

# WHITE COLLAR

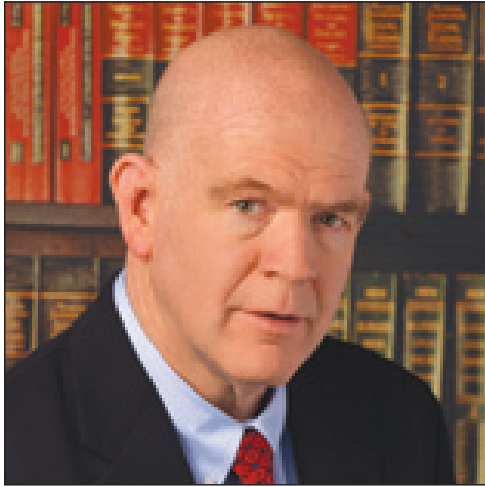
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC    ISSUE 543 | FALL 2020



## Heroes

OPEIU members on the front line  
of the COVID-19 pandemic





## Don't Let Corporate Interests Rule the Supreme Court

By Richard Lanigan  
President

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away of complications of pancreatic cancer in September. Her passing, only weeks before a national presidential election, has become a major political issue. Who will fill the vacancy and when will it be filled? Republican senators who favored waiting until after the outcome of a presidential election only four years ago are now finding themselves in the complicated position of contradicting what they said in clear terms such a short time ago. Why would these senators be willing to put themselves in that position? The answer is a vote on the Supreme Court can be worth a fortune to a big corporate donor.

In 2013, a jury in a federal court in Kansas found Dow Chemical liable in a major class action lawsuit alleging the company price fixed the cost of polyurethane. The jury assessed damages of \$400 million and found anti-trust violations with large mandated penalties, meaning the company would owe more than \$1 billion from this one suit. This finding began a legal battle culminating in Dow filing a writ of certiorari, where a lower court is ordered to deliver its record in a case to the Supreme Court for review. The high court granted the certiorari, and the case was brought before the Supreme Court.

Approximately 10 days before the court was to hear the case, Dow settled for more than \$800 million. Why, you ask, would Dow settle a class action suit after

spending tens of millions in legal fees to appeal the case to the Supreme Court? While Dow did not state the reason for its sudden change in position, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, a conservative, died just days before the case was to be heard before the Supreme Court.

Dow was aware Scalia had written several decisions in the recent years leading up to its hearing favoring large corporate defendants. Two of those cases were class action cases, like the Dow case. Once Scalia died, Dow realized Scalia, who favored large corporations in class action, would not be ruling on the case. Dow was also aware the composition of the court before Justice Scalia died was five conservatives to four liberals. After Scalia died, Dow was not willing to risk the possibility of a decision that could cost \$1.2 billion. You might say that Scalia's vote meant hundreds of millions of dollars to Dow.

Like Justice Ginsburg, Scalia's death also triggered a long political battle over whether President Barack Obama should appoint the justice who would fill the vacancy created by Scalia's death or whether the person filling that vacancy should be the winner of the 2016 presidential election.

President Donald Trump ultimately filled the vacancy with Neil Gorsuch. In his short tenure, Justice Gorsuch has also ruled in favor of corporations

in class action lawsuits. He authored the decision in the *Epic Systems Corp. v. Lewis* case, where employees were denied the right to file employment-based lawsuits as a class. This decision means employees who signed an employment agreement containing a class action waiver may not file or be a member of class in a legal action against their employer. The outcome of the case impacted 26 million working Americans.

**“There is clearly much at stake in this election.”**

While we become embroiled in the cultural and political issues regarding Justice Ginsburg's replacement, remember it's not the cultural issues corporate donors care about. Their concern, like it was four years ago, will be about a justice whose philosophy on consumers' and workers' rights cases agrees with its corporate philosophy. Please remember Ginsburg was not selected based on her corporate philosophy. There is clearly much at stake in this election, and with only a short time to go you should ask yourself if you identify with Dow Chemical or with your fellow union members at your workplace. ■

## OPEIU Enhances Identity Protection Benefit to Now Include Your Family



**Starting Nov. 20, all members should visit [OpeiuIDProtect.com](https://OpeiuIDProtect.com) to enroll yourself and your family.**

The OPEIU Identity Protection Benefit has been enhanced with new services and stronger protections, including expanded coverage for your family.

Effective Nov. 20, OPEIU members and their families will have access to a more comprehensive defense against identity theft through our new identity protection provider, Identity IQ (IDIQ), still at no cost to you.

The benefit features state-of-the-art identity and credit monitoring, checking account reporting, and full-service identity restoration that includes insurance and lost wallet assistance in canceling and replacing credit cards. If you become a victim of identity theft, IDIQ's trained experts will help you restore your identity as close as possible to the level it was before the incident. This can save you hundreds of hours of your own time and productivity. It can also save you money.

“With the COVID-19 crisis, the country has seen an increase in identity theft, so we decided it was the right time to upgrade our already robust program to help our members and their families stay safe during the pandemic and beyond,” said OPEIU President Richard Lanigan.

Additional features of this benefit include internet surveillance including the Dark Web, up to \$1 million in insurance if you are a victim of identity theft, solicitation reduction to help eliminate those annoying spam calls, and 24/7 support with fully U.S.-based customer services. You'll also get a monthly email update to give you added peace of mind.

## Free College Upcoming Enrollment Deadlines

Now's the time to complete your associate or bachelor's degree through the OPEIU Free College and Bachelor's Completion benefits. Online learning is safe and can fit into your busy schedule. As always, you can earn your associate degree or certificates for FREE. Now, students enrolled by the January deadline also can complete their bachelor's degree for FREE! The program is provided by OPEIU to all members and their families. For more information, visit [freecollege.opeiu.org](https://freecollege.opeiu.org).

### UPCOMING ENROLLMENT DEADLINES

**Free College**  
(Earn or complete an associate degree or certificates):

**Jan. 11, 2021**

**Bachelor's Completion**  
(Complete your bachelor's degree for free if you enroll this academic year):

**Jan. 19, 2021**

**To date, nearly 1,600 OPEIU members and their families have saved more than \$4.7 million in tuition, e-books and other fees through the OPEIU Free College benefit.**



Student Debt Reduction is Welcome Relief

I am so excited! I cannot believe it! Thank you so much.

I have been stressing about my bills and doing everything in my power to reduce my monthly bills so I do not lose my house. I recently applied an entire inheritance I received from my grandma, along with a little bit I had in savings, to my student loans to reduce my monthly payment amount. With this [OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Program award], my monthly student loan payments will now be able to fit into my budget. It is going to help me so much!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I have never won anything in my life, and nothing is more important for me at this time. You have made my whole year.

Tara Carroll  
Local 101  
Weston, Fla.

*Editor’s Note: See page 9 for more information about the OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Program. Complete instructions and an application can be found at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) under Member Resources and by clicking OPEIU Membership Benefits.*

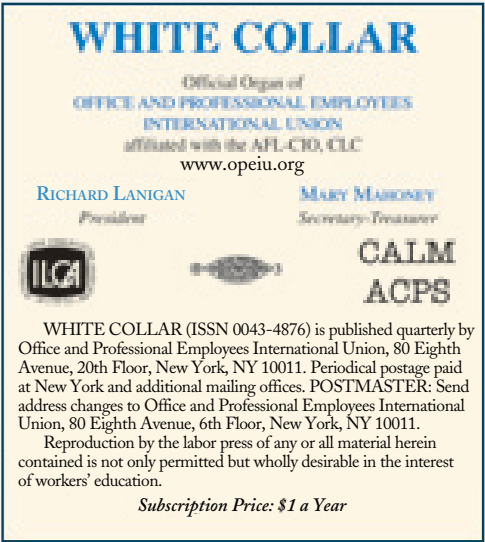
College, Made Possible

I just wanted to thank the union for everything they do. I also wanted to share with you that I am taking advantage of the Free College opportunity. My first semester started June 1. Thank you so much for offering that benefit; without it, college for me would be near impossible.

With sincere appreciation,

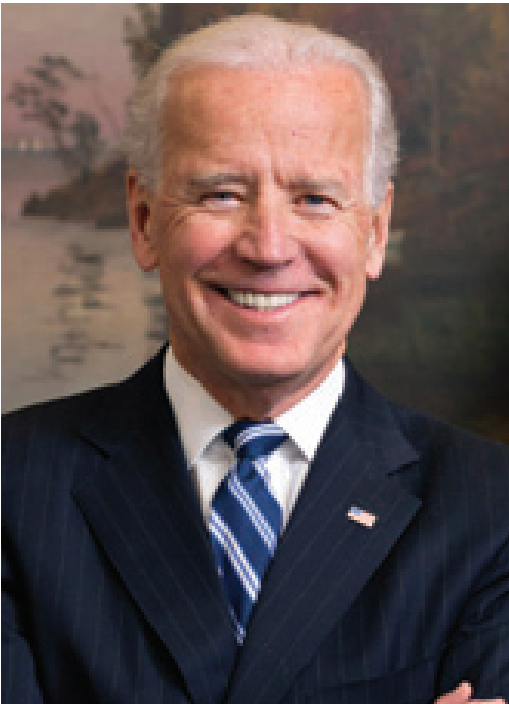
Michelle Ayala  
Local 6  
Lowell, Mass.

*Editor’s Note: The OPEIU Free College and the Bachelor’s Completion benefits are both free to all members and their families who register by the January enrollment deadlines. Visit [freecollege.opeiu.org](https://freecollege.opeiu.org) for complete information.*



*About the Cover: The 35 employees of Food Services Inc. of Gainesville, members of ITPEU/OPEIU Local 4873, have been working on the front line during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring up to 1,000 Navy and Marine personnel are fed each day at the Roy M. Wheat Dining Galley at the Meridian Naval Air Station in Meridian, Miss. Left to right are Shop Steward Marcus Holliday, Terrence Clayton, Bertha Perry, Jerrod Grace, Craig Wyatt and Barbara Johnson. Essential workers like these have kept the nation going during the pandemic crisis. See page 11 for more of the amazing work OPEIU members have been doing.*

With Member Feedback, OPEIU Endorses Joe Biden



OPEIU has officially endorsed Joe Biden for president of the United States. The endorsement is based on the results of a democratic process to capture the preferences of OPEIU members.

The endorsement was guided by a survey of members that showed almost 70 percent of respondents support Biden to be the next president. This is the first time OPEIU has conducted a union-wide survey of its members to guide the executive board when making the endorsement for president. The survey also highlighted the key issues of importance to OPEIU members, and the candidates’ positions on these issues informed the endorsement.

“Joe Biden has spent his life fighting for working people, and he is someone who understands and prioritizes the needs of working families,” said OPEIU President Richard Lanigan. “OPEIU is committed to advancing the interests of our members by rebuilding the middle class, protecting working people’s right to join unions and collectively bargain, fighting for racial justice and equality for all Americans

and improving the economy to ensure opportunity for everyone — not just the wealthy.

“Joe Biden is the only candidate who shares those values and vision for America’s future,” Lanigan continued. “He has the experience and, perhaps even more importantly, the temperament to lead our nation out of these troubled and divided times and bring us one step closer to economic and racial equality.”

In addition to his inept handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans, President Donald Trump has spent his presidency actively seeking to undermine and dismantle our nation’s major institutions and to systematically destroy worker protections, Lanigan noted. At every turn, Trump has sought to further the interests of millionaires and billionaires while sacrificing America’s working families.

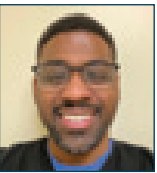
“Working people cannot survive another four years of Donald Trump. Our nation and our democracy cannot survive it either,” Lanigan said. “That’s why we need Joe Biden. He will bring this nation together with empathy and compassion and help us heal, and his actions will be guided by kindness at a time when our nation craves decency and humanity.”

**Turn the page to learn how OPEIU members responded about what’s at stake on Nov. 3.**

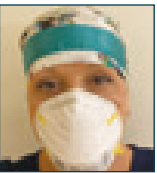
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Make Your Voice Heard. Vote!

As the 2020 election draws near, there is a lot at stake for working people. We are bombarded daily with political ads, social media posts, postcards in the mail and family and friends talking about the election. But have you stopped to think about what this election means to you as a working person?

Our recent member survey shows OPEIU members are concerned about the decline in health care and education, lack of support for our communities, continued attacks on working people and incendiary rhetoric dividing our country. This is why our members overwhelmingly believe the best chance we have of reversing all those concerns is to elect Joe Biden as president.

There is no doubt we have to work harder than ever to make sure our get-out-the-vote effort is our most successful yet, says OPEIU Political Director Cesar Leyva. “But our work will not end Nov. 3. Our voices will be heard, and we’ll be met with more open doors once Biden is elected. But just like all politicians, we have

to hold our representatives and the president accountable.”

How do we do this? By continuing to organize beyond the election. We must never stop mobilizing members across the country to get involved in legislative and political fights. Our goal is to ensure all working people have fair representation and our voices are heard in our state capitals and Washington, D.C. “We must work outside our silos and build alliances with other organizations fighting for all struggles. We must stand with the Movement for Black Lives, we must demand a clean environment, and we have to take a stand for all human rights struggles. This is the only way we’ll be able to have a collective voice loud enough to drown out corporate money in D.C.,” Leyva says.

By now, you should have a voting plan in place, whether you’ll be voting early by mail or going to your polling place and casting your ballot on Election Day. Many of you likely have been working hard and volunteering to help elect

candidates at the local, state and national level. If you haven’t been able to get involved yet, now is your time to step up as we move into the final days before the election. OPEIU has built our political movement alongside our fellow union members across the country, particularly in key battleground states. It doesn’t matter where you live, whether you can volunteer for two hours after work or devote weekends from now until Nov. 3, you will make a difference in this election.

If you want to get involved in these last few critical days before Nov. 3, sign up to volunteer by filling out the Join the OPEIU Member Action Team form at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) and your local union will coordinate and plug you in to the work happening in your state.

Perhaps even more importantly, start by having conversations with family, friends and co-workers and encouraging them to vote. Democracy only works when we all exercise our right to vote. Together we can make the difference!

# Handling of the Pandemic Crisis Tops List of Member Concerns, OPEIU Survey Shows

For the first time in its history OPEIU conducted a national survey of members to see who they feel is best able to meet the many challenges facing our nation. The results overwhelmingly indicate Joe Biden is their choice.

The survey, conducted in August, also asked members which issues will impact their choice for president. Chief among the issues of concern was the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. For those responding that the handling of the pandemic was their No. 1 priority, Biden was their top choice for president.

“Without a solid handle on COVID-19, we can’t focus on any other issue,” said a member from Seattle, Wash., echoing a concern shared by many respondents that President Trump has mishandled the nation’s pandemic response. “The way the current administration has handled the coronavirus has been atrocious, and I think it should affect people’s choices when going to the polls,” added a member from Whittier, Calif.

Perhaps tied into concerns about the pandemic, health care also topped the list of issues that will guide respondents’ decision. “The pandemic has shown the great disparity in the American population when it comes to health care, leaving some people, especially undocumented citizens, with the choice between lifelong financial ruin or death,” continued the member from Whittier. “I don’t believe people should have to make that choice.”

This is particularly true for our health care workers, many members noted. “We, as essential workers and front-line health care workers, are required to work,” said one member from Ellensburg, Wash., “putting our family at risk and scrambling to find child care to go to work.”

Members also indicated worries about the nation’s economic crisis brought on by the pandemic, as well as their own personal, and often uncertain, financial future will guide their choice for president. Also on the list, job creation and the need to protect workers’ rights on and off the job. “Employees need to have rights when it comes to work-related decisions and union requests,” said a member from District Heights, Md.

“As a unionist and human being who is also a mother, I want to ensure our voices are heard and we are safe,” said a Tacoma, Wash., member. Like many respondents, this member said the fight for racial justice for all Americans and an end to systemic racism was top of mind. “Particularly for my brothers and sisters of color. Workers’ rights are also essentially civil rights as people of color are more adversely affected in employment opportunity due to systemic racism.”



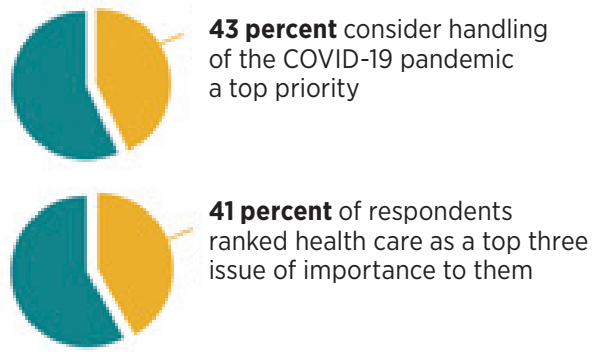
“This country has a long, painful history when it comes to systemic racism and civil rights,” said a member from Bedford, Mass. “Racism has had profound and lasting effects on the Black population in this country and racism intersects every institution, whether it be health care, education, employment, housing, nutrition, the list goes on.”

As another member from Tacoma put it, “Without equity, we are nothing.”

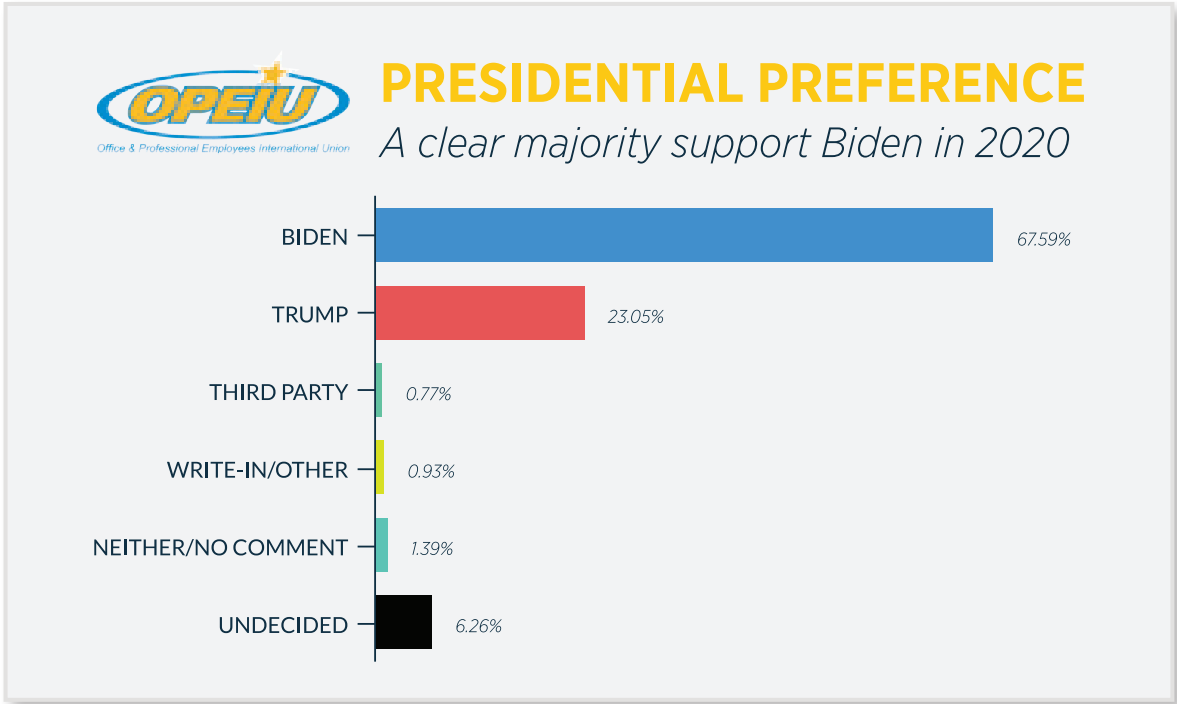
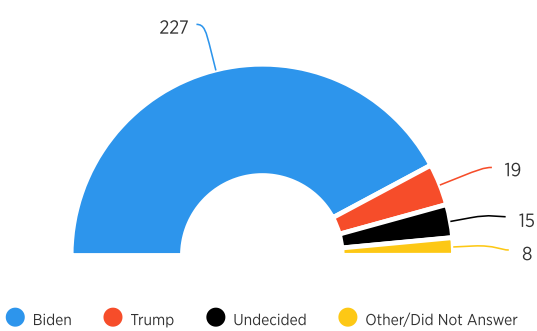
| COVID-19 IS THE TOP CONSIDERATION FOR UNDECIDED OPEIU MEMBERS |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Handling of COVID-19 pandemic                                 | 19% |
| Workers' rights                                               | 18% |
| National security                                             | 14% |
| National economic situation                                   | 12% |
| Civil rights                                                  | 7%  |
| Job creation                                                  | 7%  |

“Without a solid handle on COVID-19, we can’t focus on any other issue.”  
– A member from Seattle

## ISSUE PRIORITIES

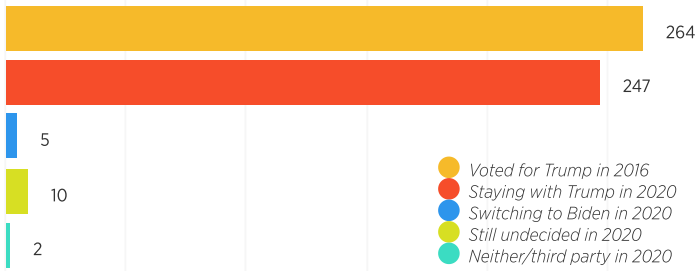


OF 269 WHO CONSIDER COVID-19 RESPONSE THE NO. 1 ISSUE, BIDEN IS THEIR TOP CHOICE



RESULTS SUGGEST TRUMP WILL RETAIN MORE THAN 9 IN 10 MEMBERS WHO VOTED FOR HIM IN 2016

Just five plan to switch to Biden



We asked members to pick the top three most important issues to them from a pool of 17 different issue areas — ranging from the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nation’s economic outlook, to racial justice, Supreme Court nominations, trade and tariffs and reproductive rights — that will impact their choice for president in Nov.

- 1 in 3 are prioritizing **civil rights**
- 1 in 4 are prioritizing the national **economic situation**
- 1 in 4 are prioritizing **workers’ rights**
- 1 in 5 are prioritizing **job creation**
- 1 in 5 are prioritizing **national security**

Survey responses from 1,293 members recorded between Aug. 4-27, 2020.

# Congrats to OPEIU Scholarship Winners

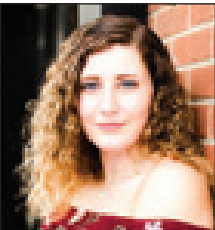
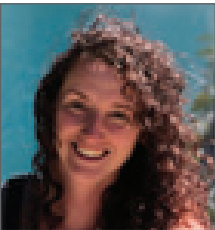
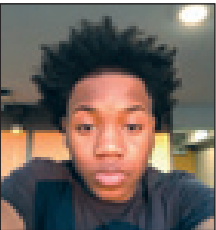
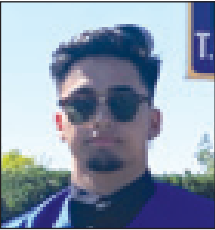
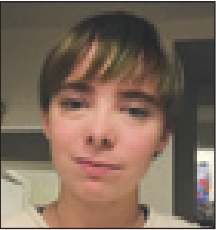
Congratulations to recipients of the 2020 OPEIU Scholarships. Annually, OPEIU awards numerous scholarships to further the education of members and their families, as well as a summer camp for kids.

Scholarship opportunities include the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship, which awards up to 12 full-time higher education scholarships of up to \$6,500 and up to eight part-time scholarships of up to \$2,650 to OPEIU members, associate members and dependents. The John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship awards up to 10 scholarships to members pursuing a degree in labor studies, industrial relations, or union leadership and administration.

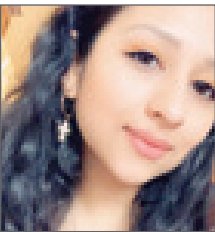
Twenty scholarships also are awarded annually from the Romeo Corbeil/ Gilles Beaugard Memorial Scholarship to attend a summer camp at the University of Missouri for members’ children ages 13-16. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately, the camp was canceled. Hopefully, students will be welcomed back in 2021.

More information about all OPEIU scholarship opportunities can be found at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org) under the Member Resources tab and by clicking on OPEIU Membership Benefits, as well as on the OPEIU app (available for free download for iPhones in the App Store and for Android devices on Google Play by searching OPEIU). Applications and updates about the 2021 scholarships will be posted in January.

## Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship — Full-Time Winners

|                                                                                    |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| Katherine McCoy<br>Local 2                                                         | Kylee DeCook<br>Local 8                                                             | Jaxson Goodman<br>Local 11                                                          | Katelyn Holeso<br>Local 50                                                           | Mikailah Kramer<br>Local 109                                                          | Kobe Kitchings<br>Local 153                                                           |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Meagan Smith<br>Local 277                                                          | Zack Metzger<br>Local 459                                                           | Albert Souza<br>Local 537                                                           | Austin Blackmon<br>Local 2001                                                        | Hannah Billmeier<br>Local 2002                                                        | Sarah Harper<br>DAG 2007A                                                             |

## Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship — Part-Time Winners

|                                                                                    |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |
| Elden Peck<br>Local 2                                                              | Virginia Agreda-Nunez<br>Local 8                                                    | Harmony Montoya<br>Local 537                                                        | Nicholas Drzal<br>Local 2002                                                         |

## John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |
| Benza Kendrick<br>Local 2                                                           | Rosario Gomez-Wixon<br>Local 6                                                      | Luiz Morizot-Leite<br>Local 100                                                     |

Applications and the latest information on the 2021 scholarships will be posted in January at [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org).

## Student Debt Reduction Recipients

Annually, OPEIU provides five awards of \$2,500 each to help members reduce student debt through the OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Program. The 2020 recipients are Nicole Kitchen, Local 6; Sharon Sagapolu, Local 50; Shakikki Craig, Local 100; Tara Carroll, Local 101; and Tiana Hamilton, Local 2002.

OPEIU members with at least \$10,000 in student debt can apply each summer. For more information, visit [opeiu.org](https://opeiu.org), search the Member Resources tab and click OPEIU Membership Benefits.

# OPEIU Family Member Awarded 2020 Union Plus Scholarship

Elizabeth Czeiszperger of Macomb, Mich., whose mother, Joanne, is treasurer of Local 40, has been awarded a \$750 Union Plus scholarship to help her pursue her goal of becoming a physician assistant.

Elizabeth is currently pursuing an Associate of General Studies degree at Macomb Community College and plans to transfer to Wayne State University to continue her college education. Like her mother, a registered nurse, Elizabeth is passionate about providing patients the care they need and deserve.

Her counselor at L’Anse Creuse High School-North, Lori O’Neal, says Elizabeth is an outstanding student whose strengths are creativity and leadership. “Elizabeth was always willing to step up and chair committees, modeling responsibility and demonstrating effective time management,” O’Neal says. “She continually encouraged and supported others, which created a positive environment for her small groups and the entire student body.”

Union Plus awards scholarships based on outstanding academic achievement, personal character, financial need and commitment to the values of organized labor. Anticipating COVID-19’s financial impact on many families, Union Plus increased this year’s total scholarship award amount from \$200,000 to \$300,000, allowing more students than ever to receive aid. More than 6,300 students applied this year and the judges selected 215 scholarship winners.

In addition to the scholarships, Union Plus offers a range of money-saving programs to union members, including discounts on wireless services from nationwide unionized wireless carrier AT&T, insurance protection, savings on travel and recreation and more. For more information, visit [unionplus.org](https://unionplus.org).



Elizabeth Czeiszperger



## Understanding the Outrageous Attacks on the USPS

In recent months, attacks against one of the nation's oldest and most venerable institutions have ramped up. But what's really going on at the United States Postal Service, and what does it mean for the Nov. 3 election?

The United States Postal Service (USPS) delivers nearly half of the world's mail. It is by far Americans' favorite government agency, with 91 percent of those polled by Pew viewing it favorably. And, for decades, it's been under relentless attacks by lawmakers and lobbyists who want to privatize our nation's only public parcel system for private profit. To understand the coordinated efforts to sabotage the USPS, it's important to understand how we got to a point where attacks on the mail have reached a fever pitch.

The USPS traces its origins to 1775, when Benjamin Franklin was appointed the nation's first postmaster general during the Second Continental Congress. In 1792, the Post Office Department was established by the Postal Service Act and was later elevated to a Cabinet level department in 1872.

Things changed in 1970. At the time, postal workers were not permitted by law to bargain for their wages, benefits and working conditions, which, many postal workers said, were unsafe and unhealthy. Efforts to lobby lawmakers resulted in no tangible improvements for postal workers. Recognizing the power of their labor, postal workers in New York began a wildcat strike against the federal government. Lasting eight days and spreading to include 210,000 postal workers across the country, it is still the largest strike against the federal government in U.S. history.

In a televised address, President Nixon ordered the strikers back to work. When they refused, he deployed the National Guard to deliver the nation's mail, albeit inefficiently. Recognizing the futility of firing striking postal workers who had public support on their side, Nixon agreed to negotiate with the four major postal workers' unions. Those negotiations culminated in legislation, the Postal Reorganization Act, granting postal workers collective bargaining rights while also transforming USPS into a hybrid governmental corporation with an ostensible goal of becoming financially self-sufficient.

By 1982, the USPS was no longer relying on government funds to pay its bills. And it continued to rake in money each year until 2006 when the George W. Bush administration signed into law the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. These new reforms imposed unique financial obligations on the USPS, a massive employer that would, if eligible for inclusion, be No. 44 on the Fortune 500 list. Threatening a veto, Bush was able to include a provision to the bill requiring the USPS to pre-fund at least a half-century of health and retirement benefits for its hundreds of thousands of employees.

Why? Many so-called "deficit hawks" in the Bush administration realized their huge corporate tax cuts in 2001 and 2003 left the government with a massive budgetary shortfall. By forcing the then-profitable USPS to pre-fund 50 years of expensive benefits, they reasoned, they could lessen the impact of their self-imposed deficits by siphoning funds from the USPS. From 2007 to 2016, when faced with what economist Dean Baker equated to a sudden 8 percent tax on revenue, the USPS lost \$62.4 billion. Its own inspector general attributed \$54.8 billion in losses to the pre-funding requirement — an innocuous, responsible-sounding requirement that helped cover up the bill's true intent and impact.

### There's More to the Story

In addition to the pre-funding requirement, the rise of email, the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase in online shopping have combined to create a unique, but solvable, financial challenge

**The rate of voter fraud? Statistically meaningless — 143 cases of fraud in 20 years, a rate of 0.00006 percent.**

for the USPS. But President Trump, in August, declared his opposition to providing emergency funding for the service, which is obligated by law to deliver to every U.S. household.

The USPS, he said, would use some of the money to handle an expected influx of mail-in ballots during the pandemic, which has already killed hundreds of thousands of Americans and left many citizens wanting to vote from the safety of their homes. Repeating his claim that mail-in voting is "fraudulent," Trump, who has personally voted by mail in several recent elections, said that denying funding "means you can't have universal mail-in voting because you're not equipped to have it."

The MIT Election Data and Science Lab recently surveyed national mail-in voting fraud data to check the veracity of Trump's often repeated claims that mail-in voting would lead to widespread election fraud. Researchers found more than 250 million ballots had been cast by mail nationwide in the past two decades. The rate of voter fraud? Statistically meaningless — 143 cases of fraud in 20 years, a rate of 0.00006 percent.

In the first two months of the pandemic alone, at least 130 federal workers, including 60 employed by the USPS, died of COVID-19 complications. The apparent discounting of the lives of our neighbors, friends and families makes it clear the manufactured USPS crisis of 2020 was concocted to serve a dual purpose: postal privatization and a successful re-election.

In September, a federal judge issued a historic decision to temporarily block new changes pushed through the USPS by Trump via his appointed postmaster, Louis DeJoy. The range of changes, postponed until at least after November, were intended to disenfranchise voters, the judge said in her ruling, citing the president's own tweets. Removing equipment, slowing deliveries down and restricting late mail runs were all deemed by the judge to be motivated by a political goal: discredit the USPS.

Though the USPS is ostensibly safe — at least for now — the ever-looming threat of privatization could uproot the jobs of nearly a quarter-million USPS employees, 37 percent of whom are Black, and could uproot rural populations' access to mail services entirely.

# Holding the Line

OPEIU members like Dawn Hengy, a perioperative technician at McLaren Macomb Hospital in Michigan and a member of Local 40, are working on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the next few pages we explore the many ways OPEIU members are bravely serving their communities during the crisis.

# OPEIU Members Show Courage and Commitment During Pandemic Crisis

OPEIU members throughout the country are demonstrating tremendous courage and compassion during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the country locked down and citizens were urged to stay home, many answered the call to join the front line against the virus.

Health care professionals, those working in transportation, custodial services, pharmacies, grocery stores and food delivery, among many others, continue to risk their health and even their lives to provide essential services that are keeping the nation safe and getting us through this crisis.

So many OPEIU members are finding ways to help! From caring for the sick and dying, to volunteering at food banks and sewing homemade masks, to working in essential offices, such as credit unions and insurance companies, to pushing back against employers who don't protect employees, their sacrifice and bravery is inspiring and deserving of a huge thank you from all of us at OPEIU.

## Local 393 Credit Union Employees Can't Stay Home!



Gracie Avery, a member of Local 393, works in lending at Security Federal Credit Union in Grand Blanc, Mich., and has kept working during the pandemic to ensure union members have access to necessary loans during the crisis.

## Protecting Geriatric Patients



Dan Affolter and Susan Cole, members of Local 12 in Roseville, Minn., in the geriatrics department at HealthPartners. These dedicated members support the geriatric nurses by scheduling their at-home visits, handling pre- and post-care paperwork and ordering supplies.

## OPEIU Distributes 20,000 KN95 Masks



As the pandemic crisis took hold across the nation, OPEIU sprang into action, purchasing and sending 20,000 KN95 respirator masks to its local unions for distribution to front-line workers.

In the following weeks and months, additional masks were procured and sent to locals from New York to Hawai'i to provide relief to health care professionals and others most at risk and often experiencing shortages at their hospitals and medical facilities. "Our goal has been to help fill the gaps left by a lack of federal guidance on workplace safety and by employers either unwilling or incapable of ensuring a safe work environment for their employees," said OPEIU President Richard Lanigan. "It's a testament to the power of our union solidarity."

## Masks Display Union Pride



Capt. Scott Clancy wears a custom face mask provided by Local 108 to all its helicopter pilot members employed at Petroleum Helicopter International (PHI), based in Lafayette, La.

The pilots provide services to the oil and gas industry, as well as aeromedical services. They have provided life-saving medical transport services, often under dangerous circumstances, during the pandemic.

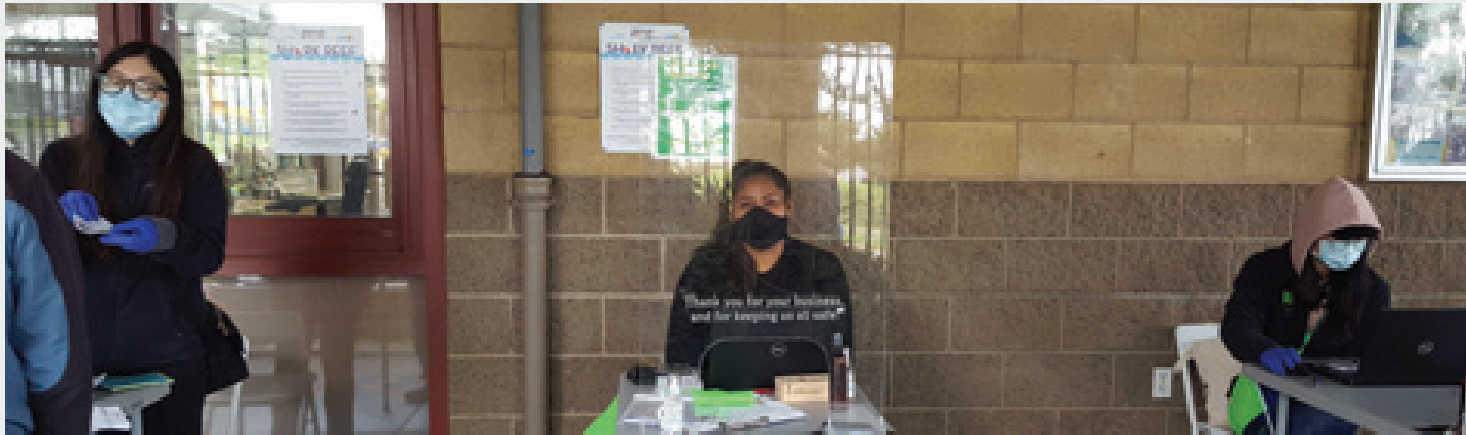
## Local 100 Makes Masks Available for Members



OPEIU Vice President and GSAF/OPEIU Local 100 President Greg Blackman, Second Vice President Luiz Morizot-Leite, First Vice President Fredricka Green and Treasurer Walter Clarit distribute OPEIU-procured KN95 masks to members who came to several distribution sites the union set up throughout the Miami Dade area. Special deliveries were made to several Local 100 health care workers in the region. Local 100 also has ordered customized masks with the union's logo to be mailed to all members.



Local 29 Members Get Food to Those in Need...



Local 29 members, left to right, Mei Chan Li, Edith Cadena and Ivy Jiang at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank (SFMFB) have worked at a pop-up pantry enrollment site throughout the pandemic. The union worked with SFMFB to protect the health of volunteers and participants, while providing the essential service of getting food to those in need, including providing necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), pre-bagging groceries, social distancing and holding the pantry outside.

“I want to help with the fight against hunger, regardless of the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis,” said Benny Pausanos, a senior driver at SFMFB.

“What kind of person would I be if I only saw that my needs were met, but not those of the ones around me,” added Claudia Wallen, a SFMFB program coordinator.

...And Help the Sick



Local 29 stewards working at Kaiser Permanente San Leandro Medical Center in Calif., with masks provided by the local union. Pictured, left to right, are Jennifer Aguinaldo, Erlinda Valdez, Annette Bailey, Urmila Charan and Anna Pang.



Laboratory receptionists on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, Calif., Sally Galban, Mashal Syed, Ernesto Hernandez and Evelyn Woods are all members of Local 29.

McLaren Workers Stand Up Against Unsafe Conditions

Local 40 registered nurses at McLaren Macomb Hospital in Michigan have been fighting to protect themselves and their co-workers during the pandemic, staging protests to demand more sick time, hazard pay and PPE.

“When the crisis began, I agreed to work overtime to support my understaffed co-workers and to do the right thing for our community,” said Mike O’Neill, a registered nurse at McLaren. O’Neill then contracted COVID-19, and McLaren told him he had to use his own vacation time to cover time off recovering. “It is times like this when true colors show,” said O’Neill.

“It is unacceptable that McLaren is denying us proper PPE to keep ourselves and our families safe. At a time like this, McLaren should be focused on fighting the pandemic, not its own employees,” said Dawn Hengy, a perioperative tech.

Representing 600 nurses and more than 300 service group workers, Local 40’s protests have seen results, as the hospital was forced to provide necessary PPE, but the fight continues for hazard pay, an emergency paid-time off bank and other crucial demands that reflect the expertise, courage and sacrifice of Local 40 RNs.

“This health crisis has not caused these problems, it has only exposed them in a brighter light,” said Local 40 Apprentice Organizer Leah Derr. “These employees are truly on the frontlines of this infectious disease. They are making huge sacrifices for our health, safety and economic security. It’s time McLaren does the same.”

Local 40 member nurses, radiology technologists and laboratory technologists at Ascension Rochester Providence Hospital also have been fighting for adequate safety precautions and have had similar success securing needed PPE, but are still fighting for what they need to stay safe and the respect they deserve as frontline workers.

“While we healthcare professionals have risen to face this crisis head on, Ascension’s corporate leadership has displayed a disturbing lack of transparency and accountability to nurses and other front-line heroes,” said Josephine Walker, an Ascension registered nurse and Local 40 vice president. “The lack of communication and support is causing unnecessary stress and confusion as we fight to save lives.”



Mike O'Neill, a registered nurse at McLaren Macomb Hospital.

Sewing Masks to Keep Co-Workers Safe



Local 2 members in the Washington, D.C., area have been working hard to keep themselves and their co-workers safe while being dedicated to their jobs during the pandemic. Tanya Chou, a frontdesk receptionist at the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) headquarters, has been making masks for her UMWA sisters and brothers — a great example of standing together during this difficult time.



Custodial Employees Unionize During Pandemic



Employees of Eagle Pro Clean at the Biggs Army Airfield in El Paso, Texas, formed a union with ITPEU/OPEIU Local 4873 in June and have continued to provide janitorial services for the base’s veterinary treatment center. Pictured, left to right, are, front row, Phoenix Cortez, Irene Velasquez and Maria Solorzano, middle row, Local 4873 Vice President Lena Bailey and Marcos Holguin, and back row, Abelardo Duenas, David Carlos, Rudy Subia, Luis Trevino and Shop Steward Adrian Yanez. (Photo taken prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.)

More Nonprofit Employees Choose OPEIU

City Bar Justice Employees Join Local 153

Employees at nonprofit organizations are often faced with a familiar scenario. Sacrifice your own rights at work, they are told, to help the mission of the organization.

But employees at the New York-based City Bar Justice Center (CBJC) exposed that common managerial talking point for what it is: a myth.

Project coordinators and other employees at the nonprofit, which provides legal services to low-income New Yorkers, voted to have a seat at the table by affiliating with Local 153 in May.

The organizing campaign, conducted amid the COVID-19 pandemic, was admittedly unique, said Organizer Grace Reckers.

Employees “made the important decision to unionize after a few attempts to make demands of management, only to be received, filed and eventually ignored,” Reckers said. “Even after a collective effort to ask for fair compensation, the employees realized that collective action in the absence of a union contract would only get them so far.”

Using electronic communication, on Zoom and via group texts, rather than standard in-person meetings, the bargaining unit of eight was able to coordinate effectively as the city remained locked down. COVID-19-related issues delayed sending in ballots to the NLRB and led to a second vote via video chat, where employees voted to affiliate with OPEIU in one of the first virtual votes in U.S. labor history.

Following the victory, Senior Project Coordinator Amelia Dunnell commented on the importance of the union at CBJC, not only for herself, but for all future coordinators, in terms of job security, fair wages and equitable office policies.

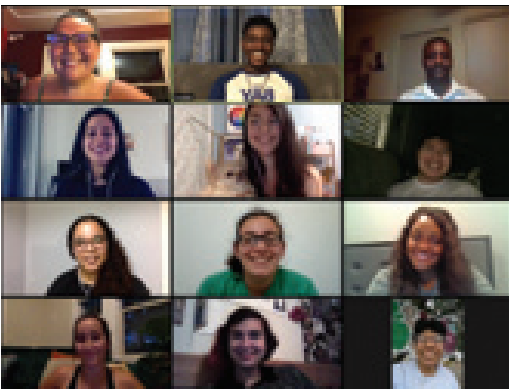
“Over the course of the three years that I’ve worked for the Justice Center, I have had incredible experiences working with clients and getting to know the legal system,” she said. “I want to ensure my colleagues, and the future CBJC coordinators who will take our places, are able to access these experiences with the knowledge that we are protected and supported in our workplace.”

OPEIU is thrilled to welcome our new union family members as part of its Nonprofit Employees United project and to work with CBJC employees to attain a strong first contract. The CBJC joins OPEIU’s growing nonprofit membership with employees from organizations such as the ACLU of Maryland, the Northwest Justice Project and the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, all of which demanded, and won, respect on the job.

LYRIC Employees Say Union Yes!

Another group of nonprofit employees — the staff of LYRIC, a San Francisco-based organization providing services to youth in the LGBTQQ community — has successfully gained recognition of their union with Local 29.

This voluntary recognition card-check agreement, whereby a majority of employees signed cards indicating they wanted to unionize and the employer then recognized the union, is a great example of an employer doing the right thing by supporting its employees’ right to representation in the workplace.



LYRIC employees have formed a union with Local 29.

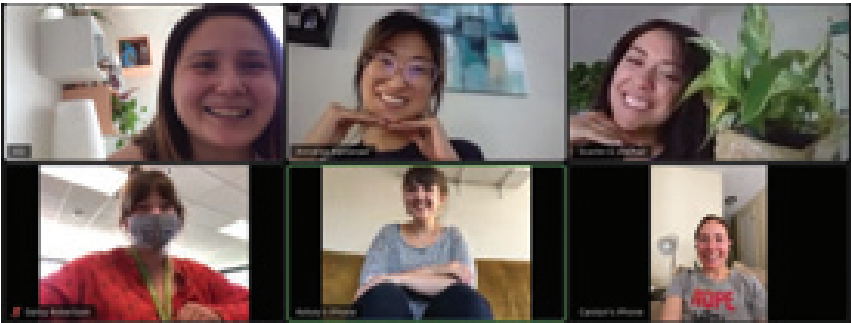
Crisis Connections Employees Vote to Form a Union with Local 8

Still more nonprofit workers have joined OPEIU, as employees at Crisis Connections in Seattle have voted overwhelmingly for representation by Local 8.

The group of 133 mental health professionals, crisis intervention specialists, public resource specialists, recovery specialists, phone workers and volunteers are dedicated to providing resources for the emotional and physical needs of hundreds of individuals across Washington state every day. They sought to unionize to improve working conditions, increase transparency and have a chance to participate in decisions about their operational protocols that impact the communities they serve.

“I believe unionizing will help us to engage in constructive dialogue with management about how to shape our workplace to ensure a high quality of services for individuals in crisis and a sustainable environment for staff,” said Violet Neitzel, a crisis intervention specialist.

“In union, there is strength,” added Jacinta Lowe, a call screening and coordination specialist.



New Local 8 members at Crisis Connections in Seattle.

## A Full-Time Unionist with a Part-Time Gig: City Council President

In a time of economic and social upheaval, union members need all the help they can get in the halls of power. Luckily for those in Lakewood, Ohio, a city of 52,000 located just outside of Cleveland, Dan O'Malley is working hard for them.

In 2015, O'Malley became the campaigns director for the North Shore Federation of Labor, the Cleveland-area central labor council, where he serves as a Local 1794 shop steward. That same year, he was elected to the Lakewood City Council, a part-time position, to fill a vacancy left by an incumbent who opted not to run for re-election.

"When I ran for office," O'Malley said, "there was some chatter about whether I would be 'too pro-union.' I feel like corporate candidates aren't asked nearly as much about whether they'd be 'too pro-business.'"

"The values of unionism and collective bargaining were instilled in me from an early age," said O'Malley, a fourth-generation union member. "My dad was an officer with the Cleveland Firefighters Union, and my family have all been union members since my great-grandmother immigrated to Cleveland from Ireland in 1949 and joined the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union as a seamstress."

Four years after his first election victory, in January of this year, his councilmember colleagues unanimously voted to make O'Malley, 35, the city council president.

"The perspective I bring as a union member to the office of council president is valuable because, for example, we might have big construction projects and no one else thinks about things like community benefits, project labor agreements, prevailing wage and local hiring," he said. "So, I'm glad to offer that viewpoint and advocate for those things that benefit working people."

The issues O'Malley fights for in both of his roles are the same ones the labor movement

has been leading on: strengthening workers' rights to rebuild the economy; ensuring proper protections for front-line workers; and, in the long term, transitioning to a sustainable energy system and a health care system that works for the many, not the few.

Still, he admits, legislating often requires difficult trade-offs, which he described as the most challenging part of his work as council president.

"There are so many needs, and so little resources, and tough decisions need to be made all the time," he said. "I always try to remember the working people in our city, the seniors on fixed incomes and the poor. Keeping them at the front of my mind sometimes makes decisions a little easier."

**"Stay true to your core values, and never forget who you're working to represent."**

To OPEIU members who also may be interested in running for public office, O'Malley offered some advice: "Don't be afraid to ask for help."

"The AFL-CIO and your own union will be glad to know you're thinking about running, and there are resources available to you. Stay true to your core values, and never forget who you're working to represent," O'Malley said. "It seems like everyone has a lobbyist in the halls of government these days except ordinary workers. Well, you can be that advocate."



Dan O'Malley

## Local 11 Re-Elects Maureen Goldberg

The results of a mail-in ballot are in, and Maureen Goldberg has been re-elected to another three-year term as executive secretary-treasurer of Local 11 in Vancouver, Wash. The local's election committee processed the returned ballots, with Goldberg receiving 62 percent of the votes cast.



Maureen Goldberg

## Meet the Newest Apprentice Organizers at Locals 12 and 153



Sam Tiratto

Two more local unions have joined the OPEIU's Apprentice Organizer Program, recognizing the importance of growing our ranks to build strength in the workplace.

Sam Tiratto joined Local 12 in Roseville, Minn., earlier this year as an apprentice organizer after graduating from George Washington University in 2018 with a degree in history. Tiratto, who grew up in Middle Tennessee, says being in Washington, D.C. at such a pivotal moment in American history led him to get involved in labor's fight for equality. He joined a campus-wide student/labor solidarity group while at GW, and commuted to Baltimore for a summer as part of UNITE HERE's Organizing Beyond Boundaries program. While still in school, Tiratto also began working as an administrator for the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES).

"I'm passionate about the labor movement and excited to have this opportunity to learn from the best here at OPEIU," says Tiratto.

Dana Kopel is a writer, editor and organizer who has joined Local 153 in New York City as an apprentice organizer. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in modern and contemporary art and critical theory from New York University and a Master of Arts from the Bard Center for Curatorial Studies.

While working as the senior editor and publications coordinator at the New Museum, she helped organize the New Museum Union, which was formed in Jan. 2019 and represented the first major New York art museum to unionize in nearly 50 years. She served as a member of the bargaining committee, helping to secure a fair contract in October of that year, then went on to serve as the unit chair.

"I'm excited to develop what I've learned from organizing with the New Museum Union and to continue to build worker power with OPEIU," says Kopel.



Dana Kopel

## Local 277 Finds Ways to Grow Despite Pandemic

While the economy sinks and unemployment skyrockets amidst the pandemic crisis, Local 277 in Ft. Worth, Texas, has adapted and found ways to grow and bring the benefits of union solidarity and representation at the bargaining table to more and more working people.

The local has seen an increase from approximately 8,200 members to nearly 10,000 in the last year. Local 277 President Tyler Turner attributes much of that growth to the union's ability to adapt to the new reality of today's work environment.

"One of the major things that led to this increase was adapting to the new business model of telecommuting and remote work," observed Turner. "Local 277 was able to negotiate the ability to telecommute for most of our hourly represented employees working at multiple employers."

"As difficult as this time has been in other ways, we have been able to find new solutions and adapt to the changing environment to best represent our members," Turner added.

Many of the new members are agents at American Income Life (AIL), a company that provides a quality insurance product specifically to union members by union members.

The local is seeing growth in other areas, recently organizing the Fair Shot Texas PAC, an organization under the leadership of the Texas AFL-CIO that supports labor allies working to advance a pro-working family agenda in the 2020 election cycle.

And those increased numbers mean greater strength at the bargaining table. For example, Local 277 was able to negotiate to keep employees on the payroll while newly organized BookPeople was shut down due to the pandemic. The local is currently in the final stages of settling a first contract with the retail store, a first in Texas.



Local 30 Elects Leaders to New Terms

It's official. Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer Marianne Giordano has been re-elected to continue her work leading Local 30 in San Diego. After fulfilling the unexpired term left open by the retirement of longtime Executive Director Walter Allen in 2018, Giordano was re-elected to a three-year term. "I am very grateful for the chance to lead this great union and especially proud to have the confidence of our members," said Giordano, who also serves as an OPEIU vice president. "I certainly plan to continue the hard work and dedication that got us here and continue on the trajectory we are on. I thank all of our members for their confidence in me."

Elected president of Local 30 was longtime member and former Vice President Michael Ramey. Ramey is a sonographer at the Kaiser Permanente La Mesa Medical Offices. He has served on the Local 30 executive board since 2014, first as a trustee and then vice president. "I would like to thank all my

colleagues in Local 30 for their support and confidence," said Ramey. "This is a huge honor for me personally, one that I take very seriously. I am proud to represent the members of Local 30 in this way."

Also elected to new three-year terms were: Vice President Catherine Engler, Recording Secretary Margie Chavez, Trustee Manuel Santillan, Executive Board-Los Angeles Members Annie Watson and Jamie Campbell, Executive Board-Arizona Member Linda Winters, Executive Board-Colorado Member Gayle Noon, Executive Board-CSC Member Ezequiel Diaz and Executive Board-San Diego Members Raymond Gallardo, Alexandra Hurtado and Anna Sands. Trustees Diane Nunez and Soralla Arellano were not up for election this year and continue in their positions.

The officers will be sworn in at Local 30's general membership meeting this fall.



Marianne Giordano

Local 393 Remembers Joyce Phillips-Stanley



Joyce Phillips-Stanley, second from left, with her fellow OPEIU sisters and brothers in 2018 on the El in Chicago, on the way to an arbitration training.

Local 393 in Flushing, Mich., is remembering longtime vice president Jocelyn "Joyce" Phillips-Stanley, who died of complications from asthma in May at the age of 68. "Joyce was active in our local union for more than 35 years, and had just retired Feb. 5 after 42 years of service to the members of Wanigas Credit Union," said Local 393 President Lynda Eckstrom. "She was truly a humanitarian in so many ways, and touched so many lives. I'm happy to have called her my friend for more than 30 years. I will treasure her memory forever."

Boston Locals Honor Women Leaders at Solidarity Lunch

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Local Unions 6, 453, 600 and the TEA in Boston held their Third Annual Solidarity Lunch honoring the women of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the unions representing them.

The locals gave their first-ever solidarity awards to one member of each of the locals who exemplified the very best among all the hard-working members of the MBTA.

"Every day, union women are doing the work to make sure the 'T' is there for its riders," said Local 453 President/Business Manager Tim Lasker. "They have dealt with decades of mismanagement, old equipment and harsh winters and have stood with their brothers through it all. It is time to recognize their achievements."

"Our speakers were incredibly uplifting and positive," he said. "Each had a different and unique story to tell, and in these times, it was great to walk out of an event feeling good!"



Photo credit: Susana Hey, MBTA photographer and Local 453 member

Left to right are Local 600 Political Director Patrick Cullen, Secretary-Treasurer Jeremiah Ahern and member Catherine Burns, Local 6 Business Manager George Noel and member Junie Celestin, Local 453 President/Business Manager Tim Lasker and member Oceana Sanchez, and TEA President Lynn Kennard and former President Kevin McDermott. (Photo taken prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.)

Jewish Community Action Staff Forms Union with Local 12

The staff of Jewish Community Action (JCA) in St. Paul, Minn., won recognition for their newly formed union after the organization's executive board agreed to authorize Local 12 as their representative for collective bargaining.

The entire staff delivered a petition requesting voluntary recognition that said taking this step will help them "better pursue JCA's mission of working for racial and economic justice in Minnesota. Forming this union will promote transparency, ensure equity, increase staff well-being and add to the long list of reasons why staff members are proud to work at JCA."

The group is now in negotiations for its first contract with the organization, whose "mission is to bring together Jewish people from diverse traditions and perspectives to promote understanding and take action on racial and economic justice issues in Minnesota."



# Credit Counseling

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## Employees Who Help Run OPEIU's Free College Program Join Local 17

Local 17 has welcomed 15 new members employed at the Student Resources Center in Steubenville, Ohio, through a voluntary recognition card-check process.

The group is located on the Eastern Gateway Community College campus and are finance counselors, administrative assistants and admissions representatives, who provide top-notch enrollment assistance to OPEIU members and their families taking advantage of the OPEIU Free College benefit.



New members of Local 17 from the Student Resource Center at Eastern Gateway Community College in Ohio. Pictured, left to right, are Zachary Burns, Cassandra Cornell, Mary Close, Gaye Geyer, Katrina Householder, Emily Green, Brittany Brown, Katie Mattern and Mary Sweeney. (Photo taken prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.)

## Big Win for Local 40 and Service Employees at McLaren Macomb

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has voted unanimously to dismiss McLaren Macomb Hospital's requests for a review of last year's election, thus certifying the group of about 330 service employees who voted overwhelmingly to unionize with Local 40 in Michigan.

"Many will never understand the amount of strength and tenacity it took for us health care heroes to come in every day with our backs against the wall, not just battling McLaren but battling a pandemic as well to serve our community and stand up for what is right for everyone," Raynette Gaines, a Local 40 bargaining member told The Macomb Daily. "I cannot express the amount of pride and admiration I have for my service group through all of this. We stood strong in solidarity against McLaren."

"The NLRB decision is final! McLaren Macomb management has already publicly committed to honor the labor board's decision and so we expect them to come to the table and bargain," said Jeff Morawski, Local 40 president. The union has pending unfair labor practice charges filed against the hospital to address unilateral changes made since the original certification, and various refusals to provide information.





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