

Talking UNION

SUMMER 2017

PUBLIC, HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION WORKERS

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Message from Vice President Brooks Sunkett



Attacks on Public, Health Care and Education Workers Continue

The law will bar dues deduction from public employees' paychecks and unions would need to be recertified prior to every contract negotiation.

In February the Iowa Legislature gave final approval to a bill that will dramatically scale back a four-decade-old collective bargaining law which governs union contract negotiations for the state's public employees. CWA represents over 1,000 public sector workers in Iowa.

Republicans took over both houses in Iowa last November and they wasted no time in fast-tracking a bill to change a 40 year old law. The new law takes collective bargaining for public workers in Iowa back to the era of the robber barons.

Under this legislation, most public sector union contract negotiations will be limited to only base wages. Public sector unions will be banned from negotiating with their employers over issues such as health insurance, evaluation procedures, staff reduction and leaves of absence for political purposes.

Also this year, Missouri became a right-to-work (for less) state. They already had very limited bargaining rights for public workers there. Now anti-worker forces are making it worse.

Since 2012, 6 states have become right-to-work states for a total of 28 states. The labor move-

ment has more free riders today than ever before - reaping the benefits bargained for them, like higher wages and better health-care benefits without paying for it. What free riders haven't figured out is if they don't join with us their lives will get much worse too.

This year our sector conference was held in Orlando, FL. We had a big healthcare rally at Senator Marco Rubio's office. Rubio had gotten thrown out of two other offices because of demonstrations. I was hoping our rally would make it number three!

Since its passage, right-wing politicians, backed by corporate interests, have attacked the Affordable Care Act. A rollback of the ACA would have meant that many of our members in hospitals, nursing home and other healthcare facilities around the country could lose their wages, benefits and possibly their jobs.

Brooks Sunkett

Vice President

Melissa Matos

Assistant to the Vice President

Adria C. Davis

Administrative Secretary

Matthew Cunningham-Cook

Research Associate

501 Third Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.434.1255

www.cwa-union.org/phew

Diminishing the ACA would not only hurt the public at large with little or no coverage but would have also hurt thousands of healthcare workers and health care providers in this country. However, as this newsletter goes to print, Congress has backed off plans to repeal the ACA. Our members and millions of other Americans mobilized and made their voices heard. ***We want care not chaos!***

There are thousands of public and healthcare workers in CWA districts around the country. Places like New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, California, Texas, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi and Puerto Rico. At each location they are struggling just to get by. Struggling just to hold on to what they fought so hard for over the years.

Mississippi and Tennessee don't even have a bargaining law. ***Yet because they are organized, and they are fighting back against unfair cuts they are considered a threat to the wealthy and right-wing politicians. Despite the lack of collective bargaining laws in these states workers see the value of standing together and are joining CWA.***

Whether we are in NJ fighting the state to save our pension or in California fighting the University from outsourcing union jobs overseas, every public and healthcare worker is under siege.

WE ARE ALL UNDER ATTACK BY WALL STREET, the ONE PERCENT AND RIGHT-WING POLITICIANS.

Our Challenges Are Many

There are at least 26 court cases attacking the right of public workers to bargain collectively, with the first of these likely to reach the U.S. Supreme Court by early next year.

Trump's "corporate cabinet," now mostly confirmed by the Senate, is stacked with former Wall Street and Goldman Sachs executives who are anti-union, anti-middle class and poor workers.

Our goal now is to fight back and RESIST this negative agenda for working people. We cannot allow these people to take over our lives without a fight.

However, I believe it is not enough to just resist. ***We must also INSIST ON A BETTER AGENDA FOR WORKING PEOPLE.***

We cannot just be against something. We must be for something. Defense is okay but we have to play some offense too. By standing together, struggling together and fighting together, we win. ***TOGETHER WE CAN OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLE. Workers united will never be defeated.***

CWA New Jersey Takes On Wall Street In Pension Portfolio



While hundreds of millions of dollars in fees have gone to Wall Street, Christie has taken away New Jersey state workers' COLA.

Amid research that shows that hedge funds have high fees and poor returns for our pensions, CWA New Jersey Director Hetty Rosenstein and CWA Local 1036 Adam Liebttag launched a campaign in Spring 2016 to get so-called "alternative investments" out of the portfolio of New Jersey public pension funds. CWA represents over 40,000 members of New Jersey public pension funds. Research from the Hedge Clippers group in July 2015 revealed that Christie had wasted \$2 billion on poor-performing hedge fund investments. This was while the Governor was complaining that our members' benefits were too

generous, and had suspended the contractually mandated cost of living adjustments for years. There have been numerous cases of Christie using his influence at the state pension fund to reward political allies. Republican Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's firm received a lucrative investment from the pension after he had donated \$10,000 to the New Jersey Republican party in 2011.

Labor Majority

CWA New Jersey took advantage of the fact that labor had just gained a majority on the New Jersey state investment council, due to Christie's failure to fill vacancies.

In May 2016, a non-CWA labor representative initially voted against the proposal to reduce fees and hedge funds, blocking the motion's passage. CWA New Jersey mobilized to force the investment council to address the issue again in August, launching a petition that was signed by hundreds of members.

By the State Investment Council meeting on August 3, CWA New Jersey and allies had applied enough pressure on council members that they agreed to slash investments in hedge funds by more than half to a maximum of 6 percent and total alternative investments from one-third to one-quarter.

"This is a good first step to significantly reduce hedge fund exposure," Liebttag, who serves as vice chairman of the council, said in a statement. "The new plan will reduce fees by \$120 million and help put the pension plan on stronger footing."

The New Jersey fund paid out over \$720 million in performance fees last year for its alternative investments, which make up about a third

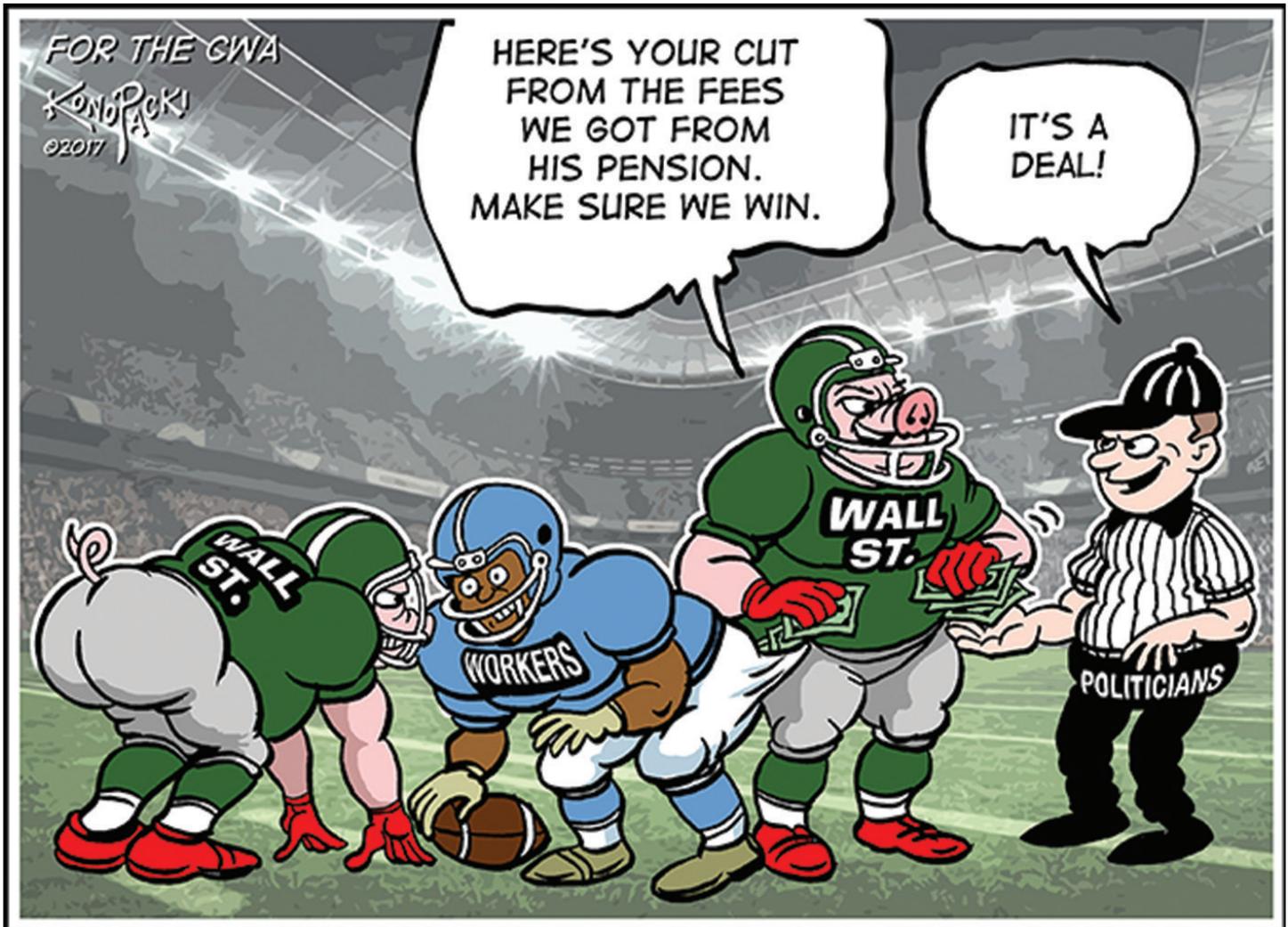
of the total portfolio. The revised strategy will reduce the number of hedge funds from 40 to fewer than 25 and will adjust the management fee and bonus structure, according to a division report. The pension fund was valued at about \$72 billion at the end of May.

Hedge fund and private equity managers are among the highest-compensated people in human history, with the top 25 hedge fund managers making an average of \$400 million each last year. Private equity titan Stephen Schwarzman, who makes millions in fees off

of the New Jersey pension, made nearly \$800 million last year. Schwarzman also serves as chairman of the Trump Administration's business advisory council.

"CWA New Jersey is setting the pace when it comes to taking on the new robber barons, hedge funds and private equity managers" said Vice President Sunkett. "We have to implement the work that Hetty and Adam have done in new jersey in the public sector nationwide."

Nationwide, alternative investments like private equity, hedge funds, and real estate are extremely costly to public pension funds. Total fees to alternative investments are over \$10 billion annually.



CWAers Work to Elect America's Most Progressive Mayor in Jackson, Mississippi



CWA Political & Internal Organizing Training participants in Jackson, MS

CWAers in Mississippi launched an unprecedented effort to elect civil rights attorney Chokwe Antar Lumumba mayor in the city's election in May. Lumumba is now "the most progressive Mayor in the United States", said Vice President Brooks Sunkett.

CWA was the first union to endorse Lumumba's transformative vision for Jackson, the state of Mississippi, and the South as a whole. Dozens of CWA members put in over 100 volunteer shifts for the Lumumba campaign. As a result of the efforts of CWA members, organizer Catherine Robinson said that "Lumumba received broad support from public sector workers." "I could not have won without the support of the members of CWA," said Lumumba. CWA represents over 7,000 public sector and telecom workers in Jackson.

The victory foreshadows a comprehensive legislative and organizing effort to get higher wages and better working conditions for CWA members in Jackson. "Members are fired up, and ready to go when it comes to getting what's due to them from the city" said VP Sunkett.

Lumumba had pledged to end a furlough of city workers, raise wages, and end privatization. CWA members at the City of Jackson were particularly involved with getting Lumumba elected. The Clarion-Ledger, Mississippi's largest newspaper, concluded that the support from city workers was the key difference with Lumumba's successful campaign in 2017 and his close loss in 2014.

Three Difficult Years

The victory is particularly sweet in light of CWA's frustration with the previous administration. Conservative Democrat Tony Yarber had expanded privatization and implemented a furlough of city employees, all while wages for hundreds of city workers languished at \$9.70 per hour.

“CITY WORKERS WERE NOT VALUED” said Robinson. “EVERYBODY KNEW THAT WE NEEDED A CHANGE.”

While CWA had numerous victories under Yarber, including blocking a proposed parking-meter privatization deal and a budget that would have led to hundreds of layoffs, Yarber refused to budge when it came to ending the furlough and granting much-needed wage increases.

In contrast, Lumumba pledges to take on entrenched establishment bent on maintaining control by the wealthy, and build power with Jackson's overwhelmingly Black and working-class population. Lumumba committed “to end furloughs for city workers, raise wages, and take on corrupt contractors that have cost the city millions.” The new Mayor is affiliated with the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, a Black-led movement against economic exploitation and racism, and Cooperation Jackson, a worker co-op movement in Jackson. Lumumba has been a leading advocate for fairness in the justice system and a critic of the prison-industrial complex. His father, Chokwe Lumumba, was elected Mayor in 2013 after a lifetime of legal activism, which included freeing the unjustly incarcerated Scott Sisters and representing political prisoners, including noted activist and author Assata Shakur.

With over 7,000 employees of the State of Mississippi and the City of Jackson residing in city limits, members and represented workers of CWA formed a crucial voting bloc to push Lumumba over the top.



CWAers gathered at Chokwe Lumumba's campaign headquarters.

Unbreakable Campaign & Political Action Fight Off Koch-ALEC Attack in Texas



The 11,000 members of the Texas State Employees Union held the line in this year's Texas legislative session, beating back an assault on dues deduction that would have significantly reduced membership.

"We have a two-front campaign" said TSEU Vice President and Organizing Coordinator Seth Hutchinson. *"We are signing up thousands of members on bank draft, and we are running an intensive lobby campaign with other public sector unions and the AFL-CIO."* The result is that for the second legislative session in a row, TSEU beat back the attack on payroll deduction.

The victory occurred despite the fact both Governor Greg

Abbott and powerful Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick had declared the bill a priority, and it had passed the Texas Senate at the end of March. The threat is not over, however. After the regular session ended, Governor Abbott initiated a special legislative session. Among a list of 20 items on the agenda, the Governor included stripping state workers and retirees of the right to payroll deduction for union membership.

Over the past two years, TSEU leaders and activists worked to collect "Unbreakable" authorizations from 41% of union members. The Unbreakable authorization commits members to switching their dues to bank draft if the

union lost payroll deduction. "We used the attack on our rights as an opportunity to organize" said TSEU President Judy Lugo. "We explained to our members that the reason why the far-right is going after us is because of the victories we win--fighting back privatization, fighting back attacks on our wages and health care, fighting back attacks on our pensions."

Nationwide Push

The bill is part of a nationwide push to reduce the power of public sector unions in state capitals. The bill is a priority of the American Legislative Exchange Council, which has received millions of dollars in funds from the Koch Brothers. A recent book, *Dark Money*,

by investigative journalist Jane Meyer, revealed that Charles and David Koch's father was a founding member of the John Birch Society, which opposed desegregation and civil rights legislation. The Koch brothers were also the largest donors to the Republican Governors Association in 2014, when incumbent Governor Greg Abbott was running. ALEC also gets millions in funding from the family of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

But while public sector unions around the country have lost numerous battles--Wisconsin being just one example--the coalition built in Texas has so far been able to fend off the attack, despite Republican control of every branch of state government. The story of how it happened is one that says that the only real measure of union

power is if locals are mobilizing members.

Rewarding Friends, Punishing Enemies

TSEU and CWA members turned out the vote for Republican Speaker Joe Straus and State Reps. Byron Cook, Charlie Geren, and Lance Gooden, who all faced Tea Party and Koch-affiliated opponents. Republican opposition in the House ultimately killed the bill.

"At TSEU, we're constantly organizing" said Hutchinson. "Our active members are expected to sign up new members. This means that they've also been prepared to do the electoral organizing that needs to get done." TSEU members knocked on hundreds of doors in the 2016

primaries, which ended up paying off in the session. Then hundreds showed up for the union's annual lobby day--the largest lobby day of any CWA local. TSEU turned out members to testify against the bill in the Texas Senate, and also organized calls to members of key Senate and House committees to pressure them to oppose it.

"Wind Out of Their Sails"

"We knew that the bill would go down on Abbott's priority list if he realized that he couldn't use it to crush us" said Lugo.

That was the driving force behind the Unbreakable campaign: to ensure that any attacks on the union couldn't be used to break it. "We are taking the wind out of their sails" said Lugo.

With the threat level increasing because of the special legislative session, Hutchinson says that the union will be stepping up their Unbreakable campaign. "We're signing new members up on Unbreakable everyday" said Hutchinson. **"We're not going to let big business and the far right destroy what we've built here."**



TSEU-CWA Lobby Day participants march for fair pay and justice on the job in Austin.

Hundreds of Millions of Taxpayer Dollars Wasted in California Show Why the Trump-DeVos Charter School Plan Won't Work

Don Cohen, In The Public Interest



Conservatives seem to have a thing for fast food. The founder of what would eventually become the country's largest private prison corporation, CoreCivic (formerly CCA), once declared, "You just sell [private prisons] like you were selling cars or real estate or hamburgers." More recently, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, an organization founded by Jeb Bush that has lobbied for its corporate funders, including the world's largest education corporation, Pearson, wrote that public schools should be thought of as fast food restaurants.

But providing public goods and services is nothing like selling hamburgers. In a democracy, human beings should control

the public schools, infrastructure, and social services in their communities. Fast food customers vote individually with their wallet, which means they really have very little say. Does anyone really want a handful of corporations, the likes of McDonalds and Burger King, teaching children and locking people up in prison?

This point is especially true of public education, and is driven home by an ITPI report released in April authored by Gordon Lafer, an associate professor at the University of Oregon. Lafer found that taxpayers have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on charter school buildings in California, yet the state has little to show for it. In the past 15 years, charter schools, which

are privately operated, have received \$2.5 billion in tax dollars or taxpayer subsidized financing to lease, build, or buy facilities. Yet much of this investment has gone to schools built in neighborhoods that don't need them and schools that perform worse—according to charter industry standards—than nearby traditional public schools. Taxpayers have provided California's underperforming charter schools—an astounding three-quarters of all the state's charter schools!—with an estimated \$750 million in direct funding.

Public support has even gone to California charter schools that discriminate against students with poor academic records, limited English-speaking skills, or disabilities. Taxpayers have given a collective \$195 million to the 253 schools found by the ACLU of Southern California in August 2016 to have discriminatory enrollment policies.

Most alarming is the fact that much of the funding has gone to a handful of large charter school chains, and some have used the money to purchase

private property. In Los Angeles, for example, the Alliance College-Ready Public Schools network of charter schools has used subsidiary corporations to build a growing empire of privately owned real estate now worth in excess of \$200 million. **State and federal taxpayers have given Alliance more than \$110 million in support, yet, because of a loophole, the schools built with these funds will never belong to the public.**

Simply put, California's leaders are treating schools like fast food restaurants. Local school boards, who are democratically elected, have little say in whether a new charter school is good for their community's students. The boards charged with authorizing new charters aren't allowed to consider the impacts on existing public schools—or whether a school is even needed. On top of that, state and federal taxpayers are subsidizing failing and discriminatory charter schools to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Unfortunately, the costs are being borne out on students. Like many across the country, California's public school districts need more resources—for things like classroom supplies, safe buildings, and training for teachers. But due to a severe lack of regulation, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars have gone to school buildings we don't need, schools that discriminate, and charter school

chains that are fattening their bank accounts. The millions of tax dollars that have gone to Alliance sure could have helped the public schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which is facing an on-going financial crisis.

Of course, fast food is a symbol for a much broader and deeper shift in the role of American government. For five decades, conservative think tanks, business leaders, and free market economists have led an all-out assault on the public sector. In fact, the idea of "school choice," i.e., charter schools and private school vouchers, comes from economist Milton Friedman, who in 1973 compared teaching children to selling groceries. "The way to achieve real reform in schooling is to give competition and free enterprise greater scope," he wrote. Under the guise of "smaller government," Friedman and think tanks like the Heritage Foundation have argued that citizens are consumers and the market, not democracy, is the best way to provide public goods and services.

Donald Trump's education secretary, the billionaire Betsy DeVos, is pushing this view. Despite having never taught in, managed, or even attended a public school, DeVos, who once sat on the Foundation for Excellence in Education's board, has said, "We must open up the [public] education industry—and let's not kid ourselves that it isn't an

industry—we must open it up to entrepreneurs and innovators."

The result hasn't been smaller government or innovation but a corporate takeover. As faith in government has dwindled, more and more taxpayer money has gone to corporations operating prisons, water systems, and other public services. At the federal level, the number of civilian executive branch jobs has remained about the same over the last fifty years, yet the U.S. population it serves has doubled. Outsourcing has made up the difference—more than half the Pentagon budget goes to private contractors. In states like Texas and cities like Chicago, public infrastructure like roads and parking meters has been handed over to corporations and Wall Street to turn a profit.

What "school choice" is really about is taking public education from communities, teachers, and education professionals and putting it in private hands. By replacing democracy with the market, charter schools fit squarely within the decades-long corporate takeover of government. **California needs common sense regulation that returns decisions about charter schools to local school districts.** Short of that, the state is slowly handing the keys to its public education system over to the charter school industry and the likes of Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos.

CWA Local 1040 Fights for Secure Jobs for Camden School District Workers

Camden City School District custodian and maintenance workers, members of CWA Local 1040 mobilized this spring for a new contract. On April 21, over 40 workers filed into the Camden City Board of Education building to deliver a petition signed by workers to Superintendent Rouhanifard and called upon the Superintendent to agree to job security. In addition, workers gave testimony face-to-face with the Superintendent on what secure jobs mean for their livelihoods and families. Upon delivering the petition, CWAers were flanked by members of Local 1014, Local 1038 and Local 1084 who also have memberships based in Camden City and Camden County. Members also received community support from local clergy members and local activists, including NJ Communities United.

Every day, custodial and maintenance workers keep Camden schools healthy, clean and secure. They are often the first to enter the schools they

serve and the last to leave. These workers – most of whom are Black and Latino – make up the backbone of the Camden School District, yet they are the only workers up to principals who can be fired without just cause. In 2016, the Superintendent took action to not renew 33 custodian and maintenance workers as a part of 154 job cuts across the school district.

The health and safety of Camden Schools is vital since they are some of the oldest school buildings in all of New Jersey. In order to achieve the best results, the students in Camden deserve clean and well-maintained schools and the custodians and maintenance workers deserve to be treated with respect.

As Talking Union goes to press, the fight is still ongoing, but the Local plans to show up and make their voices heard to decision-makers until workers get the contract they deserve.



Campus Workers Launch “Resilient” Campaign Against Privatization

When CWA President Chris Shelton spoke to the District 3 conference in April, he said that Local 3865’s campaign against the privatization of facilities management at the University of Tennessee exemplified the “R” in CWA STRONG: “Resilient.”

The campaign--now nearly two years old--has mobilized the local to sign up hundreds of new members, and has won some key victories. The local has forced the administration to mandate that the privatization will not result in any job losses or wage and benefit cuts.

“The work the activists and members in United Campus Workers have done in Tennessee exemplify how you should attack privatization efforts nationwide: No relenting!” said Don Cohen, a leading privatization expert and the Executive Director of In The Public Interest, which has helped with the campaign.

An Unprecedented Attack

The proposed facilities management outsourcing is among the most far-reaching in the nation. Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam, the nation’s richest elected official, had already outsourced facilities management at state-owned buildings--leading, as always, to marked deteriorations of service quality, including in state legislative buildings.

In the summer of 2015, when Haslam made clear that he was working to expand the privatization to higher education, United Campus Workers jumped to action.

“We started including the issue in our organizing conversations right then and there” said District 3 Organizing Coordinator Tom Smith. “Workers understood that their jobs were at risk and that the union was fighting for them. That made



UCW-CWA members and allies protesting against massive outsourcing scheme in Tennessee.

people more likely to join the union.”

The local commissioned a study on the impact of privatization from the PHEW office, which showed that the outsourcing could affect as many as 10,000 workers.

The local spent all of 2016 informing members, launching an aggressive social media campaign, “TN Is Not For Sale”, which with over 7000

“Our members know that their union is fighting for them”, said Diana Moyer, President of Local 3865. “Because of the work of our organizing team, they know the threat privatization poses to our jobs and to higher education in Tennessee. This means that people feel ownership over this fight.”

By the end of the year when the request for proposals was sent out, UCW had already

governor asking him to hold off on the contract.

The contract has been awarded to Chicago-based Jones Lang Lasalle and there are numerous questions about how competitive the process actually was, and how the administration arrived at its cost cutting projections. (After CWA research revealed the claims that the Governor was using to justify cost savings were arbitrary and baseless, the Comptroller confirmed this in a letter to the legislature.)

For Moyer, the fight is one that, if stopped in Tennessee, could be a harbinger of anti-privatization movements elsewhere. “We know from JLL’s public statements that they’re going to try and export this model around the country. If higher education workers can stop it in Tennessee, we can stop it anywhere.”

Vice President Brooks Sunkett recalls the examples of other successful fights against privatization. “Locals like the TSEU and UPTE show that while we may lose some battles, the war can ultimately be won. We’re in to win this fight for public services for the long haul.”

“LOCALS LIKE THE TSEU AND UPTE SHOW THAT WHILE WE MAY LOSE SOME BATTLES, THE WAR CAN ULTIMATELY BE WON. WE’RE IN TO WIN THIS FIGHT FOR PUBLIC SERVICES FOR THE LONG HAUL.”

“likes” on Facebook means that UCW has the widest social media reach of any current CWA organizing campaign. UCW launched a legislative action team, led by members Tom Anderson and Jeffrey Liechtenstein and Organizing Lead Cassie Watters, that met with dozens of state legislators.

In keeping with the goals of CWA Strong, the local has continued to sign up new members. *The local has grown by over 100 members since the campaign went into full gear in the Spring of 2016, to over 1700.* United Campus Workers members are all bank draft members, as Tennessee does not have dues deduction.

scored an important victory, winning crucial protections for any workers that may be outsourced. “These protections for outsourced workers are extremely rare” said Cohen. “The fact that UCW won them shows the power of organizing.

Mobilizing for Public Sector Jobs

The mobilization culminated with a big action in early March, where hundreds of CWA members and allies protested the proposed awarding of the contract. Then the local went into full gear on its legislative effort, pressuring a majority of the overwhelmingly-Republican legislature to sign a letter to the

Public, Healthcare & Education Workers Conference





In Major Victory, University of California Theater Workers Save 21 Jobs



THE ENTIRE PRODUCTION STAFF

(COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND, SCENIC & PROPS DEPTS)
have been laid off and instructed to re-apply for lesser positions which will

**REDUCE THEIR ANNUAL INCOME
BY AS MUCH AS 45% AND MORE!**

Most of these dedicated employees have been here for 10, 15, even 25 & 30 years!

PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

for these extremely dedicated and hard-working professionals by reaching out to:

DEAN OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
CRISTINA DELLA COLETTA

☎ 858-534-6270 // ✉ cdellacoletta@ucsd.edu

UCSD CHANCELLOR
PRADEEP KHOSLA

☎ 858-534-3125 // ✉ chancellor@ucsd.edu

In early November, UC San Diego's Department of Theatre and Dance laid off its entire 21-person staff, a team it shared with an off-campus performance group, the La Jolla Playhouse. Management of both theater companies had collaborated in a plan to "restructure" and separate the staff who worked joint shifts.

Employees were asked to apply for new positions that paid 25 to 45 percent less than before. The news was received with alarm from workers and community theatre-goers. UPTE-CWA Local 9119 member Will Widick, a lead artisan and department prop shop worker with 14 years of service, got together with his coworkers to plan a response.

Network of Protest Develops

UPTE members organized public support with a Facebook page and an online petition that gathered over 1,000 signatures, and did public outreach by leafleting donor events and UCSD performances. Organizers targeted UCSD chancellor Pradeep Khosla and Arts and Humanities dean Christina Della Coletta, who received a flood of protest.

To management, "we are just employees who simply screw flats together, sew seams, hang lights and speakers or put tables and chairs on a stage," Widick wrote on the Facebook page, "*but to all of the great student professionals who have passed through this great program and the amazing*

faculty supporters, we are skilled professionals, artisans, mentors, teachers and now friends and colleagues."

Organizing Paid Off

Widick told public radio station KPBS that UC's restructuring of the department was a "reflection of their changing attitudes and their commitment to the arts."

"In many ways we feel that as artists and as artisans that not only is our work not appreciated but that artists don't feel safe in this new university environment," added Widick.

By early January, the organizing paid off big time. UCSD's chancellor gave the order to immediately rehire all the staff at their original pay.

Local 1040 Ramps Up Internal Organizing

On March 27, 37 activists from CWA Local 1040 participated in an internal organizing training in Trenton, New Jersey. These activists are now members of a newly-formed Organizing Rapid Response Team that will continue the work of building the union and will make communication with members and non-members a top priority.

“OUR MEMBERS ARE READY TO WORK HARD TO GROW OUR LOCAL AND TO MAKE WORKERS’ VOICES HEARD”



“Our members are ready to work hard to grow our local and to make workers’ voices heard” said Carolyn Wade, president of CWA Local 1040, who also leads the CWA Executive Board Organizing Committee. “The challenges we face, along with other CWA locals and the entire labor movement, are a great opportunity for us to make our union stronger.”

During the training, Team members shared their strategies and best practices for signing up new members with the union and engaged in exercises by practicing one-on-one conversations with co-workers.

Structure & Accountability

Follow-up meetings were immediately where Team members will review their goals and report their progress in signing up non-members. The meeting will also be an opportunity for Team members to discuss their success and challenges with one another. **Local 1040 is one of the most organized public sector locals in CWA.**



CWA Local 1040 President Carolyn Wade and CWA New Jersey Area Director Hetty Rosenstein mobilize for CWA Strong!

Missouri State Workers Sign Up Hundreds on Unbreakable Pledge



Missouri State Workers and allies get active

Like their sisters and brothers in Texas, Missouri state workers also face unprecedented attacks on their right to exist as a union. “Paycheck deception,” which would force the union to annually recertify and pay expensive fees to do so, has been proposed over the past 9 years. But it’s never been closer to passing until now, with far-right Republican supermajorities in both the House and the Senate.

“The only reason why we were able to beat it back in the 2017 session is because of a split in the Republican caucus in the Senate” said Local 6355

President Bradley Harmon. “We knew that we needed to massively expand our Unbreakable campaign as soon as the 2016 election results came in.”

In coordination with District 6 staff, the local has had three Political Boot Camps to train more than 25 activists on the need to organize to save their union. “With the help of the district, we’ve been able to significantly deepen our base of trained activists” said Harmon.

As of now, the local has signed up over 300 members on the Unbreakable campaign--over 25% of the membership. The

local has three organizers working on the campaign full time, and is making one-on-one conversations the highest priority. “We know why people sign up on Unbreakable” said Harmon. **“They do it because of one-on-one conversations-in break rooms, coffee shops, and parking lots--that exposes to people why the union is so necessary.”**

It’s a big job for the local. The statewide local has over 174 work locations, and many members are low wage. “It’s what we have to do to keep the organization together” said Harmon. It’s difficult work, but we’re making it happen.”

New Mexico State Workers Sign Up 900 Members Through CWA Strong Campaign

In the year and a half since Local 7076--New Mexico State Workers launched its CWA Strong campaign, over 900 new members have signed up. The organizing success has reinvigorated the local, strengthening its bargaining position in state departments.

"We have a right-wing governor who's doing everything in her power to break us" said Donald Alire, President of Local 7076. "Us signing up these new members changes the relationship we have with the employer on a day-to-day basis, while also ensuring that we aren't crushed by an adverse Supreme Court decision."

The campaign began with the local hiring an organizer through the CWA Strong Growth Fund. The local, District Organizing Coordinator Jana Smith-Carr, and CWA Representative Robin Gould then mapped out agencies, identifying members that needed to be targeted.

"When we did the initial mapping, there were 525 people we identified who hadn't signed cards" said Smith-Carr. "Now there are 71."

As a result of CWA Strong, the local, which represents over 2,000 state workers, now has 29 more stewards and has doubled the amount of activists. Turnout for the 2017 lobby day tripled compared to previous years.

"OUR MEMBERS KNOW WE FACE BIG CHALLENGES, AND THAT'S WHY OUR LOCAL IS WORKING HARD TO GROW STRONGER"

"Our members know we face big challenges and that's why our local is working hard to grow stronger," said Alire. "We are talking one-on-one with every employee in our workplaces, and making sure everyone knows how important it is to be united." The work couldn't have been more critical

as the Governor attempted to furlough state workers, despite the fact that the state treasurer's office denied that there was a cash crunch.

Thanks to a quick mobilization of dozens of calls to state legislators, the furlough was beaten back. *"Because of all the internal organizing work we've been doing, it was much easier to mobilize members to defend our jobs"* said Alire. "Despite the worst intentions of our Governor, there will be no furloughs of state workers this year."

Current Republican New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez is term-limited in 2018, and the CWAers in New Mexico are working to get a pro-labor candidate elected. "The mobilization and organizing we're doing now is crucial if we're going to get the results we need at the ballot box in 2018" said Gould.



The \$48 Fix: Tuition-Free Higher Education in California

How much would it cost to fully fund California's higher education system, from UC to the Cal State campuses to community colleges? Just \$48 per family per year. The Reclaim Higher Education Coalition, of which UPTe-CWA Local 9119 is a member, has been contacting state legislators to argue for restoring free higher education in the state of California.

The coalition, which includes unions, student, and faculty organizations, converged on Sacramento in January to launch the campaign, and to introduce a new policy paper making the case for free higher education. The paper, co-authored by a team of academics led by UCSF professor Stanton Glantz, is called The \$48 Fix: Reclaiming California's Master Plan for Higher Education.

The \$48 Fix demonstrates that it is entirely possible today to provide the same accessible, low-cost university experience that California offered students throughout the 1960s and '70s. It puts to rest the notion that there is no money in California (one of the largest economies in the world) to fund the state's three-part public higher education system.

The coalition argues it can all be tuition-free, and doing so would be a major factor in preserving the state's economy into the future.



In 1960, legislators created the Master Plan for Higher Education. Committed to free tuition for all Californians, the Master Plan was highly successful in accommodating the large Baby Boom cohort while building a system with the best public universities in the world.

Beginning around 2000 and accelerating with the 2005 "Compact on Higher Education" between then-governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, UC's president,

and CSU's chancellor, this public model shifted to one in which higher education is viewed as a commodity.

Over the last fifteen years, the state's political leaders have taken \$57 billion in public investment away from higher education, all while tuition has skyrocketed.

The \$48 Fix concludes that fully funding projected enrollment and eliminating tuition in across California's public higher education system would cost median-income families only \$48 a year (taxes would be higher on millionaires).

That would raise \$9.43 billion in just the first year, enough to make higher education tuition-free.

UPTe President Jelger Kalmijn said that advocating for free higher education at UC is one of the ways that the local builds support for pro-worker demands at the bargaining table. "To win, we need a coalition" said Kalmijn. "By advancing broader demands for social and economic justice, we build alliances that change the dynamics at the bargaining table."