

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

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OF PROTEC17 (Formerly PTE Local 17)



Focus groups gather member input for 2020-22 Strategic Plan

Also, it's election season! PROTEC17 Executive Board ballot info, Chapter Officer nomination timeline, and endorsements inside!



On the Cover:

As part of our 2020-22 Strategic Planning process, we surveyed over 1400 members, and have been gathering more detailed input about what members want to see out of their union at focus groups around the region. In Spokane, we visited with PROTEC17 members from the County, Health District and WSDOT. Read more on page 6. ■

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PROTEC17 Executive Board Election!

Ballots have been mailed to all members at their last known mailing address. They must be returned to the P.O. Box listed on the ballot by Tues., Nov. 12.

VOTE

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Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

What are our politics?

It's a fabulous time of year! Fall colors paint a new landscape, kids are back in school, pumpkin spice-everything, and yes, political season. Love it or hate it, the political scene is hard to escape, which my mailbox reminds me of daily as it fills with glossy postcards.

So, *what are PROTEC17's politics?* Some may say this is a loaded question. However, if our purpose is to advocate for members, organize to build strength and capacity, and advance equity and racial justice (as the feedback is showing from our strategic planning focus group meetings, see p. 6), then it is crucial that we consider our politics and engage towards this purpose.

First, it's important to understand that member dues do not support political candidates. Members may contribute separately to a fund that supports candidates, and we welcome you to do so! These voluntary funds help our newly revamped political action program (p. 12) – with members interviewing candidates and engaging in endorsement decisions – to support politicians who care about worker issues, regardless of their political party.

As a democratically-run organization, we also have our own internal elections. With the upcoming Executive Board election (p. 2) – ballots due Nov. 12! – and our Chapter elections (p. 5), I am so appreciative of our member-leaders and their dedication to our union. I'm looking forward to working with everyone.

Now back to my question: *What are PROTEC17's politics?* As uncomfortable as this question may make some people feel, the answer is simple. We support our values to advance working people and our communities, including: living wages, good family health benefits, stability in retirement, job security, respect at work, and the ability to participate and give back to our own communities. These are our politics, and we should be proud to talk about them.

So the next time you hear someone say, '*Why is PROTEC17 involved in politics?*' offer them another perspective. For PROTEC17, it's not about Republicans or Democrats, it's about our values. Our values should not be divisive – they are unifying. And if we hold tight to our values and work together to uphold them, we will not only improve our workplaces, we will change the world.

In unity,

Meet our new King County Union Representative!



PROTEC17 welcomes new Union Representative Alex Il, who will be working with our King County members.

Il comes to us from the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21, where he worked for five years in various roles, including representation, and internal, external, political, and community organizing.

“I realized the strength workers wield by collectively coming together on issues on my first day at UFCW21 when I helped off-load thousands of picket signs for a potential strike,” said Il. “I see the union’s role as not only building power in the workplace, but as an organization that uplifts the community.”

Prior to coming to the Labor Movement, Il worked at several non-profits. During his time with the organization Food Empowerment Education Sustainability Team (FEEST), he gained experience in community and youth organizing, helping Seattle and Highline Public School students fight for healthier and more culturally relevant food.

“When people collectively stand up to fight for better conditions and a healthier community, I am inspired – that’s why I am excited to join the PROTEC17 team.”

In his free time, Il enjoys hiking and backpacking in the Pacific Northwest and around the country. ■

PROTEC17 supports Indigenous Peoples’ Day event at City of Seattle

Five years ago, the Seattle City Council passed a resolution changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples’ Day

in order to honor Native communities rather than their colonizers. And for the last two years, PROTEC17 has donated to CANOES – the City of Seattle Native American Employees affinity group – to support the annual celebration of Native culture on the second Monday of October.

PROTEC17 Executive Board member Mary Davis, who is part Cherokee and Chickasaw and a member of CANOES, expressed her gratitude for PROTEC17’s donation to this important event.

“Unions fight for the dignity and rights of working people of all backgrounds,” said Davis. “CANOES members honor the strength and persistence of native peoples to preserve their cultures and fight for their rights.”

The mission of CANOES is to raise awareness in the City of the vibrant and important indigenous nations’ culture; and to promote hiring, advancement, partici-

pation, and leadership opportunities for Native American employees throughout all City programs and services.

The theme of this year’s event on Oct. 14 honored the power and wisdom of Indigenous womxn at three events – a celebratory march in the morning beginning at Westlake Park, a luncheon at City Hall with music and dance, and an evening celebration at the Daybreak Star Cultural Center at Discovery Park.

Today, four states and more than fifty cities recognize Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day. Native Americans and allies have protested Columbus Day since its inception in 1937 for celebrating an individual who enslaved thousands of Indigenous people. In addition, celebrating Columbus with the discovery of America in 1492 does not acknowledge that Native people had been living on this land for thousands of years before that.

PROTEC17 is proud to support our Native American members and communities, and to help celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day. ■

PROTEC17 donates to ACLU to support families affected by immigration raids

After the largest workplace raid in U.S. history on August 7 in Mississippi, nearly 700 workers – many of whom were members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) working at poultry processing plants – were detained by U.S. Immigration. The raid left hundreds of families in crisis, children without parents, and families with no income.

The PROTEC17 Executive Board voted to donate \$1,000 to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Mississippi to show our solidarity. The money will go to humanitarian aid,

including food, diapers, baby formula, and basic necessities, as well as legal support.

Beyond meeting the immediate needs of the impacted families, the UFCW, ACLU, and countless other allied organizations have been focused on ensuring that all workers and their families receive the due process to which they are entitled as union members and human beings.

Thank you to the PROTEC17 Executive Board for their generous donation and to all of the PROTEC17 members who made their own personal donation to this important cause. ■

Find more news on our website: www.protec17.org/news

Be a Member Leader! Chapter Elections this fall!



Your union, your colleagues, and your fellow members – over 9,000 public sector workers throughout Washington and Oregon – need your skills, experience, and enthusiasm to help our organization be the best it can be!

To nominate yourself or a fellow member (with their permission) for chapter leadership, send an email to election@protec17.org with the name, chapter, and position for which you are submitting a nomination **by Wed., Nov. 13 at 5 p.m.** Open positions for each chapter are listed below. Terms vary – contact your Union Representative or current chapter leadership for the details.

CHEHALIS: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

DOL-PRFTA: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

DOT-TACOMA: President | Secretary-Treasurer

INLAND EMPIRE: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

KELSO: President | Vice-President | Secretary -Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

KITSAP: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

KING COUNTY: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegates (23) | REC Alt

MOUNT BAKER: President | Vice-President | Secretary | Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

NW REGIONAL DOT: Vice-President | REC Delegates (2) | REC Alt

PIERCE COUNTY: Vice-President

PORT ANGELES: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

PORTLAND: REC Delegates (5) | REC Alternate

SEA-VUE: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegates (2) | REC Alt

SEATTLE: President | VP | Secretary | Treasurer | REC Delegates (20) | REC Alt | Labor Council (1)

TACOMA: REC Delegate (1)

THURSTON CO: REC Delegates (4)

TRI-CITIES: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegate (1) | REC Alt

WSP-CO: President | Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer | REC Delegates (1) | REC Alt

WSP-CVEO: Secretary-Treasurer

WENATCHEE: Vice-President | Secretary-Treasurer

Charting a new course for PROTEC17:

Strategic plan and new leadership programs in the works for 2020-2022 based on direct member feedback

The last few months have been buzzing with activity for PROTEC17 staff and members! As part of a new initiative to engage members in their union, PROTEC17 is embarking on its first ever strategic planning process to create a three-year road map for our union, which includes goals and priorities that come directly from member feedback. In addition, both our Steward training and our political action program have been revamped, offering new leaders the opportunity to get more involved.

Back in July, a survey was emailed to the entire membership with questions about the future and direction of PROTEC17. Over 1,400 members completed the survey, which was rich in constructive feedback that will directly shape the Strategic Plan for 2020-2022.

In September and October, Executive Director Karen Estevenin and other PROTEC17 staff traveled around the region to get additional feedback from

members about the Strategic Plan at 15 different focus groups. These groups were usually two-hour working sessions held in the evenings. The members who participated provided more in-depth insight into the issues they think are important for their union to address.

The PROTEC17 Strategic Planning Committee, along with the Executive Board and the Regional Executive Committee, will be taking the feedback of the thousands of members who participated in the survey, and the hundreds of members who participated in the focus groups, to craft PROTEC17's goals and priorities, which we will begin working on starting in January 2020.

Simultaneously, the new PROTEC17 pilot Steward training program was launched in September. This program aims to help current Stewards become more active advocates in the workplace, as well as to recruit new Stewards to fill roles that have been left open as long-time member leaders have retired. So far 10 different trainings have been scheduled,

mostly in the Puget Sound area, with more to come in the new year.

New Steward Cathleen Buzan, who works in the King County Roads Division as a Project Manager III, attended the training on Sept. 18 and feels well equipped to advocate for her co-workers. When asked why she decided to become a Steward, she said:

“In this political climate, I want to ensure that our union remains strong by welcoming all members, educating our members on important workers issues, and ensuring all voices are heard.”

Buzan also attended the revamped political action training on Aug. 29 and the political candidate interviews on Oct. 5 – read more about both of those on p. 12.

“The political action training gave me a clearer understanding of the many ways we can demonstrate our collective power to change the lives of working people,” said Buzan.

Check the PROTEC17 events calendar at protec17.org/events for upcoming training opportunities near you! ■

“In this political climate, I want to ensure that our union remains strong by welcoming all members, educating our members on important worker issues, and ensuring all voices are heard.”

Cathleen Buzan,
New PROTEC17 Steward and
Project Manager at King County



Above: WSDOT Stewards after their training on Oct. 9. Next page: PROTEC17 members from across Washington and Oregon participated in the myriad of focus groups and trainings that happened throughout September and October.

FEATURES



Tacoma members reach tentative agreement on new contract after going to mediation

PROTEC17 and the City of Tacoma reached a tentative agreement on Oct. 1 after a 10-hour mediation session. Voting on the contract will take place over the last two weeks of October, either in person or online. Highlights of the agreement include: COLAs of 3% in 2019, with retroactive pay to Jan. 1, 2019, 3% in 2020, 2.5% in 2021 and 2.25% in 2022; additional market adjustments for many classifications; certification pay for inspectors and more. Check your personal email for the details on the vote and the wage adjustments. The bargaining team unanimously supports the ratification of this contract, and encourages Tacoma members to approve it.

PROTEC17 wins reclassification plus nearly 11 months of backpay for Portland member

When PROTEC17 Union Representative Rachel Whiteside was notified of a promotional reclassification for City of Portland member Peter Hurley, she didn't accept just a pay upgrade and title change as good enough. After contacting Hurley and learning that he had been doing the work that prompted the upgrade for some time – and with management's knowledge – PROTEC17 objected to the effective date of the proposed reclassification and forced the City of Portland to conduct a more thorough analysis.

Because of the strong working relationships PROTEC17 has built with the Human Resources and City Bureau Directors, we were able to meet quickly with decision-makers and won nearly 11 months of backpay without filing a grievance. Credit also belongs with Hurley for having good documentation of discussions with management and what tasks he was working on when he started asking for the reclassification.

Hurley's reclassification was prompted by the great work he has done in support of the City's winning bid for a grant through the Bloomberg American Cities Climate Challenge. Portland plans to use the Climate Challenge resources to kick climate smart transportation actions into high gear, accelerate green energy efforts, and advance equitable outcomes for all members of the community.

37 jobs saved in King County Public Health

Working in partnership with Public Health leadership at King County, PROTEC17 was able to save 37 jobs in the latest reorganization of the Community Health Services clinics. The jobs that were slated to be cut were saved through finding new placements and some retirements. This means there will be no layoffs or bumping! Since there has been some shifting of positions, there is a new seniority list. Contact your Union Representative Lorelei Walker at lorelei@protec17.org for a copy of the list.

KCIT member reclassified with backpay after a year of higher level work

With the help of Union Representative Denise Cobden, King County Information Technology member Lincoln Box was successfully reclassified to a higher position after he had been doing the higher level body of work for over a year. "It really boosted my confidence to have my union representative, Denise Cobden, present in my reclassification interviews," said Box. "It made me feel very supported to realize that management was responding not just to me but to my whole union."

PROTEC17 members challenge use of term-limited temporary (TLT) employees at King County through collective action



Over 400 PROTEC17 members signed a petition to save the jobs of King County Information Technology members Daniel Co and Ernesto Pobre Jr. As term-limited temporary (TLT) employees, they were both suddenly informed that their contracts would be cut short despite their satisfactory performance. Shortly thereafter, King County re-posted their jobs, again as TLT positions.

In September, PROTEC17 circulated a petition garnering support for both members. In early October, Co and Pobre, along with King County Stewards and PROTEC17 staff, met with members of the King County Council to discuss the results of the petition. At this meeting, members also shared their experience surrounding the abuse of TLT positions in lieu of creating permanent, career service positions that provide members with steady, stable employment and the ability to find career growth at the County.

PROTEC17 Union Representative Denise Cobden also met with Megan Pederson, Director of Labor Relations at King County, as well as Tanya Hannah, the Chief Information Officer of KCIT, to discuss the issue.

“King County has regulations and code set up to ensure that TLT workers are treated with dignity and respect and that temporary work programs are not abused,” said Cobden.

“But over the years, we have seen an increase in TLT positions and for longer periods of time,” she continued. “This member-led action highlighted some of the current issues with temporary employees so that now PROTEC17 and the King County Coalition of Unions can discuss these important issues with King County to ensure there are pathways to permanent employment and that permanent or long-term bodies of work are properly classified.”

As a direct result of the collective action of PROTEC17 members, as well as Council support, Co was given an extension to his TLT position. Also, two career service positions were created at KCIT, which both Co and Pobre are eligible to apply for.

“Getting the opportunity to sit down with the Councilmembers was an amazing experience,” said Co. “They were very understanding and supportive of my situation and I finally felt like I was being heard as a King County employee and PROTEC17 member.”

The County has expressed an interest in taking a closer look at how TLT positions are being used and how to address abuse of the positions. The King County Coalition of Unions through the Labor Policy Committee, the King County Council and the King County Executive’s Office will be working on this more in the months to come. ■



PROTEC17 members Ernesto Pobre and Daniel Co, with Union Representative Denise Cobden, and Stewards Tuan Nguyen, Jeremy Ward, and Lynn Mazer after their presentation to the King County Council about the misuse of TLT positions.

“Getting the opportunity to sit down with the Councilmembers was an amazing experience. They were very understanding and supportive of my situation and I finally felt like I was being heard as a King County employee and PROTEC17 member.”

Daniel Co, PROTEC17 Member
King County Information Technology

Meet our 2019 PROTEC17 scholarship winners!

Since the inception of the scholarship program in 2011, PROTEC17 has awarded \$45,000 in scholarships to the children of members. After very careful deliberation, we are proud to announce that our 2019 scholarship winners are Marshall Simon and Chloe Mezek.

Each year, the PROTEC17 scholarship is open to the children, grandchildren or dependents of members in good standing as they enter or continue their studies in college or technical school. There are two \$3,000 awards – one for an incoming freshman, and one for a continuing college student. Scholarship applications were accepted through July 31. The application asked students to demonstrate their academic achievements, educational goals, and extracurricular and volunteer activities. In addition, applicants needed to submit letters of recommendation, and a labor-related essay, which was judged by outside labor educators.

Marshall Simon, son of City of Seattle member Brenda Simon, is our freshman winner, who started at Washington State University in August. As a student athlete and musician, Simon is majoring in music performance while simultaneously keeping a busy schedule on the baseball team. He hopes to be a jazz trumpeter.

Chloe Mezek is our scholarship winner in the continuing student category. She, too, has a passion for music and is majoring in Business Management with a concentration in the music industry at Five Towns College in New York State. After graduation, she would like to develop emerging artists as a talent scout. Her mother, member-leader Mindi Mezek, works for the Washington State Patrol.

PROTEC17 is proud to offer this scholarship program to our members to help ease the financial burden of a college education for their children. Both Simon and Mezek expressed their gratitude to the members of PROTEC17 for supporting their dreams. ■



“I feel like my education is very important to my success. That’s why I am so excited that I’ve been given the opportunity to continue my education and grow towards achieving my goals.”

Marshall Simon, PROTEC17 Freshman Scholarship Winner



“My favorite thing about college is getting to meet people who are passionate about whatever they’re majoring in. My goal and dream is to work in the music industry helping grow and develop emerging artists.”

Chloe Mezek, PROTEC17 Continuing College Student Scholarship Winner

Your VOTE is your VOICE! VOTE on November 5!

The general election is around the corner – Tues., Nov. 5. For the past several months, PROTEC17 has been busy creating a new pilot political program (read more on p. 12) where members have a hand in conducting candidate interviews and making endorsements. The key races and initiatives listed below are the outcome of these interviews to find worker-friendly candidates throughout the region.

Remember: your union dues money is never used to endorse candidates – only voluntary contributions to the political action committee (PAC) are used for this purpose.

Most importantly, however you decide to vote, don't forget to mail in or drop off your ballot by Nov. 5! Your vote is your voice – plus, the postage is already paid! ■



PROTEC17 staff and King County member Angalee Alexander (center) with King County Councilmember Larry Gossett, who is seeking re-election.

2019 Election Endorsements



**Kent City Council
Position 5**
Mizan Rahman



**King County
Assessor**
John Wilson



**King County Council
District 2**
Larry Gossett



**King County Council
District 4**
Jeanne Kohl-Welles



**King County Council
District 8**
Joe McDermott



**SeaTac City Council
Position 5**
Takele Gobena



**Seattle City Council
Position 1**
Lisa Herbold



**Seattle City Council
Position 2**
Mark Solomon



**Seattle City Council
Position 4**
Shawn Scott



**Seattle City Council
Position 5**
Dan Strauss



Spokane Mayor:
Ben Stuckart



**Tacoma City Council
District 1**
Nathe Lawver



**Tukwila City Council
Position 2**
Nancy Manos



**WA State Senate,
LD:40**
Liz Lovelett



Initiative 1000/R88:
APPROVE



Initiative 976:
NO

Did you move?
Let us know! 800-783-0017

Political Action

Members take part in a pilot program to learn why politics are important and how to be effective advocates with policy-makers



On Aug. 29, PROTEC17 held a pilot training for members as part of a complete revamping of our political program and political action committee (PAC). The training was held at the PROTEC17 office from 5-8 p.m. with over a dozen members from King County and the City of Seattle in attendance.

The pilot program is helping members connect the dots between who we elect and how it can inform public policy and impact jobs and contracts – especially in the public sector. Part of the PROTEC17 curriculum is also teaching members to be effective advocates with their local, state and national representatives.

Another aspect of the new PAC invited members to take part in PROTEC17 candidate endorsement interviews. These have been taking place throughout the summer and fall, including a full morning of interviews on Oct. 5 at the PROTEC17 office. Ten members volunteered their Saturday morning to interview four



candidates for City and County government. Candidates are evaluated on their stance on issues related to workers, public sector jobs and funding, and other topics that directly impact our members.

Many members are already politically active, and were excited to see PROTEC17 take a more active role in engaging members in politics.

“I left the candidate interviews with new skills I can apply to start meaningful conversations with political candidates and elected officials,” said member Cathleen Buzan. “PROTEC17 staff empowered the members to shape our conversations with these candidates and focus on the questions we thought were most important like equity and housing affordability.”

You can find our list of candidate endorsements on p. 11. Remember: union dues are never used for candidate endorsements – only voluntary donations to the PAC are used for this purpose. ■