

FALL 2025 VOLUME I

AFT GUILD 1931

Standing in Solidarity, Building Our Community

BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY

Larissa Dorman-Cobb
Organizer/Trainer

Welcome back to Fall 2025!

We are all very aware of the moment we are in--as colleagues, student-centered advocates, neighbors in our communities and humans on this planet.

Our union is ramping up our focus on building a thriving and robust liaison network on each and every campus/site. We are preparing to be even more active in the face of ongoing attacks and to stand in solidarity by engaging with our union family to share urgent information as well as opportunities to build vital community that will keep us sustained.

Becoming a liaison is an opportunity to share information with colleagues, build our campus culture, be involved in decision making around how to best activate our membership and offer a space for us to make a huge impact locally. If you would like to join our liaison network, get more information or suggest others who you think would thrive in this role, please email me at aftlarissa@gmail.com. This network of campus coordinators and liaisons have already been so effective that we have seen a record number of members turning out to our events!

We must also make space for joy and bringing our families into our union community so we hope you will also mark your calendar for our AFT Guild Family Padres Day. Tickets sold out in less than 24 hours but we will let folks know if more become available on our aftguild.org event page!



April Padres Game
(150 at tailgate and 430
members at the game!)



May Day Family Picnic
(500+ members)



May AFT Inaugural Mini-Conference
Know Your Power Panel



Member Spotlight



KIMI MCSWAIN
CUYAMACA COLLEGE
ADJUNCT EOPS COUNSELOR

I have been working in EOPS at Cuyamaca for 10 years as of this past April. I am adjunct counselor. Because of AFT I receive Kaiser healthcare for free.

This past June, I had a double knee replacement; both knees at the same time, total replacements. I paid \$15 for my surgery. I had a great surgeon. I stayed in the hospital for 5 days and received excellent care. I was transported home by ambulance (for free - no co-pay). When I returned home, I received all kinds of medical equipment to use during my recovery; a walker, an ice machine, etc and for 2 weeks, 3 different home healthcare folk came to help me recover; physical therapy, occupational therapy and a home healthcare aid (for free-no co-pay).

I am 8 weeks out since surgery and I am still going to out-patient physical therapy, I have had 3 post-op appointments with my surgeon. I have a direct knee replacement line 24 hours a day where I can call and ask questions about anything.

It has been a challenging recovery, but because of our union/aft, I have had amazing health care, a great surgeon and medical staff, and all the support I need at minimal cost (maybe \$100). I am extremely grateful and I know that because of my medical insurance I will be able to walk and run (like the Bionic Woman) instead of being in a wheelchair for the rest of my life.

Thank you AFT for my new knees!



YVONNE SCHMELTZ AFT GUILD MEMBER ADVOCATE

A tentative agreement has finally been reached for the Classified CBA!

Having sat through the negotiation process for the last two years, it is hard, tedious, and strategic work. We wouldn't be here without all of your support, speaking at board meetings, wearing your buttons, using your zoom backgrounds, having conversations with each other, and keeping the pressure on at all levels. And I appreciate each and every one of you for all the work you did in your own ways to support!

I am extremely excited that the week of Sept. 2nd we will be holding information sessions for you all! It is time to let your voices be heard again!

Please gather any and all questions and come to one of the zooms scheduled:

- Tuesday, September 2nd, 2:00-4:00pm
- Wednesday, September 3rd, 9:30-11:30am
- Wednesday, September 3rd, 3:30-5:30pm
- Friday, September 5th, 9:00-11:00am

The Zoom link for all meetings will be:
<https://sdccd-edu.zoom.us/j/84101645411>

All AFT Classified Professionals will be asked to vote on the new contract a little later in September once the information sessions are all held.

Then, once we all settle back in after the return of students and faculty, in October there will be more Know Your Rights sessions and how to more succinctly ensure your contract is being enforced in your offices, departments, and areas. We are each other's and our own biggest advocates! So be on the lookout for more information from AFT, and save the dates on your calendars as soon as you get those emails!

And as always, if there is something going on in your workplace that doesn't feel quite right, or you have questions about, please don't wait to reach out!

The sooner we know what's happening, the quicker we can respond and make an impact towards corrective action if needed.
You can always contact me at aftyvonne@gmail.com

Tina Solorzano Fletcher Organizer & Membership Coordinator



Calling All NANC Employees to Join AFT Guild!

It's a new semester and we are continuing with our Non-Academic, Non-Classified (NANC) employee campaign. Beginning last semester and during the summer we have been talking with NANC employees about joining our Union. We have three amazing student organizers that have been helping us meet with NANC, student workers, and work-study employees. Many are pleased to know they can join AFT and be a part of the Union that represents the San Diego CCD Faculty and Classified Professionals and Grossmont-Cuyamaca CCD Faculty. Not only are they happy to join, but it's also exciting to be a part of a Union that will lead the way for NANC employees across the country.

Until we have a NANC Union contract in place their dues will remain \$1 while in paid status. Once there has been a vote to ratify the Union contract by the NANC members, their dues will follow our regular dues structure. NANC members are entitled to the AFT Union benefits we all enjoy.

You too can help us in this campaign! Share the following QR code with a NANC or anyone that hasn't had the opportunity to join.



It's a direct link to our AFT Guild Application for Membership. It just takes a few minutes to fill out. Once you click send, you're on your way to be a card-carrying Union member.

If you have any inquiries regarding membership or require your member card, please do not hesitate to email me at aftTina@mac.com.



Soon-Ah Fadness Professional Development Coordinator



Welcome Back from AFT Guild Professional Development and M&M Programs!

Even though I'm not sure where the summer went (!), AFT is excited to be returning with our professional development events for 2025-2026!

First up, M&M: Mentors & Mentees. If you have a new hire in your department, please reach out to me at aftprofdev@outlook.com so that we can include them in M&M and support them in their first year.

Please see a list of events for September and October below and be on the lookout for registration links.

- Friday, September 19, 1:30 – 4:30 - Leadership 101: Discovering & Leading with our Values
- Friday, September 26, 2:30 – 4:00 - Grad School: Should I Get a Ph.D. or Ed.D.
- Friday, October 10, 3:00 – 5:00 - Curating Your CV: Preparing for Your Next Position
- Friday, October 17, 1:30 – 4:30 - Leadership 101: Discovering & Leading with our Strengths;
- Thursday, October 23, 3:00 – 4:30 - Financial Series: Budgeting & Building Wealth

Please go here to register for the events and thank you all for your support!

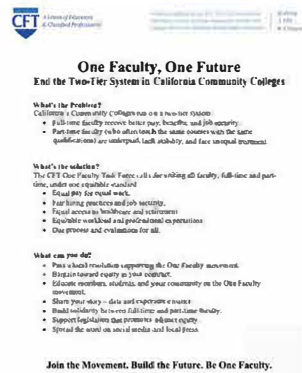
AFT PART-TIME ADVOCACY

Local

Join our Part-Time Committee and be a driving force in the One Faculty campaign! Together, we're fighting for:

- Equal Pay for Equal Work: Pay based on workload, not job title.
- Equal Benefits: Same health care, leave, and retirement for everyone.
- Equal Job Security: Fair evaluations, due process, and protection from unfair layoffs.
- Equal Opportunities: Full access to professional development and hiring processes.

Your voice and participation can make a real difference in achieving these goals. If you're ready to help create a fair and united faculty, contact Jessica Thompson at aftrep.jessica@gmail.com.



Statewide/National

CFT succeeded in getting AB1028, one of its initial efforts towards a One-Faculty model, out of Senate appropriations and onto the floor of the California Senate where it is expected to pass and move onto the governor's desk. This bill, if passed, will allow districts to negotiate termination language and create real job security for adjunct, or as referred to in California Ed Code, "temporary faculty."

AB1028 amends Ed Code so that the agreement that the district has bargained with the district becomes the standard for determining termination. It is a small but meaningful step towards the realization of due process rights for adjunct faculty, a core principle of academic freedom.

This past Summer has been significant for adjunct faculty. On July 1st, the FT One-Faculty task force held a statewide discussion of the One-Faculty model, one which is designed to end the division between Part and full-time faculty by moving all faculty to a same salary schedule, proportionate but similar job duties, and a single hiring process, with flexibility for faculty to teach full or part time with no loss of employment status. The basic principles of this model have received support from all major community college faculty groups, including CFT, CTA, CCCI, FACCC, and the ASCCC. CFT's One Tier task force is in the process of creating a strategic plan focused on phases of local education and advocacy, bargaining strategy, and legislation, the first parts of this plan to be announced this Fall.

As part of this launch, CFT is making plans for a One-Faculty Week to be held October 27th-31st. Please be looking for Information regarding One-Faculty Week on the AFT 1931 website.

AFT SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

We are a social justice union! The AFT Social Justice Committee invites you to join us to learn and engage in social justice activities throughout the year.

Meetings are on the third Friday of the month via Zoom from 12:30-1:30 PM.

Contact Jim Mahler if you are interested in being all in for justice!



AFT Social Justice Spring Events: Arab History Month Event, Coming Out Day at Miramar, Mesa and Grossmont



Labor Day 2025: Why Unions Still Matter and Might Just be the Key to Saving Democracy

Following our recent Labor Day celebration, it's a good time to think about what unions have done for American workers and society. In many ways, unions are the embodiment of participatory democracy that powerful forces in our society are currently trying to eliminate. The story of American labor is a long one that illustrates how hard it has been for ordinary Americans to get not just a bigger piece of the economic pie but also a more robust role in American society and government. Despite the fact that the labor movement faces existential threats at present, it stands as the last best hope for workers, union and nonunion, who want to stand up against the scourge of inequality and the concentration of power in the hands of a new oligarchy.

Unions have evolved along with American democracy. Most labor histories begin around 1877, the year of the Great Railroad Strike that signaled the beginning of a militant upheaval of American workers bucking up against the growing inequality and oppression they faced in the midst of the American Industrial Revolution. It's important to note that any honest assessment of American labor history should start before then, however, and include the struggles of workers of all backgrounds against indentured servitude and slavery as well as the emergence of early Workingman's parties in the 1820s. One might also want to include the struggles of the emerging women's movement that grew alongside the abolition movement and included an economic component in things like the Seneca Falls Declaration.

Unions are essentially working people standing together to form collective power in the workplace and in the political arena. Historically, unions have been the only significant institutions representing the rights of working people in America. Before unions, workers had virtually no rights in the workplace and for many years of our early history, non-property-owning men could not even vote. Thus, the history of the union movement is the history of working Americans getting together to establish some basic economic and political rights and to have a voice in American society.

At present, Americans have a more favorable view of unions than they have had in decades, and more and more workers are questioning not just how they work and for how much pay, but also what the meaning of work is and whether their jobs should define their lives. As the groundbreaking organizing victory at Amazon in New York and similar efforts at Starbucks across the country illustrate, even workers at some of the hardest places to organize are fighting for a union.

Why?

In economic terms, as Paul Krugman has noted American workers might have finally had enough with getting the short end of the stick in comparison to those in other wealthy countries where some jobs might still be "grueling and poorly paid" but are "less awful" than in the United States. Krugman reminds us that in countries like Denmark, even McDonald's workers can be paid as much as \$20 an hour and that the "the U.S. does stand out among wealthy countries for having a low minimum wage, for offering very little vacation time and for failing to offer parental and sick leave."

And unions offer answers for both pressing bread and butter economic needs and broader, equally persistent issues like the health of American democracy as a whole.

As a recent Economic Policy Institute report observed, high unionization rates are good for workers across the board. In the 17 states with the highest union density:

- *The state minimum wage is 19% higher than the national average and 40% higher than it is in states with lower union density.
- *The median income is \$6000 higher than the national average.
- *A higher share of unemployed workers receives unemployment insurance.
- *More workers have health insurance than in states with less union density.
- *More workers have paid sick leave and paid family and medical leave than those in low union density states.



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When it comes to the health of American democracy, unions also get the goods as the EPI report explains:

“There are fewer restrictive voting laws in states with the highest union density while over 70% of low-union-density states have passed voter suppression laws between 2011 and 2019.

With all the good that they do, it’s no wonder that unions are hip again or that those who want to undermine our democracy in the service of the economic elite are trying as hard as they can to get rid of us.

As Nancy MacLean outlined in *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America*, the American plutocracy’s grail quest was to “save capitalism from democracy, permanently.” In Donald Trump, the billionaire class has the man they have dreamed of for decades who can seal the deal for elite rule, and he is openly trying to do just that—crush the union movement, gut civil rights, destroy environmental and climate protections, enshrine the divine right of corporations, and give big tax breaks to the rich, many of whom see taxes as a form of “gangsterism” robbing them of their natural right to hog all the resources.

It is, in the view of folks like Kevin Roberts, the President of the Heritage Foundation, a “second American Revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be.” We need to view all this very clearly: Trump is here to deliver the kill shot on the very chance of a more robust, inclusive democracy or even the ability of movements to call for it for the foreseeable future. Hence, his assault on unionized federal workers and their collective bargaining rights along with the very idea that the public sector, public education in particular, has any value in American society.

Unions are playing a key role in contesting this, from pushing back against it by organizing workers and communities, to fighting for immigrants’ rights, to pushing for a special election in California to contest Trump’s efforts to rig the 2026 midterms via Texas redistricting. Labor unions are always essential in that they offer an alternative vision of what American democracy can be. As labor writer Hamilton Nolan puts it:

When does the typical American ever experience democracy? As a child, they are told what to do. At school, they are told what to do. When they grow up, they get a job, and are told what to do. If they go to church, they are told what to do. And everyone with any common sense can see that voting, the one activity explicitly branding and participating in democracy, seems to change nothing, as power is concentrated, and decisions are made by unknown people in places remote from the everyday experience of a normal person. From this base of nothing, we expect Americans to treasure democracy as their greatest value. That is a hard ask, when it is something they have never seen in the wild . . . Unless—unless—they happen to be in a union. In a decent union, their opinion will matter. They can directly participate in discussions that lead to a set of demands. They can decide, collectively, to take direct action to win their demands . . . It is not democracy as a slogan, but democracy as lived experience.

This Labor Day let’s celebrate the role of the union movement in expanding the reach of American democracy, providing a site of “lived democracy” for union workers, and recommit ourselves to insisting that the egalitarian principles of social justice unionism prevail throughout the entirety of American society. In this dark moment, as educators and unionists, we can provide a light, a larger sense of solidarity that can lead our way out of our present crisis of to a better future for us all.

-Jim Miller, AFT Guild 1931 Political Action, VP