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WHY WE PAY DUES

WE ARE THE UNION

Sometimes it seems like the assaults on labor unions, teachers' unions in particular, never stop. If it's not attempts to gut our political power, go after our pensions, pay, and benefits, or undermine the integrity of the profession by exploiting part-time labor, it's the drumbeat for draconian accountability measures and outright efforts by groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to privatize public education entirely.

This fall we face yet another threat in the form of a pending Supreme Court ruling in Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association that may limit our ability to collect dues. So, at times like these it's always good to remind ourselves why we pay dues and what we get from the union because many of us weren't around when some of our biggest gains were made or have forgotten where they came from.



Zulema Diaz demonstrates for part-time equity

Of course, the first thing that having union representation does for us is provide us with the ability to negotiate good contracts with our Districts for better pay, benefits, and protections.

Union representation gives us a safe voice and security in the workplace. Because of our contractual protections we can't be dismissed for our beliefs or disagreements we might have with management. We have due process in the case of discipline and a clear set of rules that govern our workplaces to prevent arbitrary actions by our employer.

The union also gives us the ability to participate in politics and elect worker-

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WHERE WE STAND

The (Mostly) Good News from Sacramento

By Jim Mahler
President, AFT Guild, Local 1931

We start this academic year with mixed news from Sacramento, although most of it is good. First off, this will be a record revenue year for the Community College system as we are due to receive nearly \$1 billion in new revenues this year as a system. This translates into roughly \$80 million more in new revenues for the SDCCCD, and roughly \$25 million more for the GCCCD.

Translated into Resource Allocation Formula percentages, we are expecting the equivalent of a 4.0% salary additive in the GCCCD, and perhaps as much as 6.0% in the SDCCCD. Keep in mind these numbers are just rough estimates at this point in time as this piece goes to press and that this total amount is what we use to fund *all* of our economic items.

This means that you all should send any ideas you may have in terms of economic enhancements to me as soon as possible as we will soon be finalizing our plans for this year's distribution.

The bad news out of Sacramento is that none of our sponsored bills made it through the legislative gauntlet to the finish line (or even to the Governor's desk). Our adjunct job security bill, AB 1010 (Medina), which would have mandated a state-wide program similar to what we have in both SDCCCD and GCCCD died in the Senate Appropriations committee. Our bill on increasing the number of tenured/tenure-track faculty positions, SB 373 (Pan), also died in the same committee. Clearly we still have a lot of work to do to

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AFT and the San Diego–Imperial Counties Labor Council Environmental Caucus Make Progress on Key Issues

Last spring we reported that the SD–Imperial Counties Labor Council had formed a new environmental caucus. Chaired by AFT 1931's Jim Miller, that new caucus's first major policy act was to commit local labor to supporting Transit First, by passing a resolution that states:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Environmental Caucus of the San Diego–Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO supports expediting the construction of new transit projects in San Diego County within the next ten years, achieving climate justice and creating high-quality jobs in the region by:

- 1) Prioritizing funding and implementation of an integrated network of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects in the urban core, Sprinter, Coaster and Blue Line corridors; and
- 2) Allocating TransNet funds to immediately invest in transit expenditures; and
- 3) Achieving at least a 50% transit, bike and walk mode

share in the urban core, Sprinter, Coaster and Blue Line corridors; and

- 4) Delivering transit trips as a competitive alternative to auto trips; and
- 5) Requiring new transit, bike and walk projects be constructed under a Local Hire Agreement with the San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO.

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Micah Mitrosky, Jim Miller, and Cassie Purdy



Council of Classified Employees (CCE) Conference

Oh, What Do You Teach?

By Tina Solórzano Fletcher
Membership Organizer

“I don’t.” The simple response is, “I’m the *other* school employee.” Like most classified employees, when asked where we work, we reply, “One of the San Diego Community Colleges.” Then comes the assumption that we’re teachers. At this point we must educate the public about our professions as classified employees. According to the California Education Code, there are two types of employees in a school district, Classified and Certificated (faculty). We must apprise the public that we as classified employees perform a multitude of duties on a college campus. We know the value of our work and the value of our influence on the students we serve. We all do whatever it takes to help our students on a daily basis.

In the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD), classified employees are Food Service workers that feed our students and colleagues. Office Technical workers are in offices, libraries, bookstores, labs and the radio station. We provide student services, employees’ payroll, and district-wide computing services. Maintenance and Operations maintains equipment, campus grounds, offices and classrooms. Many of these jobs are covert when they are carried out. They affect the temperature of the classrooms, the working order of computers, the beauty and safety of all the campuses. Classified employees engage in a multitude of jobs in the district before a student steps into a classroom.

We first introduced the many jobs held by classified employees at the Council of Classified Employees (CCE) Conference in December 2014. The goal was to publicize the jobs that we engage in with our students. Account clerks, bankers, and custodians were called to represent the many jobs fulfilled by classified. One by one, attendees mounted the stage to collect the hat listing their job title as well as the duties they perform, gradually filling the stage to depict the wide-ranging work of classified employees. By the end, a jam-packed stage demonstrated more clearly than ever before the incredible variety of jobs classified employees do with special skills, kindness, and compassion.

Classified employees were also featured at the close of the CFT Convention in Manhattan Beach highlighting the *Many Hats We Wear*. Carl Williams, Council of Classified Employees Northern Vice-President, announced that in K-12, classified employees in addition to their job descriptions are ATMs for lunch money or change for the vending machines, mediators in playground conflicts, and relationship experts. He named off job titles from accounting to vehicle mechanics from the community college employees.

Classified help students navigate the campus, library, and parking lots. We all proudly marched up to the stage to the roar of applause from our colleagues. We all do more than our job descriptions to ensure that students are successful in and outside of the classroom.

When my husband and I moved into our home, the moving man discussed his difficulty registering with one of our colleges. My husband told him I work for SDCCD. I was able to give him direction and a contact name to help him with the process. He was very grateful to have personal interaction to guide him into community college system. Three years later I received an email from him needing my assistance once again in attaining a transcript because he was out of state.

Classified employees have many stories similar to mine. My friend Nada Adjadj works in the Registrar’s Office helping students with evaluations, prerequisites, and information about their transcripts. She ensures that students leave the office completely informed of the process in question. She takes the extra effort needed to complete the transaction personally.

Students come to rely on the expertise and recommendations of classified employees. Many students have had to stand in long lines and are happy to receive advice as well as support on their academic career. Don’t underestimate the power of classified work. Classified employees are the first faces that students see

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Why AFT Local 1931 Endorses Bernie Sanders for President

You may have heard over the summer that AFT had endorsed Hillary Clinton for President. That is true of the national union whose executive board voted to give Clinton the early endorsement without much significant input from membership. As *Portside Labor* reported:

On Saturday, July 11th, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President, Randi Weingarten came under fire after her executive council voted overwhelmingly to endorse Hillary Clinton for the democratic primary for President of the United States. AFT is the parent organization of Washington Teachers' Union, Local 6 and has 1.5 million members.

In an AFT press release, President Weingarten said, "Hillary Clinton is a tested leader who shares our values, is supported by our members and is prepared for a tough fight on behalf of students, families and communities. That fight defines her career."

Weingarten added that Clinton is a "product of public schools and believes in the promise of public education.... Hillary understands that policymakers need to work with teachers and their unions. She's ready to work with us to confront the issues of children and their families today, including poverty, wage stagnation, income equality and the lack of opportunity."

Even though AFT's press release explained the process of how members were polled, including several town hall meetings, multiple surveys and a "you decide" website, the announcement of the endorsement erupted a firestorm of outrage from AFT teacher members nationwide.

Indeed, it is hard to see how a phone "town hall meeting" in the middle of the summer when many AFT members are on vacation and most locals

are not regularly meeting is the best strategy for membership involvement. Perhaps a system that gives locals an opportunity to weigh in more significantly would help democratize the process a bit more.

In anticipation of the national vote, your local, AFT 1931, unanimously voted to endorse Sanders during our open membership meeting in May because we value the role he is playing in bringing vital issues into the national spotlight, and we wanted to see him push the discourse in a more populist direction with regard to free public higher education, labor issues, income inequality, and a whole range of other important initiatives.

As California Federation of Teachers (CFT) President, Joshua Pechthalt (who was one of the two Vice Presidents who voted against the Clinton endorsement on the AFT's national executive board), put it in a message to CFT members:

[It was my argument that] the progressive movement would best be served by delaying an endorsement for as long as possible. Bernie Sanders' campaign and message have served to pull the Democratic Party in a more progressive direction. He has raised important issues of economic inequality and provided, along with Elizabeth Warren, a sharp critique of Wall Street and the banks.

He has also advocated for free higher public education and has spelled out the most progressive populist message we have heard from a mainstream candidate in a long time.

And Pechthalt is correct. Sanders' near-perfect record on labor is rivaled in excellence by his bold higher education plan. As he told AFT, "The United States must join Germany and many other countries in understanding that investing in our young people's education is investing in the

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AFT 1931 at the Labor Council Labor Day Picnic

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friendly boards of trustees and leaders in Sacramento that are more likely to listen to our voices when they make important decisions about education and/or labor issues. In addition, our political capacity makes it possible for us to do things like pass Proposition 30, which saved California from the budget crisis we all endured for many years. It also allows us to defend ourselves against threats to our pensions, job security, and ability to serve our students.

The list goes on and on.

In terms of our personal economic interests, your union is why we have had no take-backs or salary cuts even during hard economic times. It is why we have a generous and sophisticated salary schedule, fully funded health care for full-time and part-time employees with access to family benefits.



AFT interns Celeste, Francisco, and Ita working at the Labor Day Picnic

The union is why you have job security and the right to speak out without fear of retaliation. Union representation gives you the right

to file grievances if warranted and the option of legal representation if needed.

And lest we forget about this, the union is not just some service entity out there—YOU are the union. You have the right to participate in every union meeting where decisions are made. If you are unhappy, you have the right to run for office and become part of the Executive Board.

Is the union perfect? Certainly not, but in a union workplace, you have more voice and far more ability to have a say on the job than at a non-union workplace. You can work within your union to shape policy and politics and influence the District that you work in and the larger community.

And your union is also a way that we as community college teachers and staff are part of both our campuses and the larger community though our political efforts but also by supporting student scholarships, valued campus programs, and community organizations doing work

that helps improve the lives of the students we serve outside of the classroom so they can excel in school.

We mentor student interns who go on to serve the community. We partner with interfaith and social justice organizations to educate

people about voting, economic rights, educational issues, and a whole range of other social justice issues.

Your union has won awards from the San Diego–Imperial Counties Labor Council, ACCE, the Interfaith Center for Worker Justice, the Center on Policy Initiatives, as well as from our statewide union for our leadership in San Diego.

But all of this doesn't mean anything unless you take it upon yourself to remember that YOU ARE THE UNION. If you have not joined AFT, do so. If you have colleagues who you can encourage to get involved, help out. Come to



AFT interns Joe and Estrella at the Labor Day Picnic

meetings, make your voice heard, take part in the larger life of the union and the city.

We will be much stronger and continue to do great things with your active participation.

Everyone will be weaker if we are divided, but if we can overcome threats that seek to undermine us, we will all be stronger in the end and our work and our students' lives will be the better for it.

Solidarity means working people standing together. It works. Let's do it.

Where We Stand continued from page 2

educate our legislature on the value of adjunct labor so that these bills and others like them become priorities in the future.

On a slightly more positive note, our bill on classified staffing levels, AB 1066 (Gonzalez), still retains a glimmer of hope in passing as it has been made into a two-year bill. Our two accreditation reform bills, AB 1385 and 1397 (Ting), have also been made into two-year bills so they still have a chance for passage next year.

In local negotiations there is better news. I am pleased let you know that we were finally able to conclude the SDCCD faculty agreement, which includes many gains for faculty such as inclusion of CE adjunct faculty into the same job

security provisions as college adjunct faculty have enjoyed for the past 16 years, a strengthening of the college adjunct faculty job security model, an overload banking provision for contract faculty, 11-month contracts for college faculty assistant department chairs, a strengthening and clarification of the evaluation article, and three-year parking permits for all faculty!

Ratification ballots are being prepared as this goes to press and will be US-mailed to all SDCCD faculty homes as soon as the September 30 payroll processes and we can generate an accurate list of active employees.

Unfortunately, we were unable to gain workload parity for our SDCCD counseling faculty to that of our

classroom faculty, and we were also unable to make progress on lecture/lab workload parity. Both of these items will be going through the PERB impasse procedure. In the GCCCD we have filed a grievance alleging the District's willful violation of the Resource Allocation Formula by granting its two new college presidents an \$850/month pay raise. This case will be heard by a neutral arbitrator on December 8th and 9th. We probably will not have the results for either of these cases until late in the Spring semester, but we will work diligently to obtain a good result.

All in all, not a bad start of the year! We look forward to bringing more good news your way as the academic year unfolds.

Many Hats continued from page 3

when they step onto a campus and the last when they leave to further their education.

The many hats we wear do not stop with students. The most important hat we wear is our union hat. Our membership in AFT is an important aspect in our job. We belong to a union of professionals 1.6 million strong. Classified belong to our professional organization—AFT Guild, Local 1931. We join with educators in a collective belief that our union work builds power. As the mission of AFT states, “The American Federation of Teachers is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.”

Our professional organization keeps American jobs in the USA. Our membership affirms that we believe in the power of bargaining, working conditions, and excel the standards of our profession.



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Wilson

Bernie Sanders continued from page 4

future of our nation. I have introduced legislation to make tuition in public colleges and universities free, as well as substantially lower interest rates on student loans.”

As the *Huffington Post* reports, Sanders has called for a “revolution in the way higher education is funded” and a fundamental “restructure of our student loan program”:

Sanders decried the way student loans were subject to higher interest rates than car loans and housing mortgages and called for an end to “the practice of the government making \$127 billion over the next decade on profit from student loans.”

He has recently called for tuition-free courses for freshmen and sophomores at public universities and suggested closing tax loopholes for corporations as a means of paying for it. “Can we afford to invest in higher education?” he asked at Lyndon State College, “The answer is yes, we can. But one of the things that we have to do is institute real tax reform.” He recently developed a plan in which the U.S. government would provide \$18 billion per year in federal grants that matched state grants, which he said would in turn cut tuition at public universities by more than half.

Sanders has gone after Democrats and Republicans alike for their failure to protect students from predatory loans, and for their unwillingness to impose sweeping changes to the student loan system. He derided President Obama for signing off on recent legislation that would allow student loan rates to reach historic highs in two years in exchange for a temporary freeze.

“At a time when the average student is graduating from a four-year college \$27,000 in debt, when hundreds of thousands of capable young people no longer see college as an option because of high costs, and when the U.S. is falling further and further behind our economic competitors in terms of the percentage of young people graduating from college, this legislation will make college even less affordable than it is today,” Sanders said.

This, matched with his strong, principled positions on fighting big banks and Wall Street, progressive taxation, universal health care, protecting retirement security, racial justice, immigrants’ rights, and more, puts him heads and shoulders above Hillary Clinton.

While Clinton would be preferable to any of the Republican candidates, her close ties to moneyed interests involved in the push to privatize public education and her long history of alignment with the corporate wing of the Democratic Party give us great pause. Sanders’s solid campaign, early surge, and the great enthusiasm he has generated amongst young people, on the other hand, is inspiring.

Thus even if the recent polls showing Sanders gaining strength and actually beating Clinton in some early primary states does not continue, we feel he will play an

indispensable role in moving the national conversation in a more progressive direction on all fronts. Indeed he has already done this on a wide range of issues, forcing Clinton to respond to his platform with better ideas than she would have had to offer on economic inequality, the student debt crisis, criminal justice reform, and more.

So, as we approach the primary season, both idealism and big picture political pragmatism suggest that the right thing to do is stand with the candidate who shares our values rather than compromise them from the start and go with Clinton just because she is the early frontrunner.



“Anyone turn in the Middle Class?
We’ve lost it.”

Environmental Caucus continued from page 2

This resolution was greeted warmly by local environmental groups and has gone a long way to building some important new alliances.

AFT 1931 supports Transit First because it is a big part of the answer: it creates a movement that unites economic and environmental justice and offers both a strong moral case for bold environmental action and a future that doesn’t further deepen already historic levels of economic inequality, protecting the interests of the affluent while leaving the poor behind.

This means abandoning market fundamentalism and reimagining the future in a visionary fashion on all fronts before the drift toward ever-more dystopian outcomes becomes inevitable.

Along those lines, this summer, your AFT, working in partnership with SD350.org persuaded our statewide organization (CFT) to pass SB 185, which commits our retirement systems, both CalPers and CalSTRS, to divesting from coal company stocks.

Given the fact that those funds have actually lost \$5 billion over the last year, this is both a morally and financially responsible move.

As both President Obama and Governor Brown have noted, the fight to stop climate change is the battle of our lifetimes and this move is a small step toward saving the future for our children and the planet.

Much more remains to be done.



in brief

Why We Pay Dues

“You hate unions? Fine. Then don’t work in a union shop. Believe me, you won’t have any problem finding a non-union job because the overwhelming majority—the staggering majority—of American businesses are non-union. Go out in the street and throw a rock and you’ll likely hit a non-union facility.

But you say that because union jobs provide better wages, benefits and working conditions than non-union jobs, you chose to work in a union shop? Fine. Then pay your fair share of the freight. Not only does it cost money to negotiate and administer a union contract (collective bargaining, adjustment of grievances, arbitrations, etc.), but most people readily understand the ‘strength in numbers’ argument.

Most people understand the virtues of collectivism. They realize

that, where one single person trying to fight the bureaucracy is usually a waste of time, 300 aroused people protesting on the steps of City Hall is a whole other deal. The same is true of unions.

Where one person asking for a raise in pay is going to be brushed aside, hundreds asking for a raise (or improved safety standards) will be taken seriously, particularly when the group has federal labor law on its side. Which is why, across the board, union facilities are safer than non-union facilities, and why union wages are upwards of 15 percent higher than non-union wages.”

Huffington Post, 8/5/15

State Chancellor’s Office Report Says ACCJC Should Be Replaced

“The 2015 Task Force on Accreditation report, released Friday by a state chancellor’s office task force to address concerns with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, urges community college leaders to replace the state’s accreditor for 113 community colleges.

The report, written by community college administrators, faculty, trustees, accreditation liaison officers and others with the state chancellor’s office, is possibly the strongest indication yet that the process of seeking a new accreditor will be considered after concerns have arisen with the accrediting commission for at least the past eight years.”

SF Examiner, 8/28/15

Why Friedrichs v CTA Should Be Dismissed

“The *Aboud* rule is a reasonable compromise among the First Amendment rights and responsibilities of unions, members, and nonmembers. The union has a legal duty to represent all employees fairly, and it can charge dissenting nonmembers only for the costs of discharging that duty. While contract negotiation and enforce-

ment involve expressive activity, *Aboud* allows unions to collect fees from dissenters only for their fair share of the services that the law requires the union to provide to all, and not for political activity not germane to its role as bargaining agent. That does not violate the First Amendment rights of nonmembers any more than does compelled contributions to pension and health insurance companies or utility companies or paying one’s taxes.”

Scotusblog, 8/26/15

Nightmare Pensions Initiative Cooked Up by Chuck Reed and Carl DeMaio

“By giving voters the authority to determine benefit plans for local teachers at the district level, the Reed measure would immediately splinter the retirement system into 1,700 separate plans and sweep away the so-called ‘California Rule’ that currently puts public-sector pension promises behind the political firewall of the California Constitution’s Contract Clause.

‘The measure would allow voters in a school district to change all of the terms and conditions of a member’s benefits earned for future work,’ [a letter by the CalSTRS CEO] stated, ‘to increase their required contributions or to impose additional risks on the plan’s ability to achieve full funding. . . . For new employees of school districts statewide, voters will not be obligated to enroll them in a defined benefit plan, a defined contribution plan, or any retirement plan at all.’

In the latter case, teachers in the poorest or stingiest districts would find themselves left on their own, with Social Security as their only assured source of retirement income.

The ax would also disproportionately fall on women, who comprise 70 percent of the public school teacher workforce, and who would be particularly penalized for interrupting their careers to raise families. The Reed measure eliminates the current portability of CalSTRS’ defined benefit plan and mandates that returning teachers be treated as ‘new employees,’ which would effectively place them at the whim of district voters.”

Capital and Main, 8/7/15

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