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AFT Fight for 15 rally

Students, Teachers, and Community **Fight** for **15** and More

Recently AFT 1931 joined SEIU, multiple other unions from the Local Labor Council, community groups, and students in participating in San Diego's part of the Adjunct National Day of Action. As we all know, most colleges in America run on the backs of adjunct instructors who don't receive the same pay for the same work as do the shrinking pool of full-time faculty and other types of part-time labor. Thus the exploitation of contingent labor is not just a problem for employees at Starbucks, Walmart, and fast food chains where workers are fighting for \$15 an hour; it is an epidemic in the academy as well.

During protests for part-time equity, Fight for 15 organizers stood with us

and we, in turn, stood with them as teachers and students from across the city came together with workers, community activists, people of faith, and others to call for basic fairness and economic justice for all working people. In doing so we joined a movement that has taken root across the country.

For instance, in Chicago, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) recently proposed that all Chicago Public School employees receive at least \$15 an hour. In demanding this, they made it clear that paying school employees a living wage is a part of a bigger picture. As *In These Times* reported, the Chicago Teachers see paying workers a living wage as inextricably bound to

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WHERE WE STAND

Fiscal Year 2015–16 Off to a Good Start

By **Jim Mahler**
President, AFT Guild, Local 1931

I am pleased to report that this academic year is turning out to be one of our best years in recent memory.

After nearly two years of negotiations, we ratified the new SDCCD faculty CBA with a 94% “YES” vote. This is our first new CBA in seven years and contains many new gains for faculty, most importantly a strengthening of the job security system for our adjunct faculty, in addition to providing the adjunct faculty in Continuing Education

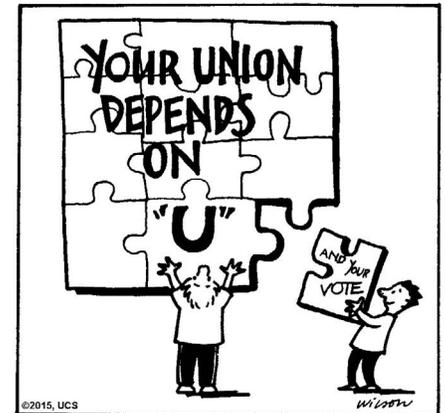
a real job security system unlike anything they have had in their 101-year history. This is noteworthy because we now have one of the most robust adjunct faculty job security programs in the state—and possibly the nation—in place for all of the adjunct faculty we represent in SDCCD colleges and continuing education as well as all the adjunct faculty in the Grossmont-Cuyamaca CCD. That translates to approximately 2,500 adjunct faculty who are now covered by a solid job security program. That’s something to celebrate!

In addition to the non-economic gains contained in the new

SDCCD faculty CBA, we also have plenty of good news to share on the economic front in both Districts.

This year marks the economic best year in decades on our campuses.

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Union Myths and Realities: Part 1

By **Jim Miller**
AFT Political Action VP

In his recent book *They're Bankrupting Us! And 20 Other Myths about Unions*, Bill Fletcher, Jr. explores and debunks many of the common misperceptions that people both in and outside of labor have about the way unions work. Over the next few newsletters we will be examining a few of the most important myths that Fletcher addresses starting with the first, “Workers Are Forced to Join Unions, Right?”

Here Fletcher underlines the seemingly obvious but often forgotten fact that, “Labor unions are created and recognized by an employer when the majority of workers in a particular company [or public sector workplace in our case] decide they want to have a union. This may happen through an election or another process in which workers indicate they want to be part of this labor union, which an employer then recognizes.”

When this happens the union becomes the “exclusive representative” of all workers. Then in some cases workers will be part of a “union shop” agreement where all the workers are in the union. The next is an “agency agreement” where workers do not have to join the union but pay a fee. And the last is when workers are under a “right to work” law where the union must represent the workers but they are not obliged to join or pay. This last situation has generally been the result of rightwing political pressure designed to restrict or kill union power.

As Fletcher notes, “The actual point of Right to Work law, then, is to drain the union of resources and simultaneously appeal to selfishness on the part of individual workers. The phrasings of right to work statutes suggest they are about freedom of choice. Actually, they are not. They are about weakening the ability of workers—as a group—from exerting any sort of power.”

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“You get minimum wage, food stamps, and subsidized health care. What more do you want?”

Inequality for All in America's Higher Education System

By Ian Duckles

Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at Mesa, Miramar, Cuyamaca, and USD; AFT Adjunct VP, Cuyamaca College

Recently Thomas Piketty spoke on economic inequality at UCSD. In his talk, Piketty hit on the central themes of his seminal work, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*: how our current level of economic inequality is now back to where it was before the “great compression” of the mid-twentieth century when union density, progressive taxation, and educational policies helped produce the high point of the American middle class. He underlined how there is no economic benefit to our current level of excessive inequality and that it is the product not of any “natural” function of the free market economy, but rather several decades of wrongheaded ideology, destructive politics, and bad policy.

It's hard not to see UCSD as a perfect microcosm of the macroeconomic inequality that Piketty was talking about with its multi-tiered system of lowly teaching assistants, lecturers, and full-professors receiving radically unequal compensation for their work. But of course it's not just at UCSD where this is an issue but across the entire landscape of American higher education, where what used to be one of the most solid middle class professions in the country is in the process of being hollowed out, bit by bit.

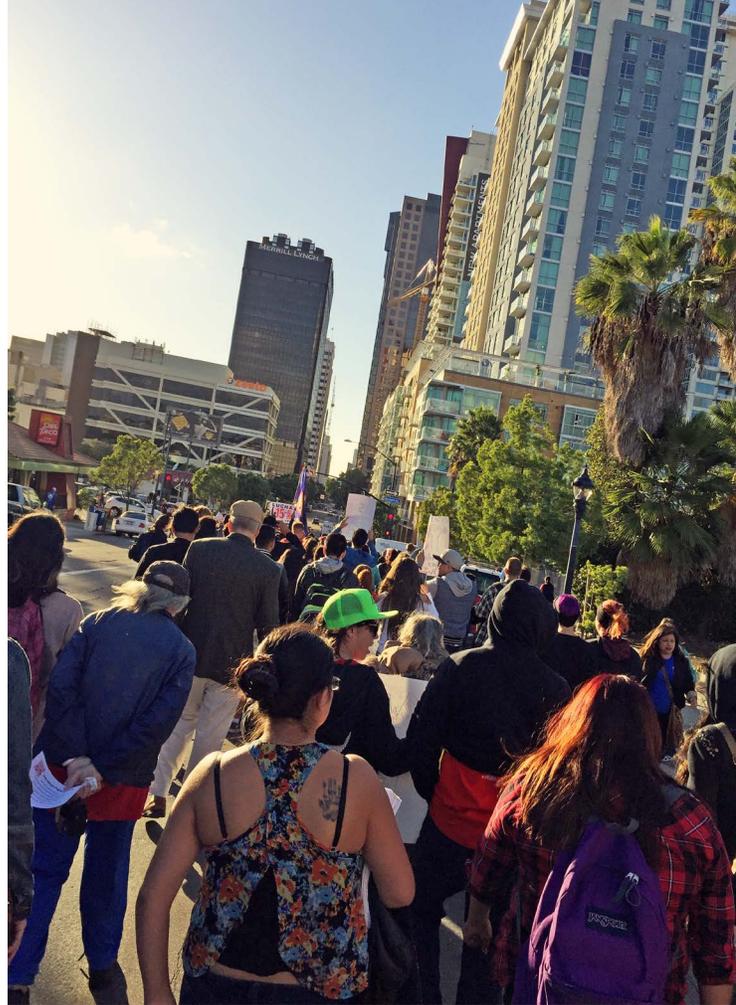
Coincidentally, only a few days after Piketty's talk, it was Campus Equity Week on our local college

campuses and across the country where faculty, staff, and students worked to raise awareness of the plight of adjunct labor and lobby to make change.

So how exactly did we get to a place where something like Campus Equity Week is even necessary?

Defined in the California Educational Code as “part-time, temporary faculty,” adjuncts were originally intended to be just that: supplements to the full-time faculty to teach classes that wouldn't support a full-time hire, or to help fill out a schedule and cover for sabbaticals and leaves. If, for example, a college wanted to offer courses in real estate, they wouldn't necessarily hire a realtor full-time (who probably wouldn't want to take the pay cut to become a full-time instructor), but instead invite a realtor to come teach a class or two per semester.

In this way, the college could take advantage of the professional expertise of these individuals without forcing them to quit their day jobs, the very thing that qualifies them to teach in the first place. There is clearly a role for this kind of instructor in the community colleges, and schools wouldn't be able to offer such a diverse list of courses and certificates without the



Fight for 15 rally at City College

assistance of these kinds of professional, part-time instructors.

Unfortunately, the role of these “part-time, temporary faculty” has shifted considerably over the last 40-50 years. During the late 60s to early 70s the ratio of adjuncts to full timers was about 20% to 80%. Today, the numbers have almost completely reversed with adjuncts making up about 75% of the faculty and full-timers making up about 25%. This shift in the make-up of higher education faculty is mirrored in all areas of higher education (community colleges, Cal States, UCs and even many private colleges), and has some significant, negative impacts. In what follows, I want to explore these negative impacts on the adjuncts themselves, students, and full-timers.

Beginning with the adjuncts, this emphasis on hiring part-time faculty has significant, negative

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The 2016 Legislative Agenda

By Jim Mahler

President, AFT Guild, Local 1931

What's on tap for 2016 in Sacramento? As usual we have a full plate of legislative items we will be advocating for in the Capitol. Last session, we were successful in getting part-time faculty job security legislation close to the finish line, but were struck down in the eleventh hour. Nonetheless, we will return this year with more resolve as we attempt to revive the part-time job security bill that was AB 1010 last session. Currently we are working with Assemblymember Medina and Senator Block to help revive this bill.

We will also be working with CSEA in seeking legislation to reduce the proliferation of hourly employees who are not being allowed to be part of the classified service. Assemblymember Gonzalez's AB 1066 is a possible vehicle for this much needed change.

In addition to our work on part-time faculty job security and reducing the number of hourlies, we will follow-up on two Ting bills, AB 1385 and 1397 regarding accreditation reform. These bills are on the Senate floor now and if they pass

the floor vote, they will move on to the Governor's desk for signature. We are hopeful that Governor Brown will sign them and we'll be able to keep the pressure on ACCJC.

Finally we will continue to advocate for improvements via the budget process. Seeking funding for more full-time hires, in addition to pay equity and paid office hours for part-time faculty remain our top priorities. As always this process is slow and frustrating but we remain vigilant and committed to moving our interests forward.

Inequality for All continued from page 3

consequences for those teaching professionals. These consequences are numerous and wide-ranging, but I will highlight just a few. In addition, because there are so many adjuncts, and these adjuncts live such a diversity of lives, it is difficult to speak for everyone. Instead, I will focus on my personal situation as a window into the broader issues confronting part-time college instructors.

Perhaps the most significant impact is that even though I have a Ph.D. and over 10 years of teaching experience, I make significantly less than my full-time counterparts for the same work. As a quick example, I interviewed for but did not get a position at Miramar College back in 2008. Had I been

hired, today I would be making an annual salary of \$80,000-\$90,000 for teaching 10 classes a year.

By contrast, I currently teach between 15 and 18 classes a year and make just under \$60,000. If we pro-rate these numbers for a per class rate, full-time me would make about \$5000 a class while real me makes about \$3750 per class. (If you are having trouble getting the numbers to add up, the full-time salary also includes other responsibilities that adjuncts

are not expected to perform, these have been eliminated from the calculation to give a more realistic per class compensation rate.) There are other significant issues such as a lack of compensation for office hours (where instructors meet with students one-on-one outside of class time—something which is required of full-timers), weak or non-existent job security, enormous time spent commuting, etc., but this disparity in pay is the most dramatic, and the most obvious example of the way in which adjuncts are exploited.

However, it should be noted that I am relatively lucky compared to many of my fellow part-timers, who may not get an adequate number of classes, might even lose several at the last minute, and/or not work in a district with a decent union and a degree of job security. Indeed, there are many part-timers whose quick changes in fortune have



"The last time I got a raise was when the government increased the minimum wage!"

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Fight for 15 continued from page 1

improving education and our society as a whole:

“You can’t expect schools to solve all of the problems of the country,” says CTU acting president Jesse Sharkey. “One of the solutions is to pay parents and contract workers a living wage. It’s very important to locate demand for better education within the demands for a society that treats working class people better. Chicago Public Schools should lead by example.”

Thus the Fight for 15 is not just about the struggles of fast food workers to make a decent wage. It is also about the plight of low wage and contingent workers across the American economy. Again from *In These Times*:

The goals of their movement quickly resonated among the nation’s low-wage workers. Taking the most recent available numbers from 2014, about half of all women workers and more than 40 percent of the workforce as a whole earned less than \$15 an hour, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Equally important, the movement captured the imagination of the broader citizenry, offering a vivid contrast with the ultra-rich 1 percent, just as the debate over economic inequality took root in the body politic.

A renewed fast food worker spring offensive now underway shows how the movement has grown in size and sophistication as well as ambition and influence. The actions planned for this spring will reach out to low-wage workers in many

industries and corporations, hoping to trigger new and broader campaigns both to organize unions and improve pay and working conditions.

Along with our colleagues in Chicago, teachers here in San Diego know that the effort to address the plight of underpaid, part-time workers does not just affect our



Fight for 15 march marching for 15

adjunct instructors but also our students and the community we serve. That is why the American Federation of Teachers Local 1931 is proud to be a part of the Fight for 15. Most of the profound obstacles our students face in the community colleges are rooted in the economic injustice of poverty and our historic level of income inequality that disproportionately affects communities of color from which the majority of our students come.

Simply put, when students have to choose between putting food on the table or buying books, providing

childcare or attending class, or any of the myriad other impossible dilemmas they frequently face, academic achievement suffers. We can talk all we want about our educational system doing more to foster better outcomes for our most underprepared students—the roses that rise through the cracks in the concrete that is poverty and systemic discrimination—but those roses will never have the room to fully bloom until we stop pouring concrete.

What the Fight for 15 represents is a call to begin to build a society that treats working people better, and it will help to make all of our communities more fertile gardens for everyone. It is not just about stopping the exploitation of fast food workers, or providing benefits with service sector jobs, or halting the effort to turn professional work into contingent labor; it’s about raising us all up. Every worker in America deserves a living wage, dignity, and respect. When we allow our neighbors to fall behind, we are all the lesser. As the old labor slogan puts it, “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

And there are real tangible wins to be had in the next year with a chance to give San Diego a raise to \$11.50 with 5 earned sick days this June and perhaps another leap to a statewide \$15 minimum wage in November. There will also quite likely be an opportunity to extend Proposition 30’s taxes on top earners to help make college more affordable.

So there is a lot of work to do but some real, pragmatic solutions are on the horizon.

Where We Stand continued from page 2

Both Districts will be receiving generous allocations from our union negotiated Resource Allocation Formula which will allow us to correct many longstanding inequities that have long persisted, in some cases, since the founding of each District.

For Classified Staff in the SDCCD, we have accomplished the final step in a 17-year process to unite all classified under one roof. Food Service, Maintenance & Operations, and Office-Technical staff are now not only on the same salary schedule, but have been seamlessly merged into all provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, both the economic and non-economic provisions. Other than the job descriptions themselves, all three groups now share identical benefits with one another.

We have made significant economic gains for our GCCCD faculty as well with significant increases in compensation for both contract and adjunct faculty,

augmentation of the structure of the adjunct faculty salary to make it more closely align with the contract faculty salary schedule, and much-needed compensation increases to our department chairs and coordinators and head coaches.

SDCCD faculty will experience gains in many areas. Across the board compensation increases on all salary schedules, additional salary steps being added to the adjunct faculty schedule to make it more closely align with the contract faculty salary schedule, additional resources for adjunct faculty paid office hours, movement toward equity for both non-classroom counselor assigned hours and classroom laboratory assignments, and equity rules for continuing education adjunct vocational faculty just to name but a few gains.

Last, but certainly not least, we were able to increase the lowest salaries of the NANC employees we represent in the SDCCD so that their minimum wage rates are closer

to \$15/hour. While not quite there yet, we hope to achieve the \$15/hour goal very soon in the years to come.

We achieved these gains because of our union's solid membership base, our effective political advocacy in electing sympathetic boards, and our work in assuring the passage of Proposition 30 that provided the resources that made everything possible. Thus our membership, advocacy, commitment to a long-term, larger vision of social justice both inside and outside the workplace brings rewards both for us and other workers, students, and communities across the state.

As we face a continual onslaught of attacks on unions from nearly every quarter, our continued strength and solidarity among our own members will be essential if we are to fend off these attacks successfully and continue to move forward. So if you haven't joined the union, there is no better time to join than now because we need you and, as these contracts illustrate, solidarity works.

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resulted in the loss of their homes or healthcare, sometimes at the most inopportune times.

So, like too many Americans at present, the majority of college professors, who have what was once considered one of the safest of middle class jobs, are now part of a growing sector of workers in a fundamentally precarious economic situation. When one factors in the large amount of student loan debt that many of us carry as a result of our graduate degrees, even adjuncts with a steady flow of classes are often only a step ahead of the debt collector.

Thus, in many ways, the systematic erosion of the job security and economic standing of the majority of college professors mirrors the larger erosion of the American middle class. Far from the stereotype of the "comfortable academic," many professors today are always just a bad semester away from losing it all.

This reliance on adjuncts also has significant negative impacts on students and all the success metrics such as "retention," "persistence," and "transfer rates" that administrators claim to value. Many adjuncts must work multiple jobs at multiple schools in order to make ends meet.

I personally teach eight courses at four schools (Cuyamaca, Mesa, Miramar, and the University of San Diego). This means that I spend a great deal of time on San Diego freeways. Because of the tight scheduling of my courses, I do not have time to spend with students outside of class. Since my compensation rate for office hours is low to non-existent, I don't hold them. This negatively impacts my students since I am not available to provide them extra assistance or time should they need it. I try to do my best by my students, but with better pay

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and paid office hours, I know I would be more able to fully serve their needs.

So our higher education system's institutional reliance on part-time labor undercuts all the rhetoric about the need to serve students and invest in the future. By being "economically efficient" with their labor pool, colleges and universities are short-changing their students, whose costs are ever-increasing as the economic fate of most of their instructors becomes more and more precarious.

Finally, the rise of adjuncts and the "adjunctification" of higher education also pose serious threats to full-time faculty. Many people may not realize how much work goes on behind the scenes to run a college or university. In addition to the actual teaching of courses, there is an enormous amount of essential administrative and committee work that must also be completed.

These include things like making sure that the college has the curriculum and is offering courses and programs that meet student needs, and ensuring that the college can maintain its accreditation. This is important work that is necessary for the college to function, and it is work that must be done by full-time professors. As the ranks of adjuncts swell the administrative demands on full-timers increase in order to do all this work. Adjuncts don't receive compensation for this work, and thus have little incentive to become involved, putting all of the burden on the dwindling pool of full-timers who are more and more stretched in multiple directions by an increasing number of administrative mandates with little to no additional time to fulfill them in a way that ensures the quality of their work.

In addition, the overreliance on adjuncts actually weakens academic freedom for all faculty as a largely contingent labor force dependent on their next class to pay the rent is less likely to do anything to rock the boat, no less take a principled stand on a controversial pedagogical, political, or administrative issue. While those outside the world of education have frequently maligned "academic freedom," a democratic society loses this space of free discourse not dependent on coercive economic forces or popular opinion at its peril.

So, I have painted a fairly dire picture here, but what can we do? In addition to raising awareness about these issues, we are also engaged in a constant lobbying campaign to encourage the Governor and the legislature to earmark more money for adjunct issues.

Specifically, we are asking them to increase funding for adjunct equity pay in the amount of \$50 million, support adjunct office hours to the tune of \$30 million, and devote \$100 million to convert part-time positions to full-time. The end results of our efforts last go-round

were disappointing with the Governor failing to support the money for office hours and part-time equity that the legislature had approved. But we remain undaunted even after losing this battle. It's not winning one budget battle but rather the long campaign to reach true equity.

Indeed, at a time when Proposition 30

has brought in much needed revenue for the first time in a long time, it's not unreasonable of us to ask that the Governor yield and devote some of the California budget to supporting these important programs that will benefit adjuncts, students, and the community at large that deserves a quality public education system.



Fight for 15 rally at Civic Center

Myths and Realities continued from page 2

And as history and current practice show, unions in "right to work" states have far less political and bargaining power and workers in those states have a significantly lower standard of living as a result. As a recent EPI study has shown, public sector workers like ourselves in "right to work" states make as much as 11% less than the average worker in the same job in a more union friendly state.

Thus unions are not about trapping workers who would otherwise do better but empowering them to make considerably more money and have much more democracy on the job than workers in places that don't respect collective bargaining.

We forget this at our peril.



in brief

Right to Work Nation? Let's Hope Not

“The nine Supreme Court judges will soon hear arguments in *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, and their ruling could transform all of the American public sector into a “right-to-work” zone. The result could be lower wages for public employees around the country, according to the author of a recent study from the pro-union Economic Policy Institute (EPI) . . . Studies of the nation’s right-to-work states show that such laws tend to lead to lower union membership rates, and to drive down wages among government employees.

Jeffrey Keefe, an EPI researcher and former professor of labor relations at Rutgers University, found that states that adopt public sector right-to-work rules—also known as “open shop” laws—see government worker pay fall by between 4.4 and 11.2 percent relative to non-right-to-work states.”

Al Jazeera America, 10/16/15

Who’s Behind Fredrichs vs. CTA?

“[T]he real force propelling *Friedrichs*’ gallop through the courts was the Center for Individual Rights (CIR), the right-wing pro-bono law group that is representing teacher Rebecca Friedrichs and her fellow plaintiffs: At each stage

in the legal process, CIR attorneys asked the courts to rule against their own clients, with the apparent interest of moving the case up to the Supreme Court as quickly as possible . . .

The list of foundations and donor-advised funds supporting the Center for Individual Rights reads like a who’s who of the right’s organized opposition to labor. A number of those funders, unsurprisingly, enjoy the support of Charles and David Koch, the billionaire brothers who are principals in Koch Industries, the second-largest privately held corporation in the United States. (*Forbes* estimates each of the brothers’ personal wealth at \$42.3 billion.) Longtime supporters of anti-labor efforts, the Koch brothers even founded their own organization, Americans for Prosperity, to create for the Republican right the sort of electoral get-out-the-vote ground

teams that members of unions often form on behalf of pro-labor, usually Democratic, candidates.”

The American Prospect, 10/29/15

Meanwhile Sweden Introduces the Six Hour Day . . .

“Sweden is moving to a six-hour working day in a bid to increase productivity and make people happier.

Employers across the country have already made the change, according to the Science Alert website, which said the aim was to get more done in a shorter amount of time and ensure people had the energy to enjoy their private lives.

Toyota centres in Gothenburg, Sweden’s second largest city, made the switch 13 years ago, with the company reporting happier staff, a lower turnover rate, and an increase in profits in that time.”

UK Independent, 10/1/15

Reforming Education Reform?

“With President Obama’s acknowledgement that testing has gotten out of control, and the work being done on Capitol Hill to fix NCLB, we have a big opening for a reset on education policy. It’s time to focus on the whole child. It’s time to focus on supporting improvement. We need to foster collaborative, safe and welcoming environments; recruit, support and retain great teachers and let them teach; include parents in decision making and engage children with a rich curriculum that includes art, music, physical education and project-based instruction; and provide wraparound emotional, social and health services. The bright spots in the data reflect these strategies. This is the way we can reclaim the promise of public education.”

AFT Statement on National Assessment of Education Progress Results

Editor

Jim Miller

Contributing Editor

Kelly Mayhew

Contributing Writers

Ian Duckles, Jim Mahler

The  Guild

**San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca
Community Colleges**

3737 Camino Del Rio South, Suite 410
San Diego, California 92108

619 640-1155 phone • 619 640-1154 fax
www.aftguild.org