Fight to Stop Right-to-Work

By Mike Lavoie, Chief Steward / Legislative Committee Chair

Ok brothers and sisters we are now in a fight to stop this so-called “right-to-work” Law in Missouri and this is how we are going to do that.

We will be collecting signatures as well as training others to collect signatures on the Citizens’ Referendum petition. So anyone 18 years of age can participate in the collecting of these petitions. To collect these petitions you will need to be trained on the proper way of filling in all the necessary information that is required. We will be having some larger training classes at first then for those that cannot make these training classes we will try to put together some smaller training classes to accommodate them. Now this is not just for union members this is for anyone that wants to help in our fight to stop this so-called “right to work” law. Brother, sister, mom, dad, son, daughter, friends, relatives and anyone else who wants to fight this fight.

Here is how we are going to defeat this bad legislation here in Missouri.

By collecting the more than 140,000 signatures needed by Aug. 25 this will put the law on hold until the November 2018 election when the citizens of Missouri can decide by their vote whether we should be a right to work for less state or not. Because of the big money that is floating around in Jefferson City this should not be a law that should be decided by our legislators. Because these Billionaires want to low our wages and we know it’s true because of the Millions of dollars they have spent on these past elections to get people elected that will vote for these bad bills. What does it mean to them, more money in their bank accounts.

Remember if this becomes law your wages will go down, your benefits will go down, you will be working in a more dangerous work place. And these are facts based on the other states that have already gone to a right to work for less state.

If no other reason to fight this fight think about your children and your grand children these are the ones that are going to pay for our not getting involved in stopping this horrible law.

Thank you brothers and sisters.

2017 CWA Local Annual Easter Egg Hunt

By Vickie Jordan, Secretary/Entertainment Committee Liaison

The Easter Egg Hunt was a success even with the change of location to Greensfelder Memorial Shelter at Creve Coeur Park. Even though it was a very windy day, the kids had a great time. As always, the Easter Bunny was a big hit with the children. Along with our clowns who had lots of face painting going on and balloons being made. Moving the Magic Show earlier enabled the children to sit down and enjoy the show. I would like to thank our many volunteers: Member Margaret Schuette and her daughter Becky, Steward Inez Wilson, Member Mike Smith, Chief Steward/Retiree Ron Munford and Executive Vice President Mark Johnson. The remaining cooked food was donated to St. Louis Fire Department Engine House No.31 and the uncooked food was donated to CWA Local 6300 Community Services Committee. Thank you all for attending the 2017 Easter Egg Hunt.
Thank You!!!
By Daniel Juedemann, Steward

Thank You Ken Bates, for all you have done for this Local, its Membership and our Community. Ken Bates served as Vice President, Chief Steward, and Steward for ASI/FACS. Some of Ken’s other contributions include Mobilization Coordinator for the Local, during contract negotiations for Verizon (frontier) and AT&T Mobility. He was on the District 6 Premise Technician Trainer for mobilizing Members throughout our District as well as on the Next Generation Committee. In addition to the aforementioned, Ken served on the Executive Board for March of Dimes as well as United Way.

Besides having an exceptional and excellent work ethic and an enviable talent to represent the Members of Local 6300, Ken showed up every day honest and committed, managing to effectively balance family, friends, and work life. Your considerable latitude for the use of initiative and independent judgment, your brave stance to challenge the status quo, and your responsible adherence to all maxims and worksite policies and procedures has been an inspiration to all of us.

We will miss you, but we realize that exciting opportunities and challenges await you. We have all benefited from your wit and wisdom and wish you every success on your career path. Finding someone to fill your shoes will be no simple undertaking. Nevertheless, we wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Your Union Brothers and Sisters Local 6300
There are Major Changes Coming

By Michael C. Goldberg, Attorney

This month I wanted to continue to provide updates on the legislative changes that are going to cause significant impact on your employment rights. There are major changes coming to make it easier for your employer to terminate your employment based on discriminatory acts or by retaliating against you if you get hurt on the job. These changes were promised before the election and are being quickly pushed through the legislative process. They will likely go into effect in August.

The major change in respect to your right not to be discriminated against at work due to race, age, sex, national origin, religion or disability is the changing of the standard you will need to prove in Court if you bring a charge of discrimination. The Republican majority determined that if you are discriminated against, you should have a higher burden of proof to make a case. You will now have to prove that the discriminatory actions of your employer were the motivating factor in the termination of your employment. What is meant by motivating factor is going to be decided ultimately through litigation and the Court system but it is definitely a higher standard than the current contributing factor standard. Currently, if you are able to prove that at least some of the employer’s action toward you in regard to your termination was driven by some discriminatory act, you can bring a claim and possibly be successful. The changing of the standard to the motivating factor will make it harder to win the same type of claim. All the employer needs to do in order to defeat the claim under the new proposed law is to prove they terminated you based on any other reason. Then it becomes the employee’s burden to prove that is false.

This will absolutely be a harder standard to prove and will eliminate many cases. Not only is the standard going to be harder to meet to be successful, the amount you can receive in benefits are going to be capped by the size of the company. Punitive damages are going to be harder to get. The actual individual who performed the discriminatory acts may escape all liability. The current law was supposed to punish the wrongdoer and the company and help prevent discrimination in the work place. However, with the reduction of these types of benefits and the elimination of personal liability it simply encourages more discrimination. It is difficult to understand why anyone would want to make it easier to discriminate in the work place but that is exactly what is being passed.

The only real reason that these changes are occurring is to save money for employers. They have finally obtained all the offices in Missouri and have super majorities in the House and Senate. It is payback time for all the campaign contributions they have received. You see the same attitude toward workers in the quick passing of right to work. This is simply another attack on the working person and a reward to the big financial contributors who can act without fear of retaliation. This is but the first step toward dismantling the legal system we have in place to protect people. You can already see from the announcements made by the Governor on down that the entire legal system is under attack and changes are coming. The only reason to change the system is to make it harder for people to bring claims in Court. This attack on your rights is coming fast and at this point there is not much to stand in the way. I will continue to advise you of these changes as you need to know how your rights are being changed. You cannot hide or ignore the fact that your rights and way of living are under attack.

We must all take action to try and stop or at least slow or modify the changes that are on the wish list of the employers or at least slow or modify the changes. Everyone needs to take a stand and protect their rights.

Michael Goldberg, Esq.
1-800-489-2891

Years of Continuous Service to be Recognized

By John J. Ebeling, Vice President Print and Media Sector

Mark your calendars: at the July 19, 2017 Awards Meeting, the Members of the Print and Media Sector who have achieved 70, 60 and 50 years of Continuous Membership will be given special recognition for this accomplishment.

A 70-Year Pin and Certificate will be awarded to Raymond Nelke and Kenneth Harding, both retired members of the Post-Dispatch Chapel.

60-Year Pin and Certificate will be awarded to Robert Wallace, a retired member of the Post-Dispatch Chapel.

50-Year Pin and Certificate will be awarded to Jackie Chapman, a retired member of the Post-Dispatch Chapel.

We would like to ask each of the Pin Recipients to let us know if you are unable to attend, in that event your Pin and Certificate will be mailed to you.

President Mehringer will be presenting the CWA COPE Awards to all the Members who have reached the various levels of voluntary giving to this very important COPE Program. Each of these Sisters and Brothers who will be recognized deserve our thanks and congratulations.

Vice President Ebeling will assist President Mehringer in presenting the Continuous Membership Pins and Certificates. The Special Awards Night will be at the Union Hall on Wednesday evening July 19, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.
Unions in Missouri offer amazing benefits, not only for just the person working in it, but their family as well. Right-to-work will not save Missouri. It is only tearing down the economy and reducing the existence of unions. Unions protect its workers and families. Without them, Missouri's economy will be greatly diminished. Removing labor unions means a reduction of a skilled labor force.

Labor Unions in the United States were originally formed in the mid-to-late 1800s. They were primarily established to protect the common interest of workers. Early trade unions played an important role in the industrial growth of America. Organized labor unions fought for better wages, reasonable working hours, and safer working conditions. This movement also lead the effort to end child labor, provide health and welfare benefits to its workers, and aid to injured or retired members. Another significant aspect of the labor unions gave workers the ability to stand up for their own rights without the fear of being fired. In 1935 the National Labor Relations Act gave employees the right to form and join unions, and also forced employers to bargain collectively with them. This was a great benefit to American labor unions.

Labor unions have helped the middle class by keeping wages high. This in turn allows union members to provide a higher standard of living for their families. Economic growth is driven by consumer spending, and consumer spending growth is dependent on an increase in wages. Union members earn approximately 11.3 percent more than nonunion workers with similar occupations. Right-to-work laws weaken unions and strengthen employers. This makes it easier for companies to reduce jobs, eliminate benefits, and decrease workplace safety. Therefore right-to-work is not a universal remedy to spur economic growth in Missouri.

On average union workers are more likely to have better benefits compared to non-union employees. This includes higher wages, health insurance, retirement, pension, and paid sick leave due to the collective bargaining power of unions. Job security is another benefit of labor unions. Workers with union jobs can only be terminated for “just cause.” Right-to-work laws will create more nonunion jobs, and many of these workers are hired “at will” which means they can be fired with no explanation. All workers benefit from unions whether they are in a union or not. The union basically sets the stage for all workers’ salaries and benefits. There is currently a bill in the Missouri legislature that would eliminate prevailing wage which in turn damages the skilled labor workforce. This allows out-of-state companies to bid on projects in the state of Missouri. These out-of-state workers do not improve the economic growth of Missouri. They send their money back to their home state or country. These workers are usually lower skilled and the result of their work is of lower quality. Right-to-work does not benefit Missouri workers.

I can speak first hand as to the benefits of union wages. I was raised in a home where my father and both grandfathers were union members. All provided a good middle class life to their families. I am able to go to college to realize my dreams of becoming a secondary mathematics educator. I know I will voluntarily join the teachers union to support and improve my chosen profession. As of now, the future of the teachers union and all other unions is unknown.

Right-to-work will be devastating for many individuals and families in Missouri. This law will destroy the standard of living for all Missourians. It gives employers the power over wages, benefits, and working conditions. Right-to-work laws reduce the bargaining power and the strength of the union. In 2011, a study by the Economic Policy Institute, found that “right-to-work” laws result in lower wages, a lower likelihood of employer-provided health care, and pensions. It also found that this law would not produce any economic benefit, or increase business relocation to Missouri. We must all get behind the petition drive to fight this unfair practice in our state. By signing the petition we will undo the wrongful acts of our current legislature.

CWA 6300 1st Place Scholarship Winner - Abby Herrmann
Right to work is a topic that is allowed the nightly news broadcast, the internet, the fliers in our mailbox every week, and even a topic of conversation at our dinner table. I have heard some passionate arguments pro and con about the topic of “Right to Work”. My goal is to understand the bill and what it means to me both today and in my lifetime of work.

My Mom and Dad, are both Union members in good standing. My Mom is with the Communication Workers of America (Local 6300) and my Dad is with the International Association of Firefighters of Eastern Missouri (Local 2655). They have both belonged to a union since before I was born. They are both proud to be part of a union and both are strongly opposed to “Right to Work”. My parents are hard-working middle-class Americans that are examples of the American Dream. They pay taxes, support local businesses, and are charitable to others less fortunate than they are.

What is “Right to Work” and why is it such an emotional topic? Before I began researching the topic for this paper, I thought it simply meant that everyone had the right to work for money to support themselves and their families. It seemed both common-sense and indisputable that everyone had the right to get a job and work. “Right to Work” laws actually have nothing to do with either one of those principles. My research has illustrated to me that these laws are specific to weakening labor unions. These laws will allow workers to opt out of paying union dues while still enjoying all the benefits that dues paying members are able to use. Labor unions would still be obligated to provide members and non-members with representation in the workplace, legal advice, and the collective bargaining of benefits and wages. Workers, under right to work, could decline to pay union dues while still taking advantage of every positive benefit a union provides. It sounds great for workers. They can reap the benefits of union membership and collective bargaining and get it for free.

My research on “Right to Work”, we need to understand how a labor union operates and how it is able to provide benefits and services to its members. A Labor Union is a group of workers that organize to provide mutual aid and defense to each worker. Workers that organize into labor unions are able to collectively bargain for higher wages and benefits than those that do not. Workers that rely on the generous nature of their employers are usually lagging behind workers that collectively bargain. Statistics show this to be very true, and it will continue to be the rule and not the exception.

In order to evaluate “Right to Work”, we need to understand how a labor union operates and how it is able to provide benefits and services to its members. A Labor Union is a group of workers that organize to provide mutual aid and defense to each worker. Workers that organize into labor unions are able to collectively bargain for higher wages and benefits than those that do not. Workers that rely on the generous nature of their employers are usually lagging behind workers that collectively bargain. Statistics show this to be very true, and it will continue to be the rule and not the exception.

CWA 6300 2nd Place Scholarship Winner - Natalie Ray

“Is right to work good or bad for Missouri?” Recently, this has been a very hot topic for Missourians. Missouri lawmakers sent a proposal to Governor Greitens, known as the “right to work” bill. In February of 2017, Governor Greitens signed the bill, making it an official law. Basically stating that anyone may work to receive union benefits however, they do not have to pay union dues. Missouri is now the twenty-eighth state in the nation to have passed this law. On the surface “right to work” sounds like it is a bill that will protect workers. However it does not.

The “right to work” law has no guarantee of work or protection for the workers in Missouri. In my opinion, “right to work” for Missouri is bad. The union bargains for rights for better working conditions and better wages. What would happen if our unions fall apart? There would be no more collective bargaining to protect workers. Research has shown that states that have passed this law have lower performance levels than states that are free bargaining. For example, in a “right to work” state an average worker makes $6,000 less per year than a worker in a free bargaining state. Research also shows that the poverty rate in a “right to work” state is at 15.3%, while the poverty rate in a free bargaining state is 12.8%. Health benefits are also affected by the “right to work” law. In a “right to work” state, 15% of workers, under the age of sixty five are uninsured. In free bargaining states, only 9.4 % of workers under the age of sixty five are uninsured. These are only a few facts that show “right to work” is not benefiting the average worker in those states with “right to work” law.

My family is part of the middle class, which was built on unions. These unions that fought for four hour work weeks, overtime, and pensions. My dad is a carpenter and has been part of the union for twenty two years. As a carpenter, work can be very seasonal. However, he has managed to stay employed over twenty years, with the help of the union. My dad was once injured outside of work, but because he is a union member, he was entitled to funds while he recovered from his injury. This was very helpful for my family. In addition, my mom has been a member of CW A for twenty Seven years. Her job at AT&T has kept our family covered with great medical benefits and good wages. My grandparents were also union workers before they retired. My dad’s father worked in Missouri as a member of the United Auto Workers Union for thirty years. My other grandfather was a union boilermaker in Missouri for thirty five years. My family has relied on the union’s bargaining and protection for many years and will continue to support their unions.

I plan to attend college in the fall to pursue my BSN in nursing. There are many unions for nurses. I find comfort in knowing that. College is very expensive and can be financially stressful. However, knowing that my parents both have great jobs protected by the union makes me feel secure about my college education. Thank you for the opportunity for this scholarship.
Next Meetings:
May 17
June 21

Motions March 15, 2017

Motion: Motion Mike Songer, second Mile Lavoie to purchase a 1/8 page ad for the Labor Tribune 2017 Workers Memorial Issue for $439.00. Motion carried.

Motion: Motion Jeff Allan, second Donna Walsh to make a donation of $200 to the Guide Dogs of America donation for their trap shoot on May 21, 2017. Motion carried.

Motion: Motion Stephanie Bates, second Josh Hull to make a $200 donation for expenses and we will be listed two rounds of trivia for the Community Services Trivia Night on April 29, 2017. Motion carried.

Motions April 19, 2017

Motion: Motion Mike Lavoie, second Earline Jones to make a $200 donation to the PPMW Sector Conference Fund for the Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on August 4-5, 2017. Motion carried.

Motion: Motion Doug Hull, second Mike Songer to make a $200 donation for a 2x4 banner and $125 for a CWA Team for the St. Louis Emerging Labor Leaders Kickball Tournament on July 30, 2017. Motion carried.

CWA Ratifies Tentative Agreement with AT&T Southwest Covering 20,000 Workers

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) District 6 bargaining committee has reached a tentative agreement with AT&T Southwest, District 6 Vice President Claude Cummings reported.

The four-year settlement provides for pay raises, paid parental leave, affordable healthcare and enhanced benefits for the 20,000 AT&T workers in Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.

A key provision of the proposed settlement commits AT&T to bring 3,000 jobs, the majority of which are sourced offshore, into bargaining units in District 6.

Vice President Cummings thanked members for their mobilization and actions that made all the difference in bargaining. “I am extremely proud of the work accomplished by our bargaining committee and very grateful for the job they have done for our members. My thanks also goes to CWA International President Chris Shelton for his support and assistance throughout these negotiations,” Cummings said.
Retirees Meeting March 14, 2017

Lay and Grady Nichols. A moment of silence was observed.

Bob Huss read the minutes of the February meeting and announced the lunch menu. With no corrections or additions a motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the minutes as read.

Ron Munford gave the Treasurer’s report for February. A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the report.

CWA Local 6300 Executive Vice President Mark Johnson shared information on Right to Work and talked about a petition drive that is being done to repeal Right to Work.

Vice President Earline Jones talked about the Trump presidency and cited examples of broken promises and the refusal to negotiate drug prices. She shared a report from the Alliance for Retired Americans and distributed a handout containing information on the current state of Social Security and Medicare. She urged members to watch C-Span to stay abreast of what is going on in the government. She also urged members to call their legislators at 202-224-3132 and let them know your concerns about legislation that is detrimental to seniors and retirees. The number for the White House is 202-456-1414.

Sharon Casey shared a call and letter she received asking for information on her medications. After researching the source of the call she found out it was a fraud.

Bob Huss urged everyone to share information they learn from these meetings. He discussed how insurance companies are contributing to problems with health care. He also urged everyone to help collect signatures for the Right to Work petition as the goal is to have it repealed.

There was no old business. Under New Business Kevin Kujawa explained that retirees who were grandfathered were moved from their existing health care plan to United Healthcare Advantage. He feels it will work just as good or better.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve $450 from the Chapter to send Bob Huss to the Missouri AFL-CIO Legislative Conference.

This is a $25 increase from $425.

The monthly birthday cake was won by Mike Harber.

Drawings were held and monies were given out as prizes.

Bob told a joke.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Bingo was not played afterwards.

Retirees Meeting April 10, 2017

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Huss. He said a prayer and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

Two deaths were acknowledged: Dennis

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Huss. He said a prayer and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

One death was announced: Ruby Bernice Garms. A moment of silence was observed for her and for the members who are ill.

Nancy Jinkerson read the minutes of the March meeting and thanked Ron Munford for taking notes in her absence. She also announced the lunch menu for the day. With no corrections or additions a motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the minutes as read.

Ron Munford gave the Treasurer’s report for February. A motion was made, seconded and passed to approve the report.

Vice President Earline Jones spoke about the ‘rollercoaster ride’ we are on under this Presidency. While acknowledging the failure of the Republican’s attempt to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act she shared concerns about the new replacement plan they are trying to put in place which they are calling The American Health Care Act. A fact sheet was distributed that explains the true meaning of the Republican code words and phrases in their proposed budget.

She also praised Clara Shoals for her voluntary participation in the AARP and her efforts to make a difference in people’s lives. She urged people to help collect signatures for a petition that would force a ballot initiative to repeal Right to Work in Missouri. Training sessions will be held for volunteers on how to collect signatures for the petition. She announced the dates of the training.

Bob Huss reported on the Legislative Conference he attended in Jefferson City. He talked about the difficulty of getting to talk to legislators, especially if you don’t live in their district. He shared his concerns with legislators about cutting the Circuit Breaker program. He also shared his concerns about funding for education and the fact that 18 schools have had to cut to four days a week with two more slated to do the same. He also attended the training for a petition to register people to vote and pointed out that if someone moves into a retirement or assisted living facility they have to register again because they have a new address. He discussed the Prevailing Wage initiative and the payroll deduction for state workers.

He urged everyone to complete the surveys that were distributed. The Chapter is facing financial trouble and ideas are requested to improve the meetings as well as the financial state of the Chapter. Attendance has been down for some time.

There was some discussion about a new AT&T site for retirees. Some people have had trouble getting into it, but according to Kevin Kujawa it has been improved and made easier for people to get in and use.

The monthly birthday cake was won by Earline Jones.

Drawings were held and monies were given out as prizes.

Bob told a joke.
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS
Day at the Ballpark
to Benefit Community Services Committee

June 24th, 2016 6:15pm

St. Louis Cardinals vs. Pittsburgh Pirates

Sections 127, 128, 129 & 130

$30 per ticket ($63 @ the box office)

For tickets please contact Tori Pratt at CWA Local 6300
314.991.0200 ext. 245

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St. Louis
Emerging Labor Leaders

Kick Start to School Co-Ed Kickball Tournament
Sunday, July 30, 2017 10am – 6pm
B.M.A.C 13212 Ferguson Lane, Bridgeton, MO 63044

Contact Gordon Smith @ gsmith@cwa6300.org or 314.593.5513

$125 per team, 10 player team minimum.
Must be 18 years old.
Food and soft drinks will be provided, alcohol is permitted-no glass bottles.
Proceeds will be used to buy school supplies for the children of the St. Louis Crisis Nursery.
Donation of school supplies is appreciated.