
- Fall 1: Aug. 17
- Fall 2: Oct. 12

### Low-Cost Degree Start Dates

- Summer: May 18
- Fall 1: Aug. 17
- Fall 2: Oct. 5

To date, OPEIU members have saved more than \$4,434,000 in tuition, e-books and other fees through the OPEIU Free College program.

## Local 251 Member Earns Free College Degree

Jolene Tapia, a member of Local 251 and an administrative assistant at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, has earned her associate degree in business management through the OPEIU Free College program. "I want to personally thank the union for giving me the opportunity to further my education," said Tapia. "It was a great experience."

Congratulations to Sister Tapia and the thousands of OPEIU members who have graduated or are pursuing their degree through the OPEIU higher education programs.



Local 251 member Jolene Tapia has earned her associate degree through OPEIU's Free College program.

# Get to Know the Many Benefits of OPEIU Membership

As a member of OPEIU, you are entitled to a host of valuable benefits at no cost to you and your family. All are provided to you free of charge by your union, including:

- \$2,000 Death Benefit
- \$2,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit
- Identity Protection
- Student Debt Reduction
- Free College (associate degree)
- Low-Cost Degree (bachelor's degree)
- Towing/Service Calls
- Union Privilege
- As well as a host of benefits for Canadian members



Visit [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) and click the Member Resources tab for more information about all your free OPEIU membership benefits.

## Union Plus Auto Buying Service Captivates OPEIU Hypnotherapist



Local 472 member Dave Guy and his new Ford Expedition, which he purchased with support of the Union Plus Auto Buying Service.

Dave Guy wasn't thinking about buying a new car. His 2012 Chevrolet Tahoe had some miles on it, but it still ran, and it was a good car for where he lives—8,000 feet up in the mountains of Southwest Colorado.

Guy is a member of Local 472 based in California. He's a semi-retired licensed professional counselor and hypnotherapist and a pastoral counselor at his church.

When he received an email from Union Plus encouraging members to buy union-made cars, he started to reassess his Tahoe.

Guy contacted the Union Plus Auto Buying Service to see if there were any dealerships nearby that offered the union discount. A friend who works at a nearby Ford dealership encouraged him to come in and sit in a new Ford Expedition. Guy's wife, Jenny, proclaimed it "a sweet ride," and today Guy is the proud owner of a new Ford Expedition.

The Union Plus Auto Buying Service, administered by TrueCar, a leading price comparison service, helps union members and their families find the right new or used car or truck at a great price and offers additional savings and benefits. With the Auto Buying Service, union members save an average of \$3,402 off MSRP\* on new cars. And, union members receive a \$100 rebate directly from Union Plus if they purchase a union-made car through TrueCar.

"Union Plus could have just said, 'We are union, so buy union' or, 'Thanks for supporting unions.' But they said, 'For supporting unions, we'll give you a rebate of \$100,'" Guy said.

Overall, buying a new car with the support of Union Plus "was a grand experience," he said.

To learn more about the Union Plus Auto Buying Service, visit [unionplus.org/autobuying](https://unionplus.org/autobuying).

*\*Between 7/1/18 and 9/30/18, the average estimated savings off MSRP presented by TrueCar Certified Dealers in TrueCar's Union Plus Auto Buying Service, based on users who received in-stock price offers and who TrueCar identified as purchasing a new vehicle of the same make and model as one of the in-stock price offers from a Certified Dealer as of 10/31/18, was \$3,402. Your actual savings may vary based on multiple factors, including the vehicle you select, region, dealer and applicable vehicle specific manufacturer incentives, which are subject to change. The MSRP is determined by the manufacturer and may not reflect the price at which vehicles are generally sold in the dealer's trade area as not all vehicles are sold at MSRP. Each dealer sets its own pricing.*

## New Apprentice Organizer Kelly Russo Works for Positive Change in the Workplace



Local 2 Apprentice Organizer Kelly Russo.

Kelly Russo didn't grow up in a union family or a union-friendly environment, but after accepting a position at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a human rights organization in Washington, D.C., she quickly came to understand that workers' rights are indeed fundamental human rights.

A native of Atlanta with a bachelor's degree in international affairs from the University of Georgia earned in 2017, Russo joined several colleagues at NED to organize with Local 2. After winning an NLRB election with 87 percent support, she decided to take her passion for labor full time by joining Local 2 as its newest apprentice organizer.

"I've long been frustrated by the poor employment policies and wages seen across the majority of nonprofits in the D.C. area," said Russo. "Nonprofit workers deserve a living wage and security, rather than policies that are constantly in flux. After seeing firsthand how the unionization campaign empowered my colleagues at NED, I wanted to help give other workers the same sense of agency and power. I am very excited to use what I learned throughout our campaign to help others make positive change in their workplaces."

## Remembering PHPA Founder Butch Grafton

OPEIU celebrates the many contributions of Charles "Butch" Grafton, former president and co-founder of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association (PHPA), the precursor to today's OPEIU Aviation Council, who has died at the age of 70.

Grafton was a veteran of the Vietnam War where he earned several awards, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. After many years of military service, he served for 30 years as a contract instrument flight instructor at Fort Rucker in Alabama, retiring in 2018. A man of many talents, he also started and ran a successful canoe rental business for 20 years.

In 2000, Grafton began work to form the OPEIU-affiliated PHPA, which was launched in 2002, bringing the benefits of unionization to helicopter pilots for the first time. Working with OPEIU, PHPA was responsible for raising wages, benefits and safety standards in the industry. Grafton was elected as its first president, a position he held for many years until his retirement.

Grafton was part of a very large extended family, and he and his wife, Sharron, hosted countless charity, community and family events at their home. He was known for his high intellect and gritty wit and loved to share his wealth of knowledge with everyone to make the world a better, more equitable place, as was evidenced by his deft leadership of the helicopter pilots association.

Grafton is survived by his wife, Sharron Tharp Grafton; his son, Will Grafton and his wife, Michelle; and granddaughters Alexandra Grafton and Brooklyn Gouge. OPEIU extends its deepest condolences to his family, and its sincere gratitude for his work to further the lives and careers of unionized helicopter pilots throughout the world.



Butch Grafton

## THE YEAR OF THE NURSE

# Celebrating OPEIU's Dedicated Nurses



Local 40 nurses from Macomb Township, Michigan, lobby on Capitol Hill for safe nurse-to-patient ratios. Left to right are Local 40 President Jeff Morawski, Treasurer Joanne Czeiszperger, Trustee Marty VanDerHeyden, Ascension Providence Rochester-RN Unit Vice President Jo Walker, Recording Secretary Joe Smithson, and McLaren Macomb-RN Unit Vice President Dina Carlisle. All are registered nurses.

## Cover Story

# It's the Year of the Nurse, and OPEIU Has a Lot to Celebrate

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the “Year of the Nurse and Midwife,” in honor of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, considered the founder of modern nursing.

This recognition is especially important now, as we all depend even more on our nursing and healthcare professionals during the global coronavirus pandemic.

OPEIU represents more than 14,000 nurses and other healthcare professionals in local unions across the United States. Each day, these hardworking women and men devote themselves to the needs of their patients, communities and their union.

Dedicated and selfless, OPEIU nurses work long hours in hospitals and clinics throughout the country, but still find time to advocate on behalf of their patients and their co-workers and to make their union a strong and effective force in the workplace.

They also spend their limited free time in many charitable endeavors, connecting with their communities through food and clothing drives and, in all things, showing they care about their neighbors. They also aren't afraid to stand up and take collective action when their union and their rights at work are being challenged.

OPEIU is proud to recognize and celebrate our nurses and healthcare professionals who provide the highest standard of patient care each and every day. Every year is the year of the nurse at OPEIU!

**“A union nurse is an empowered nurse. Having a voice and sense of security, knowing someone is behind you.”**

– Mervin Henson, RN, Local 50



Local 30 OB-GYN outpatient staff in San Diego support their co-worker Jen Parenteau, grey shirt, who later passed away after a long battle with cancer.

**“My reason for becoming a nurse is the same reason I decided to get active in the labor movement; helping people feel better and live better lives is the common goal of our profession, but it is also the building block of our great union, OPEIU.”**

– Jeff Morawski, RN, Local 40 president



Florida Nurses Association/OPEIU Local 713 nurses appear on a local radio program to discuss nurse burnout and suicide, which occur at higher rates among nurses than in the general population.

**“Being a nurse allows me to do what I do best – care for others. I cannot imagine myself having another job that could bring me such joy. And being an OPEIU nurse allows me security in that I know someone has my back. Something larger than myself is looking out for me.”**

– Lora Crosswhite, RN-BC, BSN, Local 112 director



GSAF/OPEIU Local 100 members at the Broward Addiction Recovery Center in Fort Lauderdale, left to right, are registered nurses German Withler, Desiree Upshaw, Claris Frost and behavior health clinicians Beatriz Felton and Tracy Myers.



OPEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania Local 112 nurse practitioner Elizabeth Hoy provides medical treatment following a hurricane in Haiti.



Hawai'i Nurses' Association/OPEIU Local 50 healthcare workers came out in force during contract negotiations at Straub Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The nurses took to the streets for three weeks in an informational picket, rain or shine, to bring attention to an outdated and unfair attendance policy forcing employees to come to work sick or face discipline, jeopardizing patient safety. Their solidarity paid off with the ratification of a new contract that calls for the creation of a work group representing union members and non-bargaining employees to work together to recommend changes to the attendance policy. “The solidarity demonstrated by Local 50's members at Straub was inspiring,” said International Vice President and Local 50 President Dan Ross, RN. “They turned out every day for three weeks, rain or shine, showing that collective action can bring big improvements to the workplace and protect patient safety.”

**“Being an OPEIU nurse has given me the opportunity to advocate for my patients and my colleagues. I am proud to say my work is a better place because I am a member of a union hospital. OPEIU has helped me and my fellow nurses improve our working conditions and be able to fight for what is right and just for our patients.”**

– Joanne Czeiszperger, RN, BSN, Local 40 treasurer

**“Being a nurse allows me to give my time to make someone feel better. Just to let them know someone cares.”**

– Lenore Joyce, RN, BSN, Local 112



Representing 439 years of nursing experience, nurses at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Hazleton in Pennsylvania and members of OPEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania Local 112.

## Nurses Most Trusted Profession for 18th Year!

For an unprecedented 18 years in a row, nursing tops the list of the country's most trusted professions, rating highest in honesty and ethics.

Eighty-five percent of adults in a recent Gallup poll say nurses' honesty and ethical standards are “very high” or “high,” up slightly from 84 percent in 2018. Compare that to people's trust in the honesty and ethical standards of members of Congress, which hovers at a dismal 12 percent.

## LOCAL UNION NEWS



*In an historic win, employees at Kickstarter, one of the world's largest crowdfunding platforms, voted to affiliate with OPEIU.*

## Kickstarter Employees Join OPEIU to Become One of First Tech Unions in History

In a groundbreaking win for OPEIU, 85 engineers, directors, analysts, designers, coordinators, customer support specialists and others at the crowdfunding company Kickstarter voted to affiliate with Local 153 in New York, becoming one of the first unions for tech workers in U.S. history.

The workplace issues that more than one year ago spurred the creation of the new union's organizing committee, known as Kickstarter United (KSRU), are identical to the issues resonating with professionals throughout the unorganized tech industry. Kickstarter employees felt their employer, a public benefit corporation, should live up to the foundational progressive values it espouses by ensuring trust and transparency from management, guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, implementing more inclusive hiring practices and giving employees a voice in the decision-making process.

"We believe unionizing provides a path toward furthering all of our goals," said Oriana Leckert, a KSRU spokesperson who is a senior journalism outreach lead at the company. "It was truly an honor to get to have deep conversations with so many of my colleagues around these issues. Utilizing our collective power to improve our workplace and our professional lives will increase Kickstarter's ability to have a radical, positive impact on society by allowing us all to advocate for workers' rights, which is a core pillar of the fight against inequality."

After forming an initial organizing committee, KSRU chose to partner with Local 153 because of the New York-based local union's long history of representing an array of professionals across industry lines, and its commitment to bringing economic justice to the workplace and social justice to communities. Though Kickstarter's initial response to the organizing drive was disappointing, management ultimately refrained from any interference with the NLRB election process, ensuring employees were free to draw their own conclusions on the question of union membership.

"The tech sector represents a new frontier for union organizing, and OPEIU is excited to represent one of the first tech groups to successfully win collective bargaining rights and to be part of the labor movement's efforts to improve the livelihoods of tech employees everywhere," said Richard Lanigan, OPEIU president and Local 153 business manager.

Local 153 now will support the new members as they work to create an inclusive and transparent process to determine the employees' bargaining proposals and priorities. Both OPEIU and KSRU members are excited to work together with Kickstarter management to negotiate a mutually beneficial contract, and to use the lessons learned during both organizing and bargaining campaigns to serve as a foundational roadmap for tech worker organizing in the future.

"Technical workers in the industry are put on a pedestal until they are no longer necessary, but every worker at a company makes it what it is — from your community outreach people, to your customer support people, to the people running your facilities," said Dannel Jurado, a Kickstarter senior software engineer. "I'm overjoyed by this result. There's a long road ahead of us, but it's a first step to the sustainable future in tech that I and so many others want to see."

"We hope to inspire all workers everywhere to fight for what they deserve: a healthy and safe workplace, both mentally and physically," added Camilla Zhang, a Kickstarter comics outreach lead.



## Local 100 Member Reflects on Mother's Groundbreaking Legacy



Source: Florida State Archives

In a 1959 photo, Irvana Prymus escorts her children to the Orchard Villa School in Miami-Dade County, just steps away from the family home. Her efforts helped lead to the integration of public schools in Florida.

Modern histories of the civil rights movements of the 1950s and '60s frequently place figures like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks front-and-center, while neglecting the hundreds of thousands of everyday people who turned the fight for civil rights into full-blown movements for civil rights.

By resisting, protesting and boycotting vestiges of white supremacy, black Americans across the nation slowly uprooted many of the discriminatory structures that prevented, and continue to prevent, black Americans from realizing the relative prosperity enjoyed by their white counterparts. Despite playing an integral

role, most of the activists who made up the movement remain historically anonymous, deemed too obscure, insignificant or irrelevant to warrant their own histories.

You've probably never heard of Irvana Prymus, or the remarkable steps she took to integrate public schools in Florida. But her children, including GSAF/OPEIU Local 100 Executive Board member Robert Prymus Jr., are committed to preserving their mother's radical legacy.

"Every year I look forward to Black History Month for it to come up on the news," Robert said in an interview with *White Collar*, "but it never does."

Irvana, an indigenous woman who passed away a decade ago, was a nurse who committed her professional life to caring for others in the Miami area; she committed her personal life to ensuring her children, whose father was black, would not needlessly suffer under a Jim Crow regime designed to denigrate the humanity of black Americans.

Irvana enrolled Robert's two sisters at the Orchard Villa School in Miami-Dade County in 1959. School administrators were unaware they had enrolled black students until journalists showed up, according to a Fox 13 Tampa Bay recent report. The principal sent the pair home on their first day, but Irvana persisted.

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In between the responsibilities of caring for her children and earning a living working 12-hour shifts at a local hospital, she took the case to court and won, pulverizing the barrier constructed to keep white schools "separate but equal," and winning her children the right to attend the school Robert recalls could be seen from the front door of the family home. But she didn't stop there. Taking on one unjust restriction after another, she broke down archaic barriers to equality for black Floridians: public pools, movie theaters and public beaches were integrated because of Irvana.

"She did all those things to ensure I could go to those types of places," Robert said. "She was a pioneer, but as a kid, you don't really know — it's just your mom." Though Robert wasn't born until 1962 — around the time Irvana won black Floridians the right to use public pools in the sweltering Florida heat — the lessons that've trickled down inform his work with OPEIU today.

"I like helping people and making sure things are right. Without the unions, a lot of the rights we have as employees wouldn't be there," he said. "She fought to make sure everybody had their rights, and that their rights were kept. The same thing happened with me."

Given the importance of highlighting histories of black Americans often kept out of the spotlight, Robert, a senior systems analyst programmer for the Miami-Dade Aviation Department, had some sage insights on the importance of honoring activists like his mother.

"If you forget your past," he said, "you lose your future. These things reoccur, and if you don't remember where you came from, things will get lost in the future."

"History tends to repeat itself. Hopefully that doesn't occur, but it's a struggle and a fight every day."

## AFL-CIO's King Conference Focuses on Voting Rights

Faced with the rising right-wing onslaught against women, migrants and people of color, unionists at the AFL-CIO's annual Martin Luther King Civil and Human Rights Conference spent two days in Washington, D.C. focusing on reclaiming voting rights, battling voter suppression and educating and empowering workers to ensure they can vote this year — and then getting them to do so.

"Dr. King's fight, the civil rights fight, our fight was for goals big and great: justice, jobs, dignity and a union," AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said in opening the conference. "They're still our fights." But these hard-fought gains are in peril.

The conference's theme, Give Us the Ballot, stressed how the right to vote and unfettered access to voting brings political and economic power in its wake — and how important it is that working people vote for the candidate who will best protect their interests.

Expanding voting rights is critical this year for working people, people of color, women and other voters — including, one speaker said, the white working class — who have been left behind. And the way to reach all those voters is to appeal to them as working people.

"Nothing else in democracy makes the powerless so powerful," Trumka noted. Voting rights foes fight so hard to bar people from the polls "because they're afraid of us."



International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Myra Hepburn and Local 153 Executive Board Member Anthony Walters at the AFL-CIO's 2020 Martin Luther King Civil and Human Rights Conference in Washington, D.C.

## OPEIU Mourns Loss of Local 100's Richard Cutshaw

OPEIU is shocked and deeply saddened by the death of Richard "Rick" Cutshaw, a longtime field representative with GSAF/OPEIU Local 100 in Miramar, Florida.

Cutshaw was an innocent bystander tragically killed in the crossfire between police and jewelry store robbers who had hijacked a UPS truck.

Cutshaw dedicated his entire career to the labor movement, serving with Local 100 for the past 18 years where he represented more than 2,500 Miramar government supervisory employees in Broward County, Naples, Port St. Lucie, Miami-Dade and at Jackson Memorial Hospital. Previously, he worked for more than 30 years with UFCW Local 1459 in Massachusetts.

"Rick was a true professional who cared deeply about the working people

he represented," said International Vice President and Local 100 President Greg Blackman. "He always had a smile on his face and a quick-witted barb to lighten the mood in a particularly stressful situation.

"He took on each members' case as a crusade for justice that he could ill afford to lose," continued Blackman. "His listening skills were unparalleled as he spent whatever time necessary to develop the best case possible for our members' benefit.

"The loss of such a vibrant, knowledgeable labor representative is not just a loss for us, but for the entire labor movement. He will be deeply missed," Blackman said.

OPEIU extends its deepest condolences to Brother Cutshaw's family, which includes five brothers and sisters and his 99-year-old mother.



*A plaque dedicated by Local 100 to Richard "Rick" Cutshaw, honoring his memory and commemorating his nearly 20 years of service to the members.*

## MAGE's Wimbush Makes Strides on Michigan Diversity Council

It has been about one year since the Michigan Association of Governmental Employees (MAGE)/OPEIU Local 2002 advocated for the establishment of a workgroup to address the lack of people of color in higher-level positions at the Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) in Michigan, particularly troubling considering a disproportionate number of minorities serve at the department's lower levels, reports the local.

MAGE recommended Vice President Brant Wimbush serve on the committee. He's now a team leader working to ensure equity and inclusion, and to help eliminate systematic biases at all levels of the department. Wimbush was recently honored for conducting "the most trailblazing diversity, equity and inclusion work," by the MDHHS.

"MDHHS should certainly have more people of color serving in senior management and executive positions, and we are proud to have Brant intimately involved in this important effort," said MAGE President Alan Quattrin.



*MAGE/OPEIU Local 2002 Vice President Brant Wimbush.*

A force behind the initial establishment of this effort, MAGE credits the department for taking it seriously and allocating the time, money and resources necessary for its success.

"MDHHS Director Robert Gordon and Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer should be proud of the progress being made in this department," said John DeTizio, MAGE labor relations director. "The positive effect that initiatives like this have on the morale of lower level managers is pervasive and lasting."

## Local 375 Elects New Executive Board

Local 375, the Cincinnati Professional Ushers, has elected a new executive board. The following were elected to three-year terms commencing Jan. 16: President Dr. Andy Curran, Vice President Mel Roedel, Secretary-Treasurer Mike Crawford, Recording Secretary Bill Murphy, Sergeant-at-Arms Darrell Breen, Trustee Tom Hoppenjans and Stewards Bev Hager, Bill Emeigh, Wayne McClure and Ron Kaiser.

Local 375 members work at sports and entertainment events in Cincinnati, including the Great American Ballpark, the home of the Cincinnati Reds, and Paul Brown Stadium, where the Cincinnati Bengals play. They also work at Heritage Bank Center, the home of the Cincinnati Cyclones and a variety of entertainment events including concerts and stage productions.

## Local 129 President Sherry Patton Retires



*Sherry Patton*

Sherry Patton, who long served as president of Local 129 in Lake Jackson, Texas, has announced her retirement, saying in a note to her membership "it has been a great honor to serve as president for almost 20 years.

"These years have given me a strong feeling of the need for unity within the labor movement and the necessity for a strong, vibrant and growing union membership," continued Patton. "[The local membership] entrusted me to build a respect for Local 129 with our employers, and by my side all the while was an amazing executive board, who worked toward this goal. It is only through this unity that labor will obtain success. We must remain united!"

Patton also served for five years as Local 129 secretary-treasurer and as a trustee for many years before being elected president. OPEIU extends its sincerest wishes for a long and healthy retirement.

## Local 101 Wins Election at Cooper City

Public sector employees of Cooper City in South Florida have voted to join the General Association of Miramar Employees (GAME)/OPEIU Local 101 in Miramar, Florida.

"What an incredible day," said David Niles, a utilities mechanic for 14 years. "We now have a strong union and a chance for a better life."

"We're not one voice now, but a voice of many," added Isandall Vargas, a public works equipment operator, also for 14 years. "We feel so much more secure now that we have a union."

The employees of the public works, utilities and recreation departments unionized to gain better protection for their benefits, recognition of seniority and a fair scheduling and promotion process. Local 101 President Jeremiah "Jay" Edmond and the local's executive board worked diligently to secure this organizing victory, which resulted in a vote of 48-2.

"We needed a change to improve our working conditions, and we're now heading in the right direction," said Jessie Rangel, a utility worker for 15 years.

"The employees of Cooper City have spoken loud and clear. They want to be part of our union family at GAME/OPEIU Local 101," said Edmond. "We can't wait to get to the bargaining table with our new members at Cooper City to fight for a strong voice at work." James Pittelli, a utilities electrician for the past year, agreed. "Unions are so important to protect our benefits. Together we are now so much stronger," he said.



*Cooper City employees voted to join Local 101 in Miramar, Florida.*

## Local 153 Teachers Win New Contracts

The Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT), members of Local 153 in New York, have won two first contracts with recently organized faculty at LaSalle Academy and John S. Burke Catholic High School.

"We welcome the faculties of these two excellent schools and will work hard to represent them, as we do with all our members, including the 2,500 teachers in the Archdiocese of New York who we reached a new agreement for in 2019," said FCT President Julia Pignataro. Negotiations for that master agreement were difficult and lasted more than a year. Facing a number of concessionary demands, the FCT battled hard and was able to secure a contract that brought with it wage increases and other improvements. The four-year agreement, which is retroactive to Sept. 1, 2018, also included paid family leave, increases in lump sum bonuses, increases in tuition assistance for the teachers' children and maintained the current pension benefits.

"We had a good team working to get this contract, our members gave their support and OPEIU was with us every step of the way. We are extremely grateful for our affiliation with Local 153," Pignataro said. The members stood strong, attending rallies and demonstrations throughout the year, all while working without a contract. "The members remained determined and we were willing to negotiate for as long as we needed to defeat those giveback demands, obtain raises in wages ... win other improvements and preserve our pensions as well," she added.



*FCT/OPEIU Local 153 were able to beat back demands by the Archdiocese of New York to lower teachers' pensions.*



# Everyday Savings



Save every day with union member-only discounts on everything from fashion and beauty to electronics and everyday household items. And whether it's date night or a fun family night out, enjoy delicious, union family discounts at select restaurants.

Find out more about this and other great Union Plus programs by visiting [unionplus.org](http://unionplus.org).

Learn more at [unionplus.org](http://unionplus.org)



## Local 12 Solidarity Brings Contracts with School Board



It was standing room only for the School District 622 meeting. Local 12 members, including President Terrie Bares, pictured front, joined together in solidarity to fight back against the school district's unfair contract offer.

Members of Local 12 in Roseville, Minnesota, employed by the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District 622, stood together and fought back attempts to weaken their contracts. The effort paid off, as the union members have ratified two new agreements for the clerical unit and the educational assistants and nurses unit that include significant wage and healthcare improvements.

After several bargaining sessions, the school board presented its so-called best and final offer. So, Local 12 members decided to go

after what they deserved, filling to capacity a school board meeting and ensuring their demands were heard firsthand.

They also packed the room with other union supporters from the district, including members of Education Minnesota, Service Employees Local 284 and Operating Engineers Local 70.

"This was true solidarity," said Local 12 President Terrie Bares. "The district told us they had no more money on the table for our members, so we showed up at the board meeting in big numbers to demand better. These hardworking people take care of our kids, yet the district refuses to take care of them

and offered what was essentially a pay cut."

Cathy DeGlusti, an elementary nurse, told the school board about the important work that Local 12 members do for the district, taking on more and more responsibility but still having to fight for annual raises they deserve.

"It saddens me," DeGlusti said. "We all work very hard at taking care of the students. We care about their well-being in every aspect of their lives."

The show of force made all the difference, and at the next bargaining meeting an agreement was reached. "The district also agreed to move everyone in the clerical unit up to \$15 an hour, which was one of our demands going into bargaining," said Local 12 Representative Jim Niland.

"The big thing I've learned from this experience is something we're always trying to teach our students," Steward Kelly Riemenschneider told St. Paul's *The Union Advocate*. "We want them to be as independent as they can be, to advocate for themselves. Well, if I'm teaching that, why am I not taking that advice for myself?"

"So that's what we did, and it was a really good experience."

## Local 12 Members Learn About OPEIU Identity Protection Benefit

At a recent Local 12 membership meeting, members learned more about their OPEIU Membership Benefits, including the OPEIU Identity Protection Benefit.

All OPEIU members have a proactive, comprehensive defense against identity theft, all at no cost to you. Your union has contracted one of the nation's leading identity protection solutions, InfoArmor®, to protect you against this \$16 billion crime that impacted almost 15.4 million Americans last year. To learn more about the OPEIU Identity Protection Benefit, visit [opeiu.org](http://opeiu.org) and click the Member Resources tab.



A recent Local 12 membership meeting.

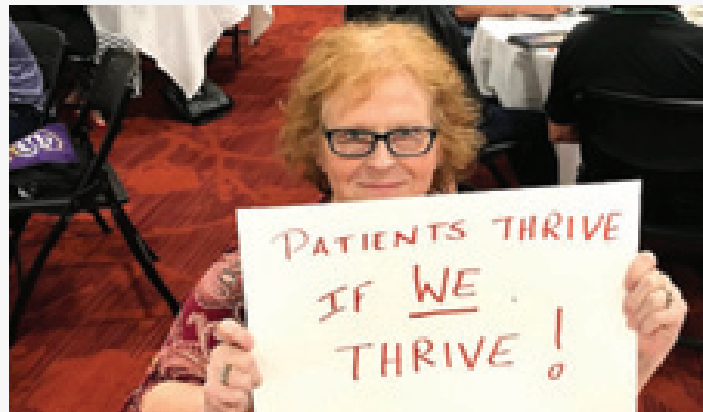
## OPEIU's Kaiser Members Stand Strong and Win Contract Fight



Local 29 members conduct informational picketing at the Kaiser Oakland Medical Center during a prolonged contract dispute, which resulted in a four-year agreement. OPEIU Local Unions 2, 8, 29, 30 and 50 all represent Kaiser employees throughout the country.



Local 2 members Chantal Palomino, Modupe Falowo, Marilyn Harris, Debbie Stevens, Vanessa Mendez and Charday Tate, clinical assistants at the Kensington Medical Center in Maryland.



Local 8 Executive Board member and Steward at Kaiser Jan Abberger.

### Notice to Employees Subject to Union Security Clauses

This notice is for all private sector employees working in the United States under an OPEIU contract containing a union security clause that requires, as a condition of employment, that an employee pay dues or fees to the Union. The obligation stated in this Notice is the only obligation under such clause regardless of the wording of the clause. Individuals who are members pay dues, while individuals who are nonmembers pay equivalent fees. These dues or fees, which are authorized by law, are your fair share of sustaining your Union's broad range of programs in support of you and your co-workers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process and thereby be obligated to pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process.

Only if you are not a member of the Union or if you resign your membership, and in either case file an objection to the funding of expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process, may you pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process. If you resign your membership, however, the many rights and opportunities available to Union members will not be open to you. For example, if you resign your membership you will no longer be able 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.

Individuals employed by public employers are not covered by this procedure. Other individuals who elect to be nonmembers may object to funding expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process.

Expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process ("chargeable" expenditures) represent that portion of the Union's expenditures devoted to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievances, arbitration and other matters

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affecting wages, hours and other conditions of employment. Examples of "chargeable" expenditures include the costs of negotiations with employers; contract administration expenses; communication with employers in regard to work-related issues; handling employee's work-related problems through the grievance and arbitration procedure and Union administration.

Examples of expenditures not germane to the collective bargaining process ("non-chargeable" expenditures) include: expenses made for community services; for political purposes; for certain affiliation fees and for benefits available only to members and their families. The fee reduction will represent these non-chargeable expenditures. 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.

Individuals who choose to file an objection will receive a rebate of their fees equal to the percentage of the Local Union's expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses. The Local Union's expenditures include those amounts it remits to the International Union as per capita payments. In determining the Local Union's percentage of non-chargeable expenses, the percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union is applied only to the Local Union's per capita payments to the International Union. The percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union, which will be effective starting January 2020, and continuing until a new percentage is issued, is 34.16 percent. The major portion of a Local Union's expenditures is for items other than the per capita to OPEIU. Studies show the final percentage of rebates for non-chargeable Local Union expenditures ranges between 0 and 8 percent.

Individuals who choose to file objections to funding expenditures that are not germane

to the collective bargaining process should file them in writing with the Office and Professional Employees International Union, P.O. Box 1761, New York, N.Y. 10113, Attention: Mary Mahoney, Secretary-Treasurer. The objection must include the objector's name, home address, Social Security number, employer, job title, department, work location, Local Union number and business telephone number.

In order for an objection to be recognized at this time, it must be postmarked during the month of June, except that 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, and except that 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 effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the objection was received by the Union.

In addition to any other avenue of relief available under the law, 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. Any challenge a nonmember makes may be coordinated or consolidated with other challenges to the Local Union or International Union determinations before a single arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association. Such challenges may also be coordinated or consolidated with challenges to other OPEIU Local Union classifications or calculations.

Challengers must notify Mary Mahoney, Secretary-Treasurer, Office and Professional Employees International Union, P.O. Box 1761, New York, N.Y. 10113, in writing, of any challenge he or she wishes to make through this arbitration procedure. Such 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 Unions 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. A challenger, however, will have to pay his or her own lost time and travel expenses and the fees, costs and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

Once 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 arbitrator issues a decision. Should the decision lower the percentage of chargeable expenditures, the appropriate portion of the escrowed fees, plus the interest earned by that portion while in the escrow account, will be refunded to the challenger. All objectors in each Local Union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will then pay 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 Local and International Unions.

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 Official Organ of  
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 INTERNATIONAL UNION  
 affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC  
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WHITE COLLAR (ISSN 0043-4876) is published quarterly by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 80 Eighth Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10011. Periodical postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office and Professional Employees International Union, 80 Eighth Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10011. 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*



Printed in the USA

AFL-CIO, CLC

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