

WHITE COLLAR

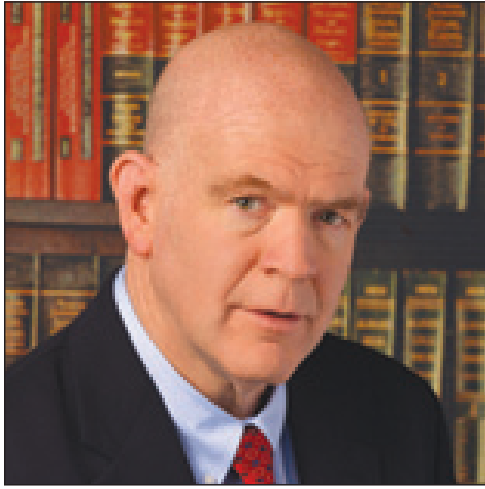
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC ISSUE 541 | FALL/WINTER 2019

A New Model for a New Union



OPEIU is employing a new model for a new union, strengthening local unions to organize working people like never before.

And it's paying off, as more and more are choosing OPEIU.



They Helped Bail Out Wall Street. Now Who is Going to Bail Out Their Pensions?

By Richard Lanigan
President

Recently, retirees from all over America met in Washington to support proposed legislation designed to breathe life into struggling pension plans.

Working people without a pension often have a difficult time appreciating the plight of these retirees. Most don't realize pensions are funded out of an employee's own money.

For most, having money at retirement is about decisions. For example, a decision to work in a job with a pension is a decision to save when you might be able to make more take-home pay at a job where you are not participating in a pension. If you have been in a pension, then you know the plan usually tells you how much you will have at retirement.

After the equity markets crashed, it was impossible for those middle aged and older who contributed to pensions to reverse decisions made decades earlier and get the spent money back. You can't retroactively change your lifestyle. For example, if you bought an expensive car when you were younger, it's pretty hard to exchange that car for a less expensive car 30 years after you bought it.

Likewise, you can't reverse a decision to pay for your children's college education 15 years after you made the last payment on their college loans. You can't go back in time and remake these decisions. The money is spent.

Imagine the lifestyle you could have lived if you hadn't used your money to fund

your pension while you were working. You might have taken a once-in-a-lifetime cruise with your family. You might have paid for private school for your children instead of public school. You might have bought a house or rented a bigger apartment. You might have purchased a newer car. You might have gone back to school. You might have done any of these things and more, but you didn't because of your decision to work for an employer with a pension.

Picture yourself — after working a lifetime where you maintained a steady job, paid your taxes and bills, supported your children, volunteered in your community, were active in your church and supported your parents in their old age — learning your pension is underfunded, and you will not receive the retirement benefit you worked so hard to create and counted on for your retirement? Imagine the thoughts going through your head. Will I have to move in with my children? Will I have enough to pay for Medicare and living expenses? Right before your eyes, your bucket list becomes a Dixie cup list.

Now consider the recession that hurt your pension also devastated certain American businesses. Those businesses, however, applied for and received a direct bailout of taxpayer money for their financial losses resulting from the

recession. Some of that bailout money was paid out of your tax dollars. For example, General Motors received a bailout of taxpayer money. Then it received wage and benefit concessions from its workers. After the bailout and the concessions, the company generated billions in profits. Following that, the corporate tax rate was cut from 35 percent to 21 percent.

Shouldn't the pensioners who paid for those bailouts and whose plans were also affected by the same recession be able to receive relief?

As the retirees met with elected officials in Washington, it was hard to comprehend why the Senate wouldn't take up legislation providing relief to these working people's beleaguered pension funds, particularly since their tax money was used to pay bailouts and tax cuts worth hundreds of billions of dollars to corporations. Such relief would help stabilize those plans, averting a pension crisis, and allowing millions of pensioners to receive the retirement benefit they paid for and were promised. If corporations received a bailout because of the recession, shouldn't the pensioners who paid for those bailouts and whose plans were also affected by the same recession be able to receive relief? ■

The Five Biggest Corporate Lies About Unions

By Robert Reich

Don't believe the lies. Today's unions are growing, expanding and boosting the wages and economic prospects of those who need them most. Wealthy corporations and their enablers have spread five big lies about unions to stop workers from organizing and to protect their own bottom lines. Know the truth and spread the truth.

Lie #1

Labor unions are bad for workers. Wrong. Unions are good for all workers — even those who are not unionized. **In the mid-1950s, when one-third of all workers in the United States were unionized, wages grew in tandem with the economy.** That's because workers across America — even those who were not unionized — had significant power to demand and get better wages, hours, benefits and working conditions. Since then, **as union membership has declined, the middle class has shrunk as well.**

Lie #2

Unions hurt the economy. Wrong again. When workers are unionized they can negotiate better wages, which in turn spreads the economic gains more evenly and strengthens the middle class. This creates a virtuous cycle: Wages increase, workers have more to spend in their communities, businesses thrive and the economy grows. **Since the 1970s, the decline in unionization accounts for one-third of the increase in income inequality.** Without unions, wealth becomes concentrated at the top and the gains don't trickle down to workers.

Lie #3

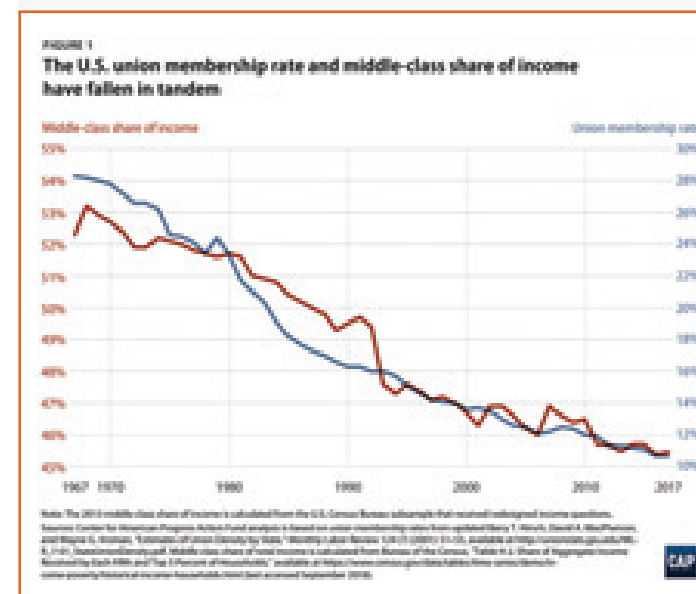
Labor unions are as powerful as big business. No way. **Labor union membership in 2018 accounted for 10.5 percent of the American workforce, while large corporations account for almost three-quarters of the entire American economy.** And when it comes to political power, it's big business and small labor. In the 2018 midterms, labor unions contributed less than \$70 million to parties and candidates, while big corporations and their political action committees contributed \$1.6 billion. This enormous gulf between business and labor is a huge problem. It explains why most economic gains have been going to executives and shareholders rather than workers. But, this doesn't have to be the case.

Lie #4

Most unionized workers are in industries like steel and auto manufacturing. Untrue. Although industrial unions are still vitally important to workers, the largest part of the unionized workforce is workers in the professional and service sectors — retail, restaurant, hotel, hospital and teachers — **which comprise 59 percent of all workers represented by a union.** These workers benefit from being in a union. In 2018, unionized service workers earned a median wage of \$802 a week. Nonunionized service workers made, on average, \$261 less. That's almost one-third less.

Lie #5

Most unionized workers are white, male and middle-aged. Some unionized workers are, of course, but most newly unionized workers are not. They're women, they're young, and a growing portion are black and brown. In fact, it's through the power of unions that people who had been historically marginalized in the American economy because of their race, ethnicity or gender are now gaining economic ground. **In 2018, women who were in unions earned 21 percent more than nonunionized women.** And African-Americans who were unionized earned nearly 20 percent more than African-Americans who were nonunionized.



Graph created by the Center for American Progress (americanprogress.org).

Don't believe the corporate lies. Today's unions are growing, expanding and boosting the wages and economic prospects of those who need them most. They're good for workers and good for America.

Reprinted with the permission of Robert Reich.

Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich was the keynote speaker at the 2019 OPEIU Convention pre-conference, *The Future of Work*, which was live-streamed and available to all members throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. To learn more about what he said, see page 13. To view the recording, visit opeiu.org.

OPEIU Scholarships Make Dreams a Reality ...

I would like to extend a huge thanks to OPEIU for awarding me the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship. Starting this Monday, I will be attending college at the École nationale de cirque in Montréal, Quebec. The scholarship will go a long way in supporting me, as I spend the next four years studying circus arts and learning about business, branding and marketing, all with the hopes of becoming a professional artist in the circus industry.

I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to study at a school that I've dreamt of attending since a young age, and am beyond grateful that the scholarship will help provide the funds necessary to make my dreams a reality. Again, I'd like to offer my thanks to everyone who helped make this scholarship a possibility.

Esmé S. Higgon
Darin Higgon (father)
Local 2007a
London, Ontario

... And Help Reduce Student Debt

I am writing to thank you for your generous Student Debt Reduction scholarship. I was very happy and appreciative to learn I was selected as the recipient of your scholarship.

By awarding me the Student Debt Reduction scholarship, you have lightened a financial burden, which made an incredible difference in my life as well as my family's.

With deepest gratitude and warmest wishes,

Claudia Guerra
Local 100
Miramar, Florida

Editor's Note: OPEIU members with at least \$10,000 in student debt can apply for the OPEIU Student Debt Reduction Program, just like Claudia did! Each year, the program offers five scholarships of \$2,500. Learn more at opeiu.org, Member Resources.

On the Cover: McLaren Macomb hospital employees vote to join Local 40. See page 17 for more about this and other groups choosing OPEIU.

We Want to Hear from You

Letters to the editor are welcomed. Send correspondence to:

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or email to frontdesk@opeiu.org.



Meet the Newest OPEIU Apprentice Organizers

As part of OPEIU's commitment to its new model for a new union that makes organizing a top priority, local unions continue to join the OPEIU Apprentice Organizer Program.

Meet the newest apprentices, Nallely Flores of Local 8 in Seattle, Maureen Flaherman of Local 29 in the San Francisco Bay Area, Adrienne Pagac of Local 39 in Madison, Wisc., and Leah Derr of Local 40 in Macomb Township, Mich.



Apprentice Organizers, left to right, Maureen Flaherman, Adrienne Pagac and Leah Derr.

Maureen Flaherman received a bachelor's degree in political science and history from Washington University in St. Louis. After graduating in 2018, she was a field organizer for the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's coordinated campaign. "As a San Francisco native, I'm thrilled to join Local 29 and excited to help strengthen OPEIU and fight for workers' rights and economic justice in northern California," says Flaherman.

True to the Apprentice Organizer Program's goals, Adrienne Pagac was first a union member before becoming an apprentice organizer with Local 39. She served as steward and co-president of the Teaching Assistants Association (TAA/AFT Local 3220) with the American Federation of Teachers, the country's oldest graduate student labor union, while studying sociology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Alongside other workers, unionized and not, she participated in the "Wisconsin Uprising" and occupation of the State Capitol in 2011, one of the largest multi-week protests held in response to proposed legislation designed to decimate public-sector unionism in the state. Though the legislation passed, "the TAA continued to fight, beating back the attempt to quasi-privatize the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the flagship institution of the state's university system, later that year," Pagac says.

"I'm excited to use what I learned to educate and empower fellow working people so they can fight and win the dignity they deserve on the job and off," Pagac says.

"After standing with my co-workers in the fight to organize and join Local 40, I was so inspired by what we did that I decided I couldn't stop there," says Leah Derr, Local 40's new apprentice organizer. Derr is also a member, having had a fulfilling 13-year career at McLaren Macomb hospital where she held various positions including medical biller and lead laboratory pathology assistant. "Being a part of Local 40 and seeing how everyone really rallies together to be such an encouraging force behind working people and helping them stand up and fight has been overwhelmingly motivational," she continues. "I grew up in Metro Detroit in a union family household, the second oldest of seven siblings. As a result, I've got a soft spot for solidarity and a tough fight."

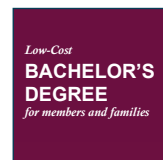
Family also has had a strong influence on Nallely Flores, Local 8's new apprentice organizer. A California transplant, Flores was raised by parents who emigrated from Mexico in search of the American Dream. "I moved from California to Washington state in 2010 and landed my first union job working for a nonprofit healthcare clinic," says Flores. "Coming from a household with immigrant parents who gave so much of their life working in agriculture and not having a union job, I didn't know much about unions until then."

She began to get involved in the union, becoming a steward and eventually was voted a member of the local's executive board. In 2017, she accepted a position as a membership support representative with Local 8, and "it's been such an amazing experience to learn more about organizing and representation. It has opened my eyes to so many issues that I didn't realize working people were experiencing." Flores credits Local 8 with giving her the opportunity to help people by fighting for their rights in the workplace and helping them earn livable wages and benefits that wouldn't be available without their union. "I am proud of the work Local 8 does to help its members reach those goals."



Local 8 Apprentice Organizer Nallely Flores.

INSIDE



Low-Cost Degree Now Available Through OPEIU 8



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320 McLaren Macomb Hospital Employees Vote to Join Local 40 17



Nonprofit Employees Continue to Choose OPEIU 18

OPEIU Celebrates the Life and Service of Charles Ponti Sr.

“If you do not organize, what you have today you might not have tomorrow.”

– Charles Ponti Sr.

OPEIU celebrates the life of Charles Ponti Sr., who passed away this summer at the age of 106 having spent a lifetime fighting for justice for working people. The longest-serving member of OPEIU, Ponti was an integral part of Local 153 in New York for 77 years, holding positions as union representative, organizer and president of the local’s retiree association.

Born June 1, 1913, Ponti was a union man through and through, who dedicated his life and career to helping working people achieve justice and dignity in the workplace. During the Great Depression, the Jersey City native began his career in the labor movement with the Bookkeepers, Stenographers and Accountants Union, the predecessor of OPEIU. After serving in WWII, where he received the American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Philippines Liberation Medal and WWII Victory Medal, he returned to his life’s work as a union organizer and business representative with Local 153 in 1946.

Throughout his work with OPEIU — and with his use of both conventional and unconventional organizing strategies — Ponti brought the benefits of unionism to working people in the NYC area, leading to significant growth of the union’s largest local. As a longtime president of the very active retiree association, Ponti continued to educate and organize OPEIU retirees to make a difference until his own retirement in 2014.

“One of the best parts about what I did for a living was that I got to train young men to do the type of work that I did,” Ponti told Downtown Rutherford magazine in 2016. He also explained his strong work ethic began in his youth. “While growing up in Jersey City, my father owned a fruit and vegetable store. My father had my brothers and I working there just about every day. That’s when I started to learn what hard work was all about.

“I truly believe that people should work hard, enjoy their work and enjoy their lives,” Ponti continued. “You really can’t do anything without working hard. In earlier days, people understood that being successful at their job was a lot like putting up a building. You had to work hard to build a foundation and truly understand what was happening at the lowest level. You had to understand what was required to build that level and every level above it. Then, you had to work hard to build a roof. I have always understood that if you really want to be good at what you do, you have to put your heart and soul into it.”

Ponti was always a welcome fixture at OPEIU events and conventions. In 2013, at the age of 100, Ponti addressed the 26th OPEIU Convention. There, he reminded the gathered local leaders of the importance of continued growth to ensure the union’s power at the bargaining table and beyond. “If you do not organize, what you have today you might not have tomorrow,” he observed.

Ponti enjoyed woodworking, watching the New York Yankees and Notre Dame football. Above all, he loved his family, which includes many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The members, elected leaders and staff of OPEIU are fortunate to have had a friend in the fight for economic justice as committed, intelligent, hard-working and humble as Charlie Ponti. As one of the longest-serving labor leaders in U.S. history, and as an integral part of OPEIU for the better part of a century, our union is committed to ensuring his legacy will be remembered for generations to come.



Charles Ponti Sr., center, with his family at his retirement celebration in 2014.



Rutherford New Jersey Mayor Joseph DeSalvo presents Ponti with a proclamation honoring him for his lifetime of service upon his retirement.

“
I have always understood that if you really want to be good at what you do, you have to put your heart and soul into it.
”

OPEIU Introduces New Membership Benefit

Low-Cost Degree Now Available Through OPEIU

OPEIU members and their families can now get their bachelor's degree for much less through the new OPEIU Low-Cost Degree Program.

OPEIU has partnered with Central State University, a public college near Dayton, Ohio, to bring members and their families an online bachelor's degree in business administration or teacher education (Pre-K to 5th grade) for no more than \$4,500 out-of-pocket per year for a full-time student, often significantly less. These costs include all tuition, fees and e-textbooks.

Members in good standing, their children, stepchildren, grandchildren, spouses, domestic partners, financial dependents, parents, siblings, and sons and daughters-in-law are all eligible. Family members do not need to be financial dependents or living with the member to be eligible. An associate degree or 60 credit hours in the intended major is required to enroll.

And remember, you can still obtain your associate degree or certificates in a number of areas of study COMPLETELY FREE through the OPEIU Free College Program benefit! OPEIU has added parents, siblings, and sons and daughters-in-law to the list of eligible family members for this benefit as well.

"With family and work, it is difficult to find time to go to a traditional school, but this program is all online and gives you the ability to go to school at a time that is convenient for you," said Janice Caruso, a member of Local 494 and a Free College graduate. "I would highly recommend this program."

Imagine what you can achieve with the OPEIU Free College Program. Find out more by visiting freecollege.opeiu.org.

In Partnership With

Central State University
1887

Low-Cost
BACHELOR'S DEGREE
for members and families

To date, more than **\$3.6 million** in scholarships has been awarded through the **OPEIU Free College Program.**

All Your Benefit Info at Your Fingertips!

You can access all your OPEIU Free College and other membership benefit information quickly and easily at opeiu.org (under Member Resources) and on the **OPEIU app**, available for download at the App Store and Google Play by searching OPEIU.



Congratulations to OPEIU Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2019 OPEIU Scholarships. Annually, the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund awards 12 full-time scholarships of up to \$1,625 each to members and their children to pursue higher education. Seven part-time scholarships of up to \$662.50 are also awarded each year.

OPEIU also awards 10 scholarships from the John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund annually. (There were no 2019 qualifying applicants.) Twenty scholarships are awarded each year from the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Scholarship Fund to attend a summer camp at the University of Missouri Campus in Columbia, Mo. The camp, for children ages 13 to 16, features lots of fun outdoor activities while teaching young people about the history of the labor movement and why unions are so important to working families today.

More information about all OPEIU scholarship opportunities can be found at opeiu.org under the Member Resources/Union Benefits link, as well as on the OPEIU app (available for free download for iPhones at the App Store and for Android devices at Google Play by searching **OPEIU**). Applications for the 2020 scholarships will be posted in January.

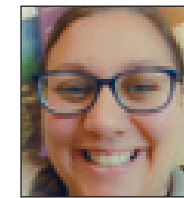


Local 494 President Joe Mason, left, presents a Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship to Taylor VanBibber. Also pictured is her mother and Local 494 member, Amy Mugford.

Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund—Full-Time Winners



Harris Afzalzada
Local 2



Erica Henson
Local 8



John Trivigno III
Local 32



Christy Ruth Villalonga
Local 40



Nicholas Bloss
Local 50



Sergio Morizot-Leite
Local 100



Joseph Redendo
Local 153



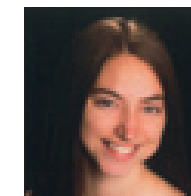
Kyle Pellen
Local 277



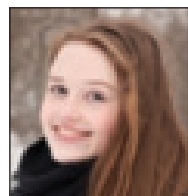
India Hudson
Local 459



Taylor VanBibber
Local 494



Olivia Tiley
Local 1937



Esmé Higgon
Local 2007A

Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund—Part-Time Winners



Melissa Gray
Local 2



Kayla Dang
Local 29



Vickie Johnson
Local 42

Jannet Mendez-Pacheco
Local 8
No photo available

Summer Campers Learn About the Importance of Unions



Recipients of the 2019 Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Scholarship Fund attend summer camp July 14-19 at the University of Missouri Campus in Columbia, Mo., to learn about organized labor while enjoying summer sports and crafts.

OPEIU Family Member Awarded 2019 Union Plus Scholarship

This year, Union Plus awarded \$170,000 in scholarships to 108 students representing 34 unions, including a winner representing OPEIU. Zachary Rambo of Ovid, Mich., whose mother, Dianna Rambo, is a member of Local 459, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

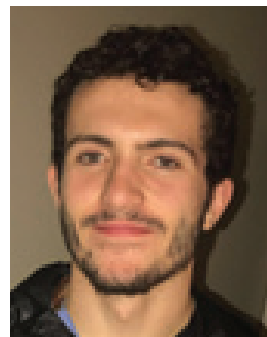
Zach is a 2019 graduate of Ovid-Elsie High School (OEHS) in Michigan and will major in nursing at Lansing Community College. He plans to obtain emergency medical technician (EMT) and certified nursing assistant (CNA) licenses en route to becoming a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA). Tracey Hoffman, agriscience teacher and Future Farmers of America sponsor at OEHS, said Zach is an outstanding student with an excellent work ethic. "Zach has always taken great pride in his academics, and I definitely have seen this in his performance in my classroom," Hoffman said. "He pushes himself to be a great student and has the motivation to succeed in whatever he chooses to do."

Zach is a member of the National Honor Society, the National Society of High School Scholars, the National Technical Honor Society, the high school's varsity football and track and field teams, among many other activities and honors. He also volunteers at his local hospital, Owosso Memorial Healthcare.

The Union Plus Scholarship Program, now in its 28th year, awards scholarships based on outstanding academic achievement, personal character, financial need and commitment to the values of organized labor. This year's group of scholarship recipients includes university, college and trade or technical school students from 31 states plus the District of Columbia.

Union Plus provides benefits and services at competitive prices to working families. All members

of OPEIU are eligible to take advantage of these benefits. If you're interested in the Union Plus scholarship program or any of its other money-saving programs — including discounts on wireless services from AT&T, the only unionized nationwide wireless carrier — visit unionplus.org.



Zachary Rambo

The 2020 Union Plus scholarship applications are now available at unionplus.org. The deadline is Jan. 31, 2020.

International Vice Presidents Allen, Dyer and Turner Retire



Walter Allen Jr., center, with Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney and President Richard Lanigan.

As long-serving International Vice Presidents Walter Allen Jr., Dan Dyer and Becky Turner retire from the International Executive Board, OPEIU expresses its deep appreciation to them for their many contributions and dedication to the union and its members.

Allen has spent more than three decades as an activist and leader within the labor movement, beginning his career as a business agent and then business manager of Local 6 in Boston. In 2001, he was elected to serve as both executive director and chief financial officer of Local 30 in San Diego. He served on the International Executive Board since 1995.

Dyer was elected to serve on the executive board at the 22nd OPEIU Convention in 2001. He began his lengthy career in the labor movement as a research economist with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. It was then he began serving Local 2 in the Washington, D.C. area as a chief shop steward. He later was elected to the local's executive board in 1975, and as a first vice president in 1984. A year later, he became a full-time staff representative and was elected president of the local in 1993.

Turner has been an active and committed member and leader of Local 277 in Fort Worth, Texas, for more than four decades, beginning when she accepted a position as a grammatical editor for technical publications at General Dynamics in 1978. Later, at Lockheed Martin, she was elected committee person for the Logistics Department and then was appointed chief steward in 1991. In 1995, she became a full-time staff member at Local 277, serving as its first female business representative. She became president in 2001.

"Walter, Dan and Becky's contributions to OPEIU and the broader labor movement for the past several decades will be deeply missed by OPEIU, its officers and staff and the more than 103,000 members throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico," said President Richard Lanigan. "Their wisdom, experience and compassion for working people was unrivaled, and we can't thank them enough for their contributions to our union."

Allen, Dyer and Turner were all conferred the title of vice president emeritus/emerita at the 28th Convention in June, and all continue to serve their local unions.



Becky Turner



Dan Dyer

28th OPEIU Convention Supplement

A New Model for a New Union

More than 300 OPEIU leaders and activists representing 103,000 members from throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico gathered in Las Vegas to chart a course for the future of the union focusing on building strength at the local union level to organize members like never before.

With the theme, A New Model for a New Union, the 28th OPEIU Convention adopted a number of resolutions to ready our union for the challenges facing working people today, including growing income inequality, the healthcare crisis and so-called “right-to-work” laws designed to weaken the rights of working people and the unions representing them.

“Working people across the nation are facing a difficult reality: an economy that isn’t working for them, characterized by stagnant wages, cuts to healthcare, and systematic discrimination and inequality,” reads the “New Model for a New Union” resolution adopted by delegates. “Anti-union forces are conspiring to strip working people of their rights on and off the job, spending hundreds of millions of dollars per year...to eliminate working people’s ability to negotiate a better standard of living for themselves and their families.”

In response, OPEIU has adopted a new model focusing on prioritizing organizing, thus building strength through numbers to increase our clout at the bargaining table and in our communities. Delegates affirmed it will take all of us to make this new model a success. “Working people and strong unions must be at the center of this fight, as greater activism and engagement in their union, communities and societies is the key

to meeting the challenges we face in this new economic and political reality,” reads the resolution.

In his address to delegates, President Richard Lanigan further explained why we need this new model. “We cannot ask our members to continue to fight using old techniques against newly equipped adversaries any more than an army can be asked to ride horseback into battle against stealth bombers,” he said. “We must change our approach. We must use effective techniques and strategies. We must change our model and be the new union we are capable of being.”

Lanigan also offered hope that, despite obstacles, this type of growth is possible. “The labor movement has entered into a period of possibility when unions are growing,” he said. “OPEIU has locals that are growing. Why? Because nonunion work does not pay as well, has less job security and has less in the way of the benefits such as healthcare and pensions than union work. It’s also because the new generation of worker does not see their place in the American Dream and wants help from unions.”

All resolutions adopted by the convention can be read at opeiu.org and on the OPEIU app, available at the App Store and Google Play by searching **OPEIU**.

Richard Lanigan and Mary Mahoney Re-Elected to Lead OPEIU



Convention delegates re-elected President Richard Lanigan and Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney for another four-year term.

Since becoming president, Lanigan, who also serves as business manager of Local 153 in New York and is a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, has implemented an innovative union model focusing on building local union power to organize a new generation of working people. Working in tandem with Secretary-Treasurer Mahoney, he has also found new and pioneering ways to improve the lives of OPEIU members, including the development of an OPEIU 401(k) program and national health plan.

See page 23 for more about the national health plan.



Economist and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich speaks during the OPEIU convention's Future of Work pre-conference.

The Future of Work is Dependent on the Strength of Unions

The 2019 convention began with a pre-conference on The Future of Work, which was also live-streamed to members throughout the country, where economist and former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich warned that a strong economy capable of benefiting everyone is directly tied to and dependent upon the strength of the labor movement.

OPEIU called in three experts from the worlds of economics, labor and academia to share their perspectives on the future of work, and to help OPEIU leaders and activists understand their role in ensuring that future is bright for working people.

Reich spoke about the issues plaguing the working middle class, including skyrocketing income inequality, myths surrounding globalization, the recent rise of worker misclassification and anti-union corporate behavior.

“Trickle-down economics is a fiction,” said Reich, dispelling the popular, and what he called “dangerous,” myth that more money in the hands of the wealthy makes a stronger economy for all. “What we need might be called bottom-up economics. That’s the only way to create an economy that is sustainable,” he continued. “I mean you pay

workers; you pay them a fair share of the gains of economic growth. You not only pay them, but you invest in workers, in terms of education and job training, and health insurance. That is rising-up economics, the kind of economics we used to practice in this country and then we stopped practicing.”

So, what is the future of America and American workers, and what is our role as union members? “Number one, we have got to — not just for yourself and not just for your union, but for the country — we’ve got to fight for stronger unions,” Reich advised.

“I’m talking about legislation that makes it easier to form unions — card check ought to be automatic,” he continued. “We’ve got to make the penalties for firing people, abusing workers for trying to form unions, high enough to get companies to stop doing it. And we’ve got to prevent striker replacements.”

Reich also had sage advice about what it means to be a responsible citizen.

“The act of organizing is an essential part of citizenship,” he said. “Citizenship is not just voting, not just serving on juries and not just paying taxes. Citizenship is about getting out there and organizing and mobilizing.”

Other conference speakers included Solidarity Center Executive Director Shawna Bader-Blau, whose organization monitors and tracks the rights of workers across the globe, and provides worker education programs in more than 60 countries. Bader-Blau shared the importance of solidarity across borders.

“We have set up global economic architecture with free markets for business, but highly constrained rights for workers, driving inequality on a massive scale,” she noted. “Sisters and brothers, we have confronted these kinds of disparities before — that is why we have a labor movement.

“Yes, it’s pretty tough right now,” she continued, “but sisters and brothers, we were born for this moment. This is why we exist.”

Ken Jacobs, chair of the UC Berkeley Labor Center who discussed the intersection of inequality and organizing — with an emphasis on organizing workers in industries previously deemed too difficult to organize, such as fast food and the tech world — shared that sense of optimism, noting “it’s time to think big. If we think small, we won’t be able to build the power needed to take on these challenges.”

“Number one, we have got to — not just for yourself and not just for your union, but for the country — we’ve got to fight for stronger unions.”

– Robert Reich

28th OPEIU Convention Supplement

Scenes from the 28th OPEIU Convention



Delegates to the 28th OPEIU Convention.



Left to right are International Vice President and OPEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania Local 112 Executive Director Michael Bodinsky, Secretary-Treasurer Amanda Kalinowski, President Janeen Davis and Director Lora Crosswhite.



The Local 11, Vancouver, Wash., delegation included, left to right, President Barbara Melton, Union Representative Karyn Morrison, Executive Secretary-Treasurer Maureen Colvin and Union Representative Olivia Glassow.



The Local 2 delegation, left to right, included International Vice President and Local 2 Secretary-Treasurer Linda Bridges, First Vice President Sarah Levesque, Second Vice President Michael Spiller, Staff Representative Rian Howard, Head Steward Ian Stublarec, Third Vice President Rosemary Meushaw and Apprentice Organizer Grace Reckers. Local 2 represents members in the Washington, D.C. area.



Left to right are International Vice President and Local 32 President Mary Short, Local 6 Recording Secretary Debbie Puopolo, Vice President Lois Ciuffredo and Secretary-Treasurer Patti Pelletier. Local 32 is located in Wall, N.J., and Local 6 is in Braintree, Mass.



Left to right are President Jeremiah Edmond, Secretary-Treasurer Melissa Stuart, Negotiator Tecora Noble, Vice President Tracey Woodruff and Negotiator Johnnell Kemp of GAME/OPEIU Local 101 in Miramar, Fla.

Meet the OPEIU Executive Board

The International Executive Board elected at the convention is comprised of 15 vice presidents representing eight regions, and two vice presidents representing diversity.

Region I



Steve Pettie
Vice President
DAG 110s

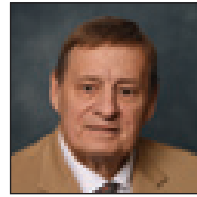


Linda Bridges
Secretary-Treasurer
Local 2



Mary Short
President
Local 32

Region II



John Mattiacci, D.P.M.
President
Guild 45



Michael Bodinsky
Executive Director
Local 112



Myra Hepburn
Secretary-Treasurer
Local 153

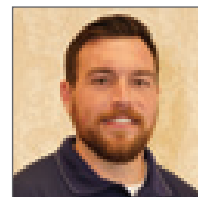
Region III



Greg Blackman
President, GSAF/
OPEIU Local 100

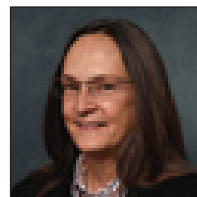


Dennis R. Arrington
President, ITPEIU/OPEIU
Local 4873

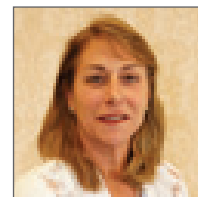


Tyler Turner
President
Local 277

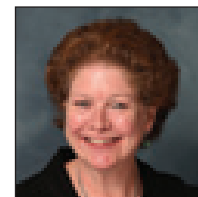
Region V



Tamara Rubyn
President/Business
Manager, Local 29

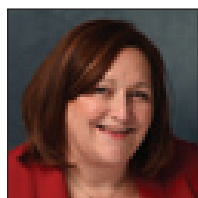


Marianne Giordano
Executive Director/CFO
Local 30



Suzanne Mode
Business Manager
Local 8

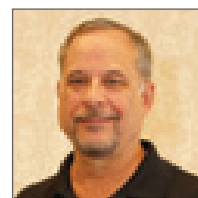
Region VII



Sharon Taylor
President
Local 459



Aaron Sanders
President
Local 512

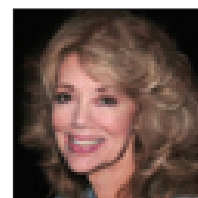


Dan Ross
President, HNA/
OPEIU Local 50

Diversity



Lisa Blake
President
Local 42



Christine Page
President/Business
Manager, Local 174

LOCAL UNION NEWS

320 McLaren Macomb Hospital Employees Vote to Join Local 40



McLaren Macomb employees are "all in" for Local 40 representation.

A group of 320 clerical associates, couriers, critical care techs, dispatchers, lab assistants, patient access reps, patient sitters, pharmacy techs and several other classifications at McLaren Macomb hospital in Michigan voted to form a union with Local 40, joining the 600 registered nurses already represented at the hospital by the local.

The employees overcame the hospital management's efforts to both delay the balloting and to challenge who was eligible to vote, a common tactic used by employers when working people try to unionize. Management tried to toss 100 voters off the rolls in an effort to delay the election results, but the National Labor Relations Board's Region 7 director ruled against that tactic.

"McLaren management has been fighting its workers with every trick in the book, dragging out the process while they

bombarded the employees with misleading anti-union literature and mandatory captive audience meetings," said Jeff Morawski, Local 40 president and a registered nurse at McLaren Macomb. It didn't work, as the vote showed.

The Local 40 RNs at the hospital have also had problems with the hospital's management. At one point, McLaren Macomb dedicated a new \$68 million wing but refused to hire enough nurses to help staff it.

That led Local 40 to erect a giant billboard looming over a nearby highway, showing a nurse — and the union — caring for patients.

"This is the proudest day in the history of Local 40," said Morawski after the vote. "The workers' voices were heard loud and clear, and I am excited and proud to welcome them to Local 40. When workers win an election to form a union, everyone wins."

"I'm proud of our group for standing united and not backing down no matter what our employer threw in our way," said Leah Derr, a lab assistant and new apprentice organizer. "Our solidarity gave us an overwhelming victory, and we're going to take that power with us to the bargaining table. We are a union family now!"

Congratulations to these new members for standing together and fighting for their rights on the job, and to the members of the organizing committee, led by President Morawski and the Local 40 Executive Board members.

Local 40 also represents the RNs and radiology technologists at Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital. Local 40 is a founding member of the OPEIU Nurses Council, which represents more than 14,000 healthcare professionals.

Nonprofit Employees Continue to Choose OPEIU

In historic numbers nonprofit employees throughout the country have chosen to come together and form a union with OPEIU. They join the growing trend of employees at nonprofit organizations unionizing to gain a say in their organization, increase transparency and raise workplace standards.

The past few months have seen unprecedented growth of our local unions. In one week alone, more than 420 employees at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, YouthCare and the National Endowment for Democracy chose to unionize with OPEIU. Here are their stories.

Local 29 Organizes San Francisco-Marin Food Bank

More than 100 employees at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank (SFMFB) voted overwhelmingly for representation by Local 29, unionizing to ensure greater transparency from their employer and to have the ability to participate more fully in decisions impacting their community.

The group of program coordinators, drivers, intake specialists, order builders, community fundraisers, distribution assistants and other job classifications at the San Francisco and Marin sites are devoted to providing a critical lifeline to more than 140,000 people in need every week. SFMFB has been a leader for more than 30 years in ending hunger in the Bay Area.

“In forming our union, SFMFB staff gain a stronger voice in our workplace and community. We want to ensure our colleagues, who are experts in their fields, feel empowered to voice their ideas and have an opportunity to see their impact,” said Edith Cadena, SFMFB program coordinator. “Through our union, we’ll prioritize and advocate for creating real solutions to the issues and challenges we and our communities face.”

“I’ve been at the Food Bank for 18 years and I’ve seen a lot of changes that have made me recognize the need for us to constantly deepen our commitment to each other and our community,” said Emily Citraro, SFMFB senior allocation coordinator. “We know we can do this better with representation from our union.”



San Francisco-Marin Food Bank employees with OPEIU organizers Andom “Nati” Kahsay, back row far left, and Jennifer Levine, kneeling far right, and Local 29 Apprentice Organizer Maureen Flaherman, kneeling center.

More than 180 YouthCare Employees Vote to Join Local 8



YouthCare employees with Local 8 Organizing Director Corinne Cosentino, far left.

A group of 180 youth counselors, case managers, education and employment specialists, on-call staff, outreach workers, development staff and other classifications at YouthCare have voted to join Local 8 in Seattle.

YouthCare works to end youth homelessness and to ensure young people are valued for who they are and empowered to achieve their potential. Founded in 1974, it was one of the first shelters to serve runaway and homeless youth on the West Coast.

“I’ve seen so many amazing youth workers leave YouthCare because they didn’t feel heard,” said Emily Penna, program coordinator. “I am excited [for our union] to give everyone a voice to ultimately advocate to better serve our youth.”

“I stand with my co-workers in our union because it brings unity and balance into our working community,” said Niki Sebatware, youth counselor.

National Endowment for Democracy Chooses Local 2

After a 10-month organizing effort to achieve collective bargaining power and ensure the democratic values they espouse abroad are similarly observed in their own workplace, more than 150 employees at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) voted by overwhelming majority to join Local 2 in the Washington, D.C. area.



New Local 2 members at the National Endowment for Democracy with Apprentice Organizer Grace Reckers, far left.

The newest Local 2 members are compliance experts, auditors, researchers, communication specialists, public affairs officers, journalists, program and grant officers and more, who want to ensure the private nonprofit — which has funded democratic grants internationally since its founding in 1983 — remains committed to its core principles of human and labor rights. “To quote my mother, we are best when we move away from an individualized and arbitrary decision-making process to a collective and transparent one,” observed Rula Jamous, senior grants officer. “Without a formal collective unit, there was no mechanism for such participation, and so a union was the logical and rational answer.”

Excitement around the win was widespread among employees. “It’s been so meaningful to be a small part of the organizing effort and to put my values into practice in the workplace. I’m so proud of the work we’ve done to make this happen,” said Alex Steiner, program assistant for the Eurasia team. “We’re excited to see how collective bargaining will make a difference at the place we work every day.”

NED is the latest nonprofit to join Local 2, following the Solidarity Center, Planned Parenthood, the National Democratic Institute, PartnersGlobal and the ACLU of Maryland. See the story below for more info about that recent win.

ACLU of Maryland Joins Local 2

Fourteen employees of the ACLU of Maryland, including organizers, attorneys, policy specialists, and legal fellows and assistants spent nine long months building up power and support for a union with Local 2 before winning an election with the American Arbitration Association (AAA). The recognition agreement with management and the AAA allowed the unit to technically be voluntarily recognized, albeit through an election.



Employees of the ACLU of Maryland have voted to be represented by Local 2.

The ACLU of Maryland is an affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union, a progressive nonprofit that works to preserve and maintain individual freedoms. Staff routinely expressed how important it is for an organization with such dedication to civil liberties to support an employee union.

“We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to negotiate a workplace that is fair and equitable for all staff,” said Justin Nalley, education policy analyst and a member of the organizing committee. “The staff of the ACLU of Maryland take exercising our rights as employees as seriously as the work we produce on behalf of our clients, Maryland residents, and the broader ACLU of Maryland family.”

“We hope the ACLU of Maryland will hold itself to the same values we use to fight for our civil liberties every day and apply those values to our internal workplace reform,” Nalley continued. “While it is unfortunate the unionization process was met with increased distrust on the management side and has taken nearly half a year after asking for voluntary recognition, we expect the contract negotiation to be more efficient and collaborative as we all share the same goals.”

Local 106 Averts Strike and Ratifies Contract

The Metal Trades Council (MTC) — a coalition of several unions, including Local 106, representing nearly 2,700 workers — have overwhelmingly voted to ratify a four-year contract with General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Conn.

More than 85 percent of voters voted to ratify the contract, which provides an across-the-board 3 percent wage increase, additional wage increases for certain job titles, and a \$500 bonus for all members. The contract also includes an increase in retirement benefits for eligible members, paid time off and employer contributions to health savings accounts.

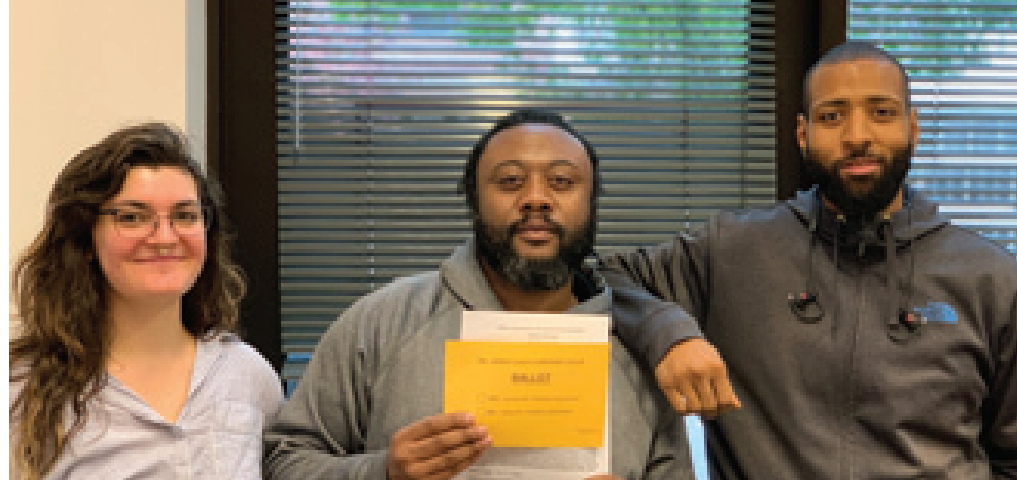
“There were contentious negotiations right down to the end, to the very last minute, when we took it to the [MTC] membership for a vote,” said Paul Bruno, president of Local 106 who served as OPEIU’s representative on the bargaining committee alongside Vice President Howard Manuel. The final tally showed 1,844 members in favor of ratification and 357 votes against approving the deal.

Local 106 represents 154 of the 2,673 workers covered by the contract at the Connecticut shipyard. OPEIU members at Electric Boat — which has produced submarines for the U.S. Navy since 1899 — include data processors, administrative and financial clerks, industrial radiography technicians, radiological control monitors and dosimetry technicians.

Plymouth Housing Employees Ratify Contract

Employees at the nonprofit Plymouth Housing represented by Local 8 in Seattle have ratified a contract implementing immediate 10-24 percent market rate wage increases for all employees, in addition to annual pay increases each year of the contract.

Members will also receive an additional day of paid time off, an additional day of paid traumatic event leave, as well as a process for members to address workload when vacancies occur, including additional pay.



Local 8’s Plymouth Housing bargaining committee members, left to right, Phoebe Feldsher, Sakai Kearse and John Meadows.

Local 13’s Pat Austin Retires After 44 Years as OPEIU Member, Officer

OPEIU is taking time to recognize and appreciate the many contributions of Patricia Austin, who is retiring after serving as a Local 13 member and officer for 44 years.

Austin became a member of Local 13 in Bridgeton, Mo., in 1975, and just a year later was appointed recording secretary. She spent many years serving as president/business representative, vice president and trustee before serving as secretary-treasurer from 1994 until her retirement. She also served as a vice president on the St. Louis Labor Council Executive Board.

“I cannot think of a more rewarding job than to help working people stand up for themselves and have a say in their working conditions,” Austin said. “My father and brother were union sheet metal workers, my grandmother was a waitress and a shop steward at Fred Harvey restaurant in Union Station, my maternal grandfather was a union Red Cap at Union Station, and my paternal grandfather was a union bus driver.

“I was raised to be a strong and independent woman at a time when others discouraged it,” she continued. “My roots made me a strong supporter of the union labor movement and my parents were extremely proud of me. OPEIU is a great organization, and I am glad that I was able to be a part of it.”

Wanda Wrinkle Inducted into Nebraska AFL-CIO Hall of Fame

Wanda Wrinkle of Local 53 in Omaha, Neb., has been recognized for her many years of service to working people as she was recently inducted into the Nebraska State AFL-CIO Labor Leaders Hall of Fame.

“We are so proud of Wanda,” said Local 53 President Jody Monahan. And so are all your OPEIU sisters and brothers. Congratulations to Sister Wrinkle!



Wanda Wrinkle, second from right, with Local 277’s Becky Cutler, Local 53 President Jody Monahan and Secretary-Treasurer Vicki Jones.

Local 105’s Philip Hood Begins Law School with a Day of Community Service

Local 105 President Philip Hood is taking his commitment to his community to another level, enrolling in law school so he can become an even stronger advocate for working people.

Hood has been an OPEIU member since 2003 and an elected leader of Local 105 in Little Rock, Ark., since 2005. He also is the former president of IAMAW Local 2907, serving from 1996-2003. He’s now begun studying labor and employment law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock’s William H. Bowen School of Law, and he began his first fall semester with a day of public service at Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Little Rock.

White Collar asked Hood to reflect on why he thinks it’s so important for union members to get involved in their local communities, and why he wanted to make public service a part of his first day of law school.

Here are excerpts from that interview:



Local 105 President Philip Hood, pictured wearing his blue I AM OPEIU shirt, engaged in a day of service at Booker T. Washington Elementary School with his fellow Bowen law students.

Why, in your view, is it important for union members and leaders to get involved in their local communities?

Union members must have a presence in their communities to influence public opinion to counter what is being suggested by the business community. Local communities need to see us active and involved socially and politically, protecting shared interests and advocating for common causes.

What was the purpose or symbolism behind starting law school with a day of public service?

It was to show that public service should always be a core value and providing a service without an accompanying invoice is alright. Additionally, for many, it is a humbling experience. To embark on a career that is known for prestige and honor by doing work that may be regarded as beneath them is the perfect way to begin.

Why did you decide to start law school, and if you have post-graduation plans, what are they?

We need more help as union members. Employees need more people to advocate on their behalf legally. I served 12 years as the commissioner representing labor’s interests for the Arkansas Workers’ Compensation Commission and witnessed, in session after session, the erosion of employee rights and benefits. I was motivated to go because of the need.



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OPEIU National Health Plan Provides Coverage Option

More than 44 million Americans are uninsured, and millions more are dangerously underinsured. For those fortunate enough to have insurance, premiums and employee-mandated contributions are sharply on the rise.

There is no doubt there is a healthcare crisis in this country. To that end, OPEIU is now offering local unions the opportunity to secure fully insured healthcare plans for their members and their families. These plans are available to your local union during bargaining, allowing locals to take a meaningful position on healthcare costs, which have traditionally been dependent on employers' proposals.

OPEIU has partnered with the Steelworkers Health and Welfare Fund, which currently serves more than 120,000 beneficiaries, to provide insurance policies underwritten through Highmark and Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). The policies are fully insured,

and are administered through the BCBS "Blue Card," which utilizes the local's applicable BCBS provider panels.

OPEIU local unions entering negotiations can now secure health plan bids based on their current contract structure or can negotiate new health plan structures.

"Our goal is to develop tools that local unions can use in negotiations to secure the best possible benefits for our members," said President Richard Lanigan. "The ability to secure bids based upon our own negotiating strategies, as opposed to 'take it or leave it' proposals from employers, will give union negotiators advantages they've historically never had."

If a local union has any questions or is interested in securing a bid on the new plans, contact Diane Pickle, executive director, Steelworkers Health and Welfare Fund at 412-562-2279 or toll-free at 888-831-3863.

"The ability to secure bids based upon our own negotiating strategies, as opposed to 'take it or leave it' proposals from employers, will give union negotiators advantages they've historically never had."

– Richard Lanigan

As Stigma Around Depression Declines, More Seek Mental Health Treatment

Depression is on the rise in the United States, especially among younger people. But research suggests this upward trend may be a bit deceptive.

A Columbia University study published in *Psychological Medicine* recently identified trends showing the rising rate of depression among all Americans, and especially young adults. From 2005 to 2015, depression among all persons in the U.S. rose from 6.6 percent to 7.2 percent. Among those ages 12 to 17, however, the rate increased from 8.7 percent to 12.7 percent.

The stigma surrounding mental health issues is deep-rooted in our national psyche. Those with mental health issues routinely face exclusion, both in the workplace and within social circles, which often contributes to a seemingly unbreakable cycle where people are afraid or embarrassed to seek help. Depression frequently remains undiagnosed, the study says, despite it being among the most treatable mental conditions.

That's why the rising rate of depression can be seen, in part, as a good thing: more and more people are willing to self-identify as having mental health issues. Research suggests that makes a significant difference in people's ability to receive treatment and further contributes to the

destigmatization of discussing mental health, which is important as untreated depression is one of the strongest risk factors for suicide.

But why is the rate higher among younger adults? Many experts interviewed by the healthcare website Healthline point to social media as a significant factor.

"Millennials can't help but compare their situations and achievements to everyone else's, which can leave them feeling insecure and unaccomplished," said Jessica Singh, a mental health therapist. "Millennials are feeling the pressure to always look and act like they have it all together. This can easily result in lowered self-esteem, anxiety or depression."

If you think you may be suffering from depression, it's important to seek treatment as soon as possible. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act of 2010, insurance plans are required to cover depression screenings. Not sure where to start? The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has created an anonymous mental health treatment services locator that can be found at findtreatment.samhsa.gov.

Did You Know?

Raising the minimum wage has been shown to reduce the number of suicides.

[Source: "Researchers Say There's a Simple Way to Reduce Suicides: Increase the Minimum Wage," *The Washington Post*, April 30, 2019]

Learn more at unionplus.org





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