

AFSCME 189 NEWSLETTER

Fall 2019

Are You Ready For Bargaining?



AFSCME 189 Walks The Line In Solidarity With UFCW & ONA

Happy Autumn! We are preparing for bargaining to start in the winter, so expect to hear from us early and often as we work to integrate our whole union family into the process. The labor movement is heating up, both locally and on the national stage.

We are seeing the power of collective action. Our union family at OHSU won a better contract with the help of folks like us, showing up at the pickets to demonstrate to management the support of the community. There are strikes and boycotts happening across the country, and whether they wear AFSCME green or any other union colors - this is our extended labor family. When they win, we win.

Our delegation to the Oregon AFL-CIO convention participated in the Rosie/RESPECT action at the Fred Meyer and in the march for Astoria nurses Saturday September 21st. The workers' complaints are much the same as they've been for decades. Unfair pay, unsafe working conditions, and management that refuses to listen or bargain in good faith. Far from being a relic of the past, unions are needed right here and right now.

What is our story to tell? When AFSCME 189 and the rest of the District Council of Trade Unions are working on the next contract with the City - what do we want, and how does it relate to making our community a better place? Let us know what you care about, and help us fight for what matters to you.

Join us to strengthen our position at bargaining. If you are already represented by AFSCME, all you need to do is sign a membership card. Check your union bulletin board or with a steward at your worksite. Don't have access to either?

Chris Flanary 843 452 3201 / chrisflanarypdx@gmail.com.

Not already represented but interested in joining our union? Hit me up, and together we can secure your place at the bargaining table.

In Solidarity,

Chris Flanary - Recording Secretary Local 189

Message From Our Organizer Mark

Why Our Union Matters

We fight to keep the city of Portland a good place to work. In our last contract negotiations we won raises and compensation for workers required to work during inclement weather. Over the past year or so we have worked with other unions and management to improve our vacation accruals, secure six weeks of paid parental leave and lower the annual out of pocket maximum for our self-insured plan.

We fight off bad contract changes and preserve the best of what we have. Failed City proposals included background checks for current employees, attempts to weaken seniority rights and other changes that would allow the city to outsource your job. We clash with Management who try to erode our members' contract rights, like using sick leave for dependent care.

We fight to help our members. The cost of housing in the city is rapidly rising and many workers struggle to stay in the community we serve, so we push for wage increases. We want the City to follow the County and the State by paying a bilingual premium to workers who use those skills in their job. We advocate for recognition of the office skills that so many of our members bring to bear without compensation.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT!

The City knows the percentage of represented workers that belong to their union. The collective strength of our workers is what it takes to continue to make positive gains and fight take aways. As a membership of volunteers, we sometimes make mistakes. As a democratic organization we sometimes make collective decisions that not everyone agrees with (myself included). This is our Union. When we stay together, we win.

We need everyone on board to succeed.

Mark Gipson

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Upcoming Events

General Membership Meeting Second Tuesday of Every Month @ 6025 E Burnside, 5:30 pm - Dinner and childcare provided

Check our online calendar! www.afscme189.com

From the International President



Workers Need the Freedom to Negotiate

For AFSCME sister Tina Suckow, helping people struggling with mental illness is a calling. She always wanted to be a nurse, and while she knew her job at Iowa's Independence Mental Health Institute could be dangerous, nothing could have prepared her for what happened last October.

A patient brutally attacked and

beat her, leaving her unconscious with injuries to the head, knee and shoulder.

It has been a long road to recovery. But in March, Tina's nightmare took another horrific turn. After her sick days ran out, her employer, the state of Iowa, refused to grant her request for unpaid leave. And then, the state fired her just a few weeks after she had major surgery.

For decades, Iowa had a robust collective bargaining system that allowed state employees like Tina to negotiate virtually all terms of employment. But a new state law, rammed through the legislature in 2017 with barely any debate, stripped the system down to its bare bones.

People like Tina who devote their careers to public service deserve better. They deserve a seat at the table with their employer to hash out a fair contract. A new bill introduced in Congress would give them just that.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act would extend to public employees the same rights and protections enjoyed by those working in the private sector. It would allow them to join together in a union if a majority of employees vote to have one; to bargain collectively

over wages, hours and working conditions; and to access dispute resolution mechanisms like arbitration and mediation, as well as the ability to sue.

If this bill were law, Tina could have filed a grievance through her collective bargaining contract after she was terminated. And she would have had the chance to negotiate for more rigorous workplace safety standards in the first place, perhaps preventing the incident altogether.

Workers nationwide are organizing and mobilizing to secure just these kinds of freedoms, with strong unions as the vehicle for progress.

Thanks to a surge of bold activism from AFSCME members, the governor of Nevada recently signed an historic law empowering 20,000 state employees with collective bargaining rights. They now have the ability to negotiate for a fair return on their work and for resources their communities need. In Delaware, AFSCME members recently won improved access to wage bargaining. New state contracts in both Illinois and Pennsylvania include strong wage increases, demonstrating respect for the work we do. In Texas, AFSCME Texas Corrections won \$84 million for retention of experienced employees.

From strikes by teachers, hotel workers and grocery workers to vigorous new organizing in media, behavioral health and other industries, we're seeing the most dynamic wave of worker activism in decades. Public approval ratings for labor unions are at a 15-year high, and nearly half of all Americans say they would join a union if given the choice.

Now is the moment to harness that energy and momentum, turning it into lasting change. We can start by passing the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, giving Tina Suckow and so many like her the voice on the job they need and the basic respect they deserve.

We Never Quit Spotlight - Claudia Alvarez



Claudia Alvarez - 2019 Woman on the Rise Nominee

Water Bureau Utility Apprentice Claudia Alvarez is wrapping up her first year with the City with panache. Alvarez is nominated to Oregon Tradeswomen's Woman on the Rise award, which honors exceptional women who are "on the rise" as a leader. Her nomination from Danielle Marcial reads: "During her short tenure at the Water Bureau (so far), Claudia has worked many hours of overtime, overnights, responding to emergency main breaks and other projects that would affect the livability of neighborhood residents during typical daytime hours. Claudia has been a dependable and enthusiastic worker all while raising children at home. She has been a stand-out and an asset to the workgroup."

We reached out to Claudia about her start with the City, and she shared with us, "it's been great, I've learned a lot and have made a lot of friendships. I am looking forward to the next 30 years of my career with the city. I am blessed to have been nominated for this award. Hopefully I can help make a difference for women in trades."