

# Insight

An Information Pipeline for Members and

Friends of Local 17

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## Public sector unions getting ready for 'Right-to-Work'



## On the Cover:

Public sector unions across the country are preparing for the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, expected this spring. The case will likely allow public employees in union jobs to opt-out of paying dues, but may still require unions to provide full representation services. Read more on pages 6-7. ■

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## Insight

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## Bring. It. On.

**T**he Labor Movement is facing big challenges. And in weeks — not months or years — public sector unions are going to change dramatically.

But we at Local 17 say: "Bring. It. On."

If you haven't heard about *Janus v. AFSCME*, well, now's the time to listen up. In this issue's cover story (p. 6-7), you'll learn about what's at stake in this monumental U.S. Supreme Court case — a case that will dismantle a 40-year precedent in how union dues are paid — as well as what Local 17 has been doing to prepare to operate in a Right-to-Work environment, and what you can do to help.

We know that being in a union is not about the dues. And, really, unionism reaches far beyond even what's printed in the contract. For working people, unions represent the ability to take care of ourselves and our families without worry — like Richard Frith's miraculous story of recovery after a traumatic accident (p. 8). Unions allow us the time to foster relationships with friends, and to do the things we enjoy — like our Portland members who started a cricket league (p. 9). And being in a union gives us the security we need to excel at our jobs — like the Communication Officers at the Washington State Patrol (p. 5) — and hence, contribute to our communities, like our Public Health members (p. 10) who are helping battle the opioid crisis, tobacco use in children, and more.

The *Janus* case is going to alter how we operate, but maybe that's a good thing. Over the last year, Local 17 has strived to reconnect with our members in new and meaningful ways. And as we approach our 100th birthday later this year, we want to be continually evolving so that we meet the changing needs of our members and our world.

Like it or not, unions are probably going to look a little different in the near future. But with your help, Local 17 is ready for the challenge!

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Deidre", written in a cursive, flowing style.

P.S. Thanks for indulging me as I step out from behind the scenes of *Insight* to write this column! You are always welcome to reach out to me if you have a story you'd like to share in our magazine, on social media, etc. Along with your fellow members, I am inspired by the work you do everyday to support your communities.

## Seattle Chapter officers sworn in



New Seattle Chapter officers were sworn in at the January meeting. In the picture above (left to right), Ray Ceaser, current Local 17 Trustee, swears in Mary Davis (Vice President), Joe Steinmeyer (Secretary), Denise Krownbell (President), and Darren Wilson (Treasurer). ■

## Local 17 gearing up for 2019-21 State contract negotiations

The 2019-21 contract for Local 17 members that work for the State of Washington is up for negotiations this year. By law, this contract must be ratified by Oct. 1, 2018 so that it can be included in the Governor's biennial budget.

An electronic survey was sent to all state members in order to assess the top priorities for bargaining this year, and members were invited to a meeting on Feb. 24 to give their feedback, create a strategy, and elect the bargaining team.

During negotiations, you can visit [pte17.org/state](http://pte17.org/state) to meet your bargaining team, learn the issues and follow our progress. Be sure to check your personal email – we will be sending updates there as well. If you need to update your personal contact information with us, visit: [pte17.org/address/form.html](http://pte17.org/address/form.html). ■

Local 17 constitutional amendment passes, creating stability pre-*Janus*

When the Regional Executive Committee (REC) – the policy-making body of our union – met last October, they unanimously passed a motion to bring an amendment to the Local 17 constitution to a membership-wide vote. This amendment would create a fair and transparent process for members to opt-out of paying dues should the U.S. Supreme Court rule against public sector unions in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case. (Read more on p 6-7.)

Starting after the October REC, Local 17 staff and member leaders across the region, launched a campaign to educate members about the importance of this amendment. Turnout for this vote – by paper ballot, as per the constitution – was high, thanks in large part to the tremendous efforts of our REC Delegates,

Stewards, Chapter officers, and other member leaders. Thank you to everyone who helped get out the vote!

The ballots were tallied on Dec. 13, and members voted to approve the amendment with an 89 percent YES vote. Now, should the court case allow opt-outs as many experts predict it will, Local 17 members who make this choice will have the opportunity to do so from Dec. 1-20 each calendar year. This will help us have more financial stability and predictability while creating a budget based on sound numbers for the subsequent year.

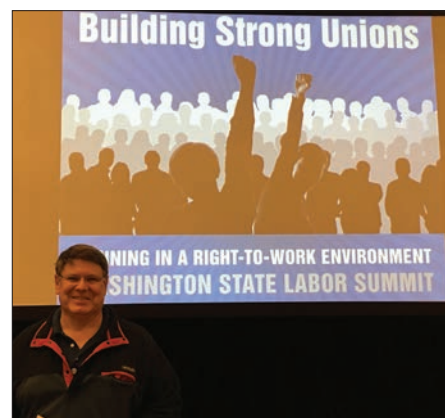
The REC meets again in March and delegates will be learning the next phase of plans to strengthen our membership base and demonstrate the value of being in this union. Stay tuned! ■

## Unions join forces at WSLC 'Right-to-Work' Summit

On Feb. 5, the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) sponsored an all-day summit about Right-to-Work at the Sea-Tac Hilton. The summit was designed to bring union members from across the state and from all sectors to the table to talk about the practical ways they are engaging members as this new environment fast-approaches.

The Right-to-Work conversation is especially relevant given the pending U.S. Supreme Court case, *Janus v. AFSCME*, which will impact public sector unions as early as April of this year. (Read more in our in-depth feature on p. 6-7). Sessions on topics like communication, organizing, new member engagement, recruiting activists, and more, helped union staff and leaders learn what other unions are doing to combat the negative external forces that want to dismantle unions -- like the Freedom Foundation.

In his opening remarks, WSLC President Jeff Johnson said: "When our voices



Local 17 member Mark Rauchenstein (Clark County) at the RTW summit.

are stifled, the result is income inequality, voter suppression, fear of the other, and free reign to a new set of entrepreneurs who make the robber barons of the gilded age seem tame. When our voices are united — we win!"

Several Local 17 staffers and members attended the event, which attracted nearly 600 unionists with standing room only space. ■

## Meet your WSP Communications Officers: the friendly voices at the end of your 911 call

On a daily basis, the 115 Local 17 Communications Officers (COs) located at Washington State Patrol (WSP) call centers across the state take hundreds, if not thousands, of 911 calls. As the unsung heroes working behind the scenes to keep callers calm and to connect them with the resources they need in times of crisis, all COs deserve an award.

Recently, the WSP chose one CO in each district who exemplifies what it means to be a vital part of a crisis team with its annual Communications Officer of the Year award. Winners included: Shari Good (District 1), Mindi Mezek (District 2), Sabrina Newman (District 3), Kayla Miliate (District 4), Heather Cavanaugh (District 5), Courtney Grant (District 6), Tim McDonald (District 7), and Sharilyn Hinz (District 8).

WSP selects the winning COs based on a host of criteria including the quality of work, commendations, dependability, community involvement, work on critical incidents, etc. Starting last year, the award also came with a cash prize.

"I think my favorite thing about being a CO is that overall, it's really fun," said Courtney Grant who won the award in District 6 – the Wenatchee area.

"It presents a new and unique challenge everyday because you never know what you're going to come across. I really like being that voice that presents a positive image for the State Patrol when you get a concerned husband on the phone who just wants to make sure his wife is okay or you have a caller that helps us safely locate and pull over a person who's been driving under the influence. It's definitely a job I love and I don't believe doing another job could equate to how much I enjoy being a CO."



Communications Officers at the Bellevue office, including Mindi Mezek (left) who won CO of the year for District 2, Alexis Young (Local 17 Union Rep), Aisha Dayal, Ashley Hubbard, Shannon Sanders, Spencer Powell, and Andrea Marlow (a CO4, who usually works in the Marysville office).

In Bellevue, Mezek, a 17-year WSP CO veteran, has been heavily involved in training new employees and models all of the traits of a good CO.

"Mindi works hard and puts her heart and soul into everything she does," said co-worker Ashley Hubbard.

Mezek is also the President of the Local 17 statewide CO Chapter, a Regional Executive Committee delegate, and a Steward in her workplace. She's also heavily involved in bringing issues to the Local 17 staff in preparation for the 2019-2021 contract. As Local 17 gears up for negotiations – with the bargaining team election and strategy meeting on Feb. 24 – Mezek and her colleagues across the state will be looking at issues like: geographic pay, uniforms, and safe staffing levels. ■

**"I really like being that voice that presents a positive image for the State Patrol... It's definitely a job I love and I don't believe doing another job could equate to how much I enjoy being a CO."**

*Courtney Grant, Local 17 member and Communications Officer, Washington State Patrol - Wenatchee*

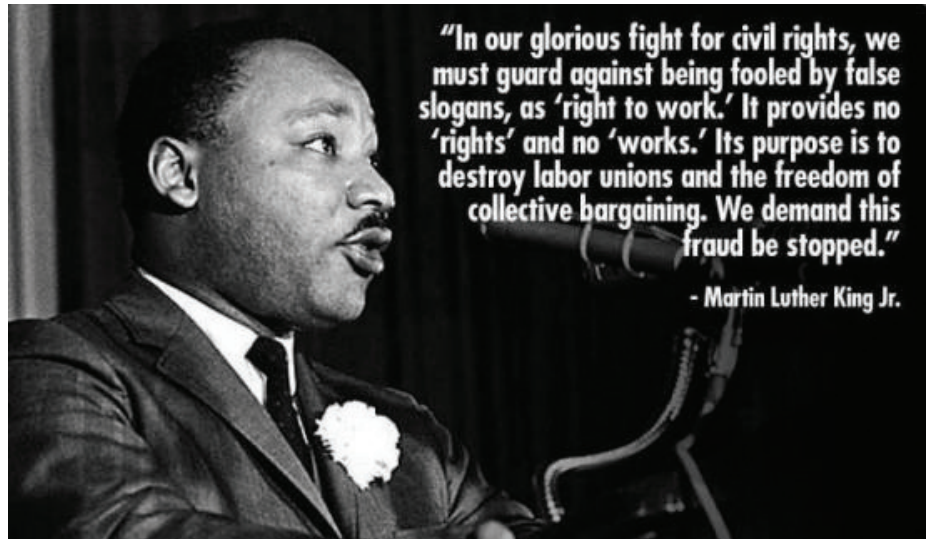
Find ways to get involved in your union at: [ptel17.org/get\\_involved.php](http://ptel17.org/get_involved.php)

# What's going to happen to public sector unions after *Janus v. AFSCME* and national 'Right-to-Work'?

On February 26, 2018, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME*, what some in the labor movement have dubbed “*Friedrichs 2.0*”. The Court’s decision is expected as early as April or as late as June of this year. *Janus* is just the most recent attack on organized labor by the Freedom Foundation and other anti-union, anti-workers’ rights organizations.

## What’s at Stake

At the heart of *Janus* is a challenge to public sector union security clauses that are the foundation of public employee union funding. Under current law, settled in 1977’s *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, employees in union-represented positions who choose to opt-out of membership are still required to pay the portion of the dues – called an agency fee or fair-share fee – to cover the cost of administering the contract that covers their job. This same ruling also requires unions to provide representation to all employees covered under the contract whether they are full dues paying members or agency fee paying non-members.



The plaintiffs in *Janus*, like their predecessors in *Friedrichs*, argue that they should not have to pay any union dues on the grounds that it is a violation of their First Amendment right to freedom of speech.

This argument is grounded in the ruling of a 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. While the result of *Citizens United* was to remove nearly all restrictions on corporations’ political campaign contributions and expenditures, the Supreme Court’s basis for this decision was, in effect, money equals speech. And, since the Supreme Court has previously determined that corporations are “people” under the Constitution, the federal government is prohibited from placing any restrictions on their political “speech”.

This is effectively the argument that the plaintiffs in *Janus* are making: that even agency or fair-share fees constitute “speech” under the First Amendment, and that the government in non-Right-to-Work (RTW) states constitutes prohibited “compelled” speech. Noticeably absent from the plaintiffs’ argument is any consideration of the fundamental unfairness of allowing employees to opt out of paying dues while unions are compelled by law to still provide representation to paying and non-paying employees alike.

## What exactly is 'Right-to-Work'?

Right-to-Work (RTW) is a clever misnomer that was invented by anti-worker forces decades ago. Contrary to the way it sounds, it has nothing to do with the right of any person to seek or accept gainful employment. Instead, RTW laws prohibit labor unions and employers from negotiating union security clauses – the contract provisions that regulate the collection of dues.

Currently, there is no national or federal RTW law in place so individual state governments can decide if they want to be RTW v. non-RTW. Twenty-four states, including Washington and Oregon, are non-RTW and in those states, employers and unions generally have “union shop” or “fair share” agreements which require all workers in a bargaining unit to pay some share of the costs for union representation services (administering, enforcing, and bargaining contracts, representing members in grievance proceedings, prosecuting Unfair Labor Practices, etc.).

In RTW States, unions are prohibited from negotiating security clauses making payment of union dues in those states optional. However, in all but one RTW state, unions still have a duty to provide representation to all members in the bargaining unit, not just those that pay dues.

Proponents of RTW laws have one goal in mind: disrupting the financial stability of unions for the sole purpose of diminishing the power and ability of unions to advocate for better wages, hours and working conditions for working people.

Proponents, like the plaintiffs in *Janus* and *Friedrichs*, will also assert that RTW laws attract more businesses and jobs to the State. There is simply no evidence supporting this assertion. However, there is hard data on the impact RTW laws have on workers: they make less money (\$1,500 to \$10,000 less, even when factoring in cost of living differences), have comparatively diminished health and retirement benefits and a much higher rate of workplace injuries and fatalities.

### Friedrichs and the 4-4 Split

*Friedrichs v. the California Teachers Association* was the last case considered by the Supreme Court that challenged union security clauses. Based on the oral arguments in January of 2016, it was widely believed that the Court would narrowly (5-4) side with the plaintiffs in *Friedrichs*, imposing a federal RTW standard nationwide. However, Justice Scalia passed away shortly after the oral arguments and the decision came down to a 4-4 split, meaning that the 40 year precedent of *Abood* continues to be good law.

The facts in *Janus*, and the goal of its plaintiffs, are effectively identical to those in *Friedrichs* so why is the Supreme Court accepting a request to hear a case with the same facts it split on a mere two years ago?

After the Senate took the unprecedented step of blocking President Obama's pick (Merrick Garland) for Scalia's vacancy in the final year of his presidency, the Senate approved President Trump's pick: Neil Gorsuch. Justice Gorsuch is an ultra-conservative acolyte of Justice Scalia and is widely expected to break the split in favor of the *Janus* plaintiffs.

So, the *Janus* case presents the same facts, the same argument and the same stakes for Local 17 members and every other public-sector employee union member in the 22 non-RTW states, including Washington and Oregon.

It's coming. But with your help, Local 17 will be ready. Read more about what you can do below! ■

To learn more about *Janus* and RTW, visit: [pte17.org/janus.php](http://pte17.org/janus.php)

## What is Local 17 doing about RTW? And what you can do to help!

Local 17 has taken a multi-pronged approach to protecting our financial security and our ability to continue to provide high quality services to our members in a Right-to-Work (RTW) environment.

As you read on page 4, our legislative body, the Regional Executive Committee (REC), unanimously voted to propose an amendment to our constitution that narrows the window that members can opt out of paying fair share fees should nationwide RTW be mandated by the Supreme Court. This amendment provides Local 17 improved financial security in advance of setting its budget each year.

We've also been gaining steam with our internal organizing, educating our members on what it means to be in a union, the importance of each member's participation in Local 17, and providing expanded trainings and other opportunities to engage with fellow members both inside and outside of the workplace.

But there's still more to do! We all have to get our coworkers, family and friends involved in conversations about the importance of being a union member.

We have to communicate how a strong union not only makes our workplaces better, but how a strong union directly impacts the things we love and care about outside of work in our communities.

RTW is bad. Yes, we all know that. We've been hearing it for years and we will continue to hear it. Instead of engaging in the same conversations about it being bad (because like it or not, it's coming!) we need to talk about what we're going to do about it and make a plan.

When RTW is here, it is expected that new hires won't be members until they sign a card. *How are we going to engage with them? How can current members help with the process?*

Local 17 members can help create good experiences and a positive narrative for new hires. *How can we expect others*

*to join if 1) nobody talks to them about the benefits of the union, 2) all they hear are the frustrations about the union, and 3) they aren't asked to join?*

Similarly, consider current members who are apathetic about the union. *Has anyone ever had a sincere conversation with them about union values and the benefits of being a part of this community?*

Active and engaged members have never been needed as much as they are right now in the entire history of Local 17. No matter what your experience has been with Local 17 in the past, we have to move forward together and do things we've never done before. It might be hard and a little uncomfortable, but we have to make changes! Our future depends on it.

If you want to get involved, contact our Development Director Chelsea Nelson at 800-783-0017, ext. 116, or [chelsea@pte17.org](mailto:chelsea@pte17.org). ■

# Former member donates nearly \$20k to EASE program to thank fellow employees for financial support after near fatal accident

**A**fter he and three other pedestrians were run down by a car in a crosswalk back in November 2012, Richard Frith's life changed forever.

Up until that moment, Frith had been a 22-year employee with the City of Seattle working as a Real Estate Property Agent for the Parks Department – a job he loved. But of the four pedestrians, Frith's injuries were the most severe. He was in a coma with a traumatic brain injury, and spent his first month in a nursing home where he received around-the-clock care.

When he regained consciousness, Frith began his long road to recovery – a journey that continues to this day, more than five years later.

Initially, he was only awake for three hours a day. When he was allowed to go home, he had 24/7 home health care, and had to re-learn how to walk, talk, eat – pretty much everything. His home health care needs were gradually reduced to eight hours a day, five days per week for the next year and a half.

While he will always have some residual effects from the accident, Frith – who still sees his neurologist and physical therapists regularly for check-ups – is almost back to his old self. He's been driving for the last year and has even started doing repair projects on his rental properties in the city.

During the first year after the accident, Frith was touched by the incredible gener-

**"I'm lucky I was in a union and worked in a progressive and generous city. I wouldn't have survived without the support of my family, my co-workers and my union."**

*Richard Frith, former Local 17 member 1990-2012, City of Seattle*



Former Local 17 member Richard Frith (center) and his wife Judy give a check for \$19,887.08 to former EASE Board member (and former Local 17 President) Allan Yamaguchi.

osity of his co-workers, who donated many hours of sick leave thanks to the shared leave benefit in the contract.

When he received a settlement in his legal case, Frith knew he wanted to pay it forward to thank everyone who helped him when he needed it, as well as ensure that future employees in need would have resources when they need it. So he donated \$19,887.08 – the exact amount he received in shared sick leave in 2012-2013 – to the Emergency Assistance for Seattle Employees (EASE) program.

Frith, who was an active Local 17 member when he was working at the City, is extremely grateful that he was in a union job where he had good health insurance and disability pay. Local 17 has also been a long-time donor to EASE.

"I'm lucky I was in a union and worked in a progressive and generous city," he said. "I wouldn't have survived without the support of my family, my co-workers and my union."

While he's since officially retired from City employment, Frith stays busy manag-

ing his rental properties, which he prices below market so that hard-working people can still find an affordable place to live in Seattle. He is keenly aware about all of the opportunities he's had in life, and he wants to ensure others get a helping hand, too.

"It's not about how much I can get for a property, it's about taking care of people," he said. "A lot of people gave me breaks along the way – other people deserve a break."

In addition to his sense of gratitude, Frith's humor has helped him overcome many obstacles. In his donation letter to EASE, he said that he may never return to normal, but "as my co-workers would attest, I was never normal before!"

"That's what's kept me alive," said Frith talking about his sense of humor. "You can either laugh or cry at things."

Richard Frith's story is one of incredible strength, perseverance, gratitude, and humor. He is so thankful to public employees for the work they do everyday, and for their dedication to lending a helping hand for the greater good. ■

## Life After Work: Portland member starts cricket league, building camaraderie, trust inside and outside of work

**C**ricket ranks as the second most popular sport in the world, but it is largely unknown in the Pacific Northwest.

In an effort to learn more about this sport and get to know his co-workers better, Portland Chapter member Thang Ngo started to organize pickup games after work last fall.

Cricket is a bat-and-ball game played between two teams of eleven players each. At the center of the field there is a 22-yard-long rectangular pitch with a target called the wicket, which is a set of three wooden stumps topped by two bails at each end.

Several members at the Bureau of Technology Services (BTS) who played cricket as children joined with colleagues – and managers – who were new to the sport for a little friendly competition — and also a trophy!

The first game took place at Duniway Park between the Enterprise Business Solutions (EBS) group and Vertical Applications group, with the Vertical Applications

team taking home the trophy. Looking for their first win, the EBS team wanted to take on a fresh challenge and played against a new team consisting of players from multiple departments: Network, Servers, the Project Management Office (PMO), and Customer Relations. EBS could not take on the power of the multi-team combination, and so the trophy moved on.

While the group has played just two games so far, they already have a profound respect for the sport and each other.

“By playing cricket, we became closer to employees from other BTS groups, whom we rarely meet,” said Portland Chapter Member Manish Thakore.

“It’s a fun team building exercise,” he continued. “When you know employees closely, ‘speed of trust’ comes to life.”

Regardless of teams and trophies, everyone had a great time and is looking forward to continuing the fun when the weather gets better. ■



Local 17 member Manish Thakore hits a long ball.



Local 17 members and other colleagues from the City of Portland's Bureau of Technology Services form pickup cricket games.

**“By playing cricket, we became closer to employees from other BTS groups whom we rarely meet. It’s a fun team building exercise. When you know employees closely, ‘speed of trust’ comes to life.”**

*Manish Thakore, Local 17 Member and Bureau of Technology Services employee, City of Portland*

Update your contact information with us at: [ptel7.org/address/form.html](http://ptel7.org/address/form.html)

# Tobacco and opioids: the big priorities at Public Health Day

**O**n February 7, many Local 17 members from across the state participated in Public Health Education Day in Olympia. The Washington State Public Health Association (WSPHA) — an organization connecting public, private and community groups to Public Health funding and education issues — organized the event, which has been co-sponsored by Local 17 for many years.

At the yearly event, Public Health professionals from throughout the state meet with their elected officials to talk about the importance of Public Health, and to share their stories about the impact that reduced funding has on the services they provide.



Local 17 members from Snohomish and King County at Public Health Legislative Education Day.



Local 17 member Samantha Santos-DaSilva (top) from Snohomish Health District talks to the Legislative Assistant for Sen. Strom Pederson. Konstantin Setiaev (above) — Local 17 member at Snohomish — demonstrates the cost of tuberculosis treatment with the Legislative Assistant for Sen. Marilyn Chase.

After a successful education day and lobbying around the *Public Health is Essential* campaign last year, the state allocated a one-time \$12 million dollars for core, called foundational, Public Health services. The focus of this year's Education Day was to build on the success of the *Public Health is Essential* campaign, and to continue to educate lawmakers on the need for additional funding in order to best protect our communities.

Because this is not a state budget year, there was no big funding ask, but Public Health professionals showed their support for the Tobacco 21 bill (HB1054 and SB6048) and the Opioid bill (HB2489 and SB6150), which are two top priorities for Public Health according to Secretary of Health John Wiesman.

The Tobacco 21 bill would increase the purchase age for tobacco to 21, which studies have shown to decrease addiction rates by 25 percent in young adults.

"This is the single most important bill to keep our kids healthy," said Wiesman.

In Washington, there are two deaths every day related to opioid useage. The opioid bill would implement programs to increase access to treatment, prevent addiction by offering non-pharmaceutical pain relief options, reduce the stigma by integrating information into electronic

health records, and reverse overdoses related to opioid use.

There was a great turnout of Local 17 members and staff at this event, including Union Representatives Annie Costello, Lorelei Walker and Alexis Young, and Communications Director Deidre Girard. Members in attendance were from Seattle-King County Public Health and Snohomish Public Health District.

Representative Laurie Jenkins, a strong Public Health advocate, also spoke to the group on the current status of Public Health issues in the legislature. After the morning presentations, the group split up to meet with the legislators in their districts.

This was a great event for Public Health specialists to see the legislative process in action as well as to effect change for their programs and the community. But Secretary Wiesman and all of the panelists encouraged constituents to keep talking to their legislators throughout the year — not just during session — to get to know what they care about, and to share what you care about with them.

"You should not hesitate in asking for their time — they work for you," said Wiesman. ■

# Measure 101 passes; 2018 Oregon legislative session underway

**O**n Jan. 23, Oregon voters approved Measure 101 by 62 percent, confirming a Medicaid funding mechanism that allows the state to begin collecting revenues from insurance companies and hospitals to fund medical care for the most vulnerable. Local 17 supported the measure along with a broad coalition of labor unions, and health and community groups. Thank you to our members who voted and became involved in the campaign!

With Measure 101 passed, the Legislature can now focus on other priorities for 2018. The Governor has laid out a policy agenda largely focused on job training and educational investments. Though the short 35-day session does not allow for much in-depth legislative work, lawmakers will lay the groundwork for the 2019 long session.

## Paid Family Leave

Following the passage of statewide paid family leave benefits in Washington, many in the progressive community have

advocated for Oregon to adopt a similar benefit. Such a program would likely be structured similarly to unemployment insurance whereby costs are shared between employers and employees. Local 17 supports such a benefit, and we will closely track legislative activities on the subject.

## Prescription Drug Transparency

A major subject of discussion during the 2017 session was prescription drug price controls, and Local 17 participated in a broad coalition supporting these efforts. While ultimately the bill championed by Representative Rob Nosse (D – Inner East Portland) did not pass through the legislature, efforts continue in the form of HB 4005, which would compel drug manufacturers to provide information to justify sudden and significant price increases for their products. Local 17 has witnessed prescription drugs consume an ever-growing share of healthcare dollars at our employers, and we are concerned that without action on this subject health ben-

efits will be harmed in order to continue drug payments. We support efforts to introduce transparency into the prescription drug market, and will work with coalition partners to address this important issue.

## Public Employee Retirement Benefits

While public employee retirement benefit reform has been the subject of much heated discussion in Salem in recent years, it appears unlikely that the legislature will undertake such an effort during the short session. One issue that could arise has to do with the changes to the investment profile of employees individual account plan (IAP) that will go into effect in March of 2019. There is currently a proposal that such changes would be made optional in order to give the employee more input, rather than automatically moving investments into an age-based portfolio. PERS is a critical part of our members' benefit packages. Local 17 will stay closely attuned to any proposals to change these benefits. ■

*To learn more about the political issues in Oregon that impact Local 17 members, visit:*  
**[pte17.org/publicaffairs/oregon](http://pte17.org/publicaffairs/oregon)**

## Local 17 Legislative Priorities for 2018 in Washington state

★ **Washington Legislative AGENDA** ★  
**Our Top Priorities for 2018**  
Professional & Technical Employees Local 17 is an organization representing nearly 9,000 public sector employees in city, county, state and public health in Washington and Oregon.

**STRENGTHEN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LAWS FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

**AMEND THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT (PRA) TO SAFEGUARD THE PRIVACY OF OUR MEMBERS**

**PUBLIC HEALTH is essential**  
**FULLY FUND PUBLIC HEALTH TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES AGAINST COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

★ **VISIT: [www.ptel7.org/publicaffairs](http://www.ptel7.org/publicaffairs) to learn more!**

**A**drienne Thompson, our former Government Affairs Director and longtime Local 17 staff member, had the opportunity to take an incredible position with the new Mayor of Seattle, Jenny Durkan. Congrats Adrienne! But before she left, she made sure the wheels were in motion for the big issues that we need to tackle in the 2018 legislative session. Until we can find someone to fill the position permanently, a contract lobbyist has been hired to meet our needs this session. Our top issues are:

- 1. Strengthening collective bargaining laws for public employees**
- 2. Amending the Public Records Act to safeguard the privacy of our members**
- 3. Fully funding Public Health to protect our communities against communicable disease**

Visit the Local 17 Government Affairs page for your copy of the 2018 agenda: [pte17.org/publicaffairs](http://pte17.org/publicaffairs)



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# Labor Victories

## City of Seattle members win equitable overtime calculation process

**U**nder state and federal law, employers are not required to count paid sick or vacation leave when calculating overtime. For example, if an employee uses eight hours of sick leave on a Monday and then works the remainder of their normal work week, including an extra four-hour shift on Saturday, an employer is not required to pay the employee overtime for that extra shift. Again, this is because the law only requires employers to count hours worked to determine overtime.

However, the City of Seattle has long counted all paid time, whether worked or not, for purposes of calculating overtime – or at least, most of the departments did.

Thanks to an observant member, Local 17 discovered that three departments, the Human Services Department (HSD), Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and Department of Education and Early Learning (DEEL) had been excluding all



paid time – aside from paid holidays – from the calculation. While this practice was technically legal, it was inconsistent with the broader City practice and was inequitable for our members in those three departments.

In late 2016, Local 17 City Union Representatives filed a grievance with the City. After the initial meeting, the City acquiesced and Local 17 negotiated a settlement agreement that expanded the City's policy of including all paid leave in overtime calculations to HSD, DON and DEEL. This was a huge win for our members in those departments not only because it increases their access to overtime but also because it resulted in cultural changes. Now, management can no longer make members work nights or weekends for straight time just because they happened to call in sick or use a vacation day earlier that week. ■