

insight

A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

OF PROTEC17

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Vaccination efforts continue: Unions play important role



On the Cover:

Over the past few months, vaccine efforts have ramped up, including at the mass vaccination site at Lumen Field Events Center in Seattle – currently the largest in the country. Nearly 200 PROTEC17 Customer Service Representatives have been hired by the City of Seattle to help. Unions are helping in many other ways too. Read more on page 6. *REUTERS / Alamy Stock Photo* ■

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Karen Estevenin
Executive Director

Possibility, hope, and gratitude

The shift from winter to spring is upon us, and this year, more than ever before, it's a refreshing reminder of the power of transformation. The energy that explodes in order to fill barren branches with greenery and blooming color is astounding. The warmth of the sun, longer days, and planting for what's to come all bring possibility, hope, and gratitude.

As vaccinations are becoming more widely available this spring in Washington and Oregon, what once seemed like a distant vision is now a reality for millions. PROTEC17 members are contributing to this massive effort, offering a welcome dose of relief along with the vaccination shots (p. 6). I cannot express enough gratitude to our many members involved in COVID-relief efforts and other essential functions to support our communities.

Spring has also brought progress for our work in the Legislatures (p. 10-11). We have made real strides this year as we push for a strong transportation package that funds projects that PROTEC17 members design and build. We are also tracking important police reform measures that will make our communities safe for everyone. We are supporting a revenue building policy through an excessive wealth tax that, if passed, will fund crucial community services and education. And, we had a successful virtual Public Health Education Day, and are continuing to push for public health funding.

As an organization, we are in a transformative phase. Our trajectory is high and full of momentum, fueled by the power of our members. That energy will be needed for the abundant ongoing work ahead. This includes anti-racist work, which is a key component in our transformation.

This past month, we witnessed the tragic loss of eight people in Atlanta – six of whom were Asian Americans. We stand against all hate crimes, and in solidarity with these communities and our Asian and Pacific Islander members. You can read more about resources and ways to support on page 8.

Internally, we have made tremendous strides towards improving our governing documents and constitution. These efforts will continue to evolve with some of the positive trends we've picked up from distant gathering, like virtual meetings, as well as improving Chapter finances and structure. Please add your voice to this effort and vote in the upcoming constitutional vote (p. 4).

We also have a number of critical negotiations taking shape, including at the City of Seattle, City of Portland, and King County. And, as we work our way through the economic strain of the pandemic, our Washington State members prepare to re-open their contract in an effort to reduce the ongoing furloughs they have endured.

Members are the heart – the life force – of all of this tremendous work. I am so grateful for each and every contribution that PROTEC17 members make daily to lift-up public services and build our communities, as well as make our union strong today – and for what's to come.

In gratitude and solidarity,

PROTEC17 scholarship application now available!



The annual college scholarship program for dependents of PROTEC17 members is now open! Since its inception in 2011, PROTEC17 has awarded 17 scholarships totalling over \$50,000 towards the advanced education of our members' children.

The program sponsors two \$3,000 college scholarships each year – one for an incoming college freshman, and the other for a continuing college student. Applicants are asked to demonstrate their academic achievement, community service, extracurricular activities, and educational goals, as well as write a labor-related essay which is reviewed by outside labor educators.

The application is now available on the PROTEC17 website (www.protec17.org/benefits) – the deadline to apply is July 31, 2021. Winners will be announced in the Sept/Oct. issue of *Insight* magazine, and on our website and social media channels.

In their essays, past winners have highlighted how their parent's involvement with PROTEC17 has taught them the value of working together to solve problems, as well as the importance of unions and the broader worker community.

If you are the parent, grandparent or legal guardian of a child heading off or returning to college, please encourage them to apply. If you have any questions about the scholarship program, contact Communications Director Deidre Girard at deidre@protec17.org. ■

Constitution vote coming in May; survey about Chapter structure open now!

The PROTEC17 constitution committee has been thoughtfully combing through our union's governing documents for over 18 months to make much needed and necessary changes to keep our documents current, and our organization aligned with best practices. Now, the next proposed amendment will be on its way to members for a vote in May.

The committee – consisting of members Rachael Brooks, Rachel Burlington, Ulysses Hillard, Jake Jacobovitch, Dan Santon, and Sean Simmons – presented this change to the Regional Executive Committee (REC) in February, where it was unanimously approved and motioned to go to the broader membership for a vote. This amendment would allow for electronic voting for Board elections.

If approved, this would be the sixth constitutional amendment ratified by PROTEC17 members. Previous amend-

ments have updated the Executive Board structure, allowed for electronic voting for Chapter and REC elections, and made some housekeeping changes, such as updating our name from PTE17 to PROTEC17.

Next, the committee will be looking at whether updates are needed to improve Chapter meetings, structure, and funding – *but they need your input first!*

Currently, we have a survey open to all members to give feedback on what changes you'd like to see to how your Chapter is run – whether that be the Chapter election process, how to use Chapter funds, or how to get fellow members more engaged. If you haven't already taken the survey, you can find it here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KGR9DSH>.

Your participation in these decisions is pivotal to upholding our member-powered union. If you have questions, feel free to reach out via future@protec17.org. ■

PROTEC17 to reopen State contract to reduce furloughs in 2021-23 biennium

During last year's round of contract negotiations, PROTEC17 State members ratified a contract that included no cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) through the 2021-2023 biennium, as well as scheduled monthly furloughs. While the PROTEC17 bargaining team agreed to these provisions reluctantly after a long summer of negotiations, we did so acknowledging two things: 1) There were more questions than answers with regard to the state of the budget, and 2) as State employees, we knew that – like during the great recession – we may have to make sacrifices for the greater good of our communities and our workforce as a whole.

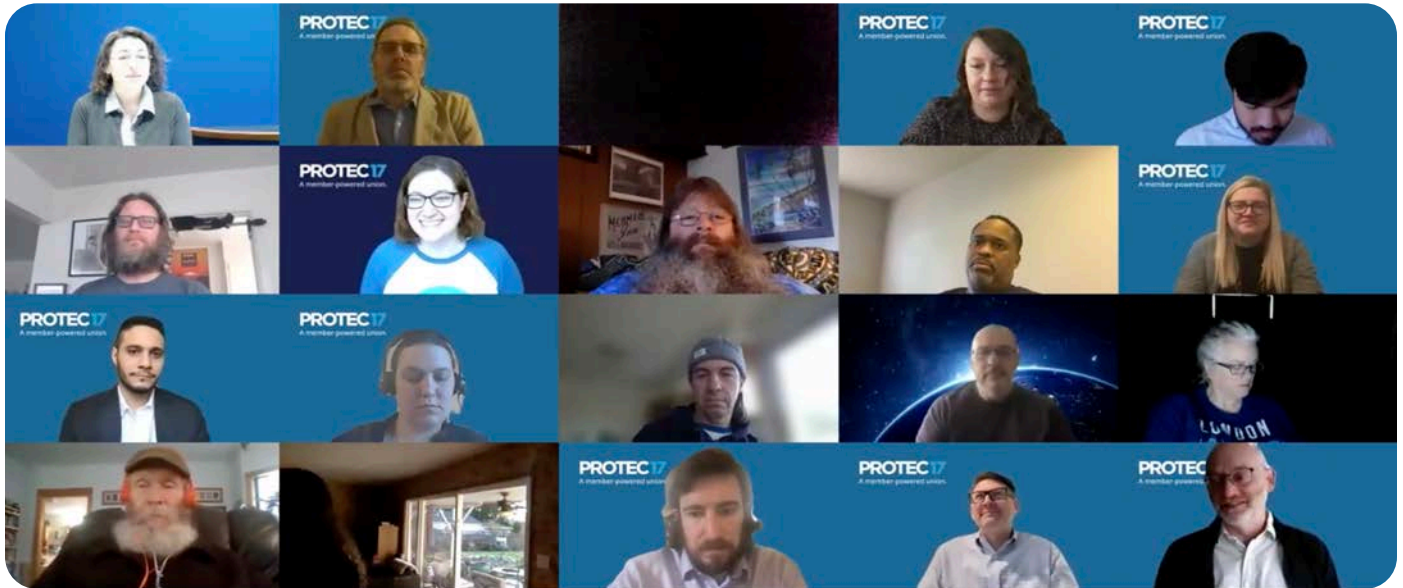
Since we're obligated by statute to ratify the contract by October 1st of the year

preceding the biennium, we couldn't wait – we had to act to get a contract in front of the Governor and the legislature for their approval. But, included in that Tentative Agreement (TA) was language that said either party could re-open the contract ahead of the biennium for the purpose of reducing or eliminating the furloughs. We have begun this process and we are cautiously optimistic that we'll be successful in either reducing or eliminating the scheduled furlough days. This is the result of a combination of factors, including a robust relief bill coming out of Congress and a better-than-expected revenue forecast.

If you have questions about the reopener, please ask your Union Representative. We will also update State members via email when we have news. ■

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

Regional Executive Committee meets: Delegates reflect on 2020 and move forward with resolve



PROTEC17's policy-making body – the Regional Executive Committee – met virtually on February 27 for their twice-yearly gathering to discuss the business of our union.

With the theme of 'Reflect and Resolve', delegates reflected on the many challenges and accomplishments in the difficult year that was 2020, and resolved to keep moving forward and making positive change. Nearly 80 participants joined the Zoom meeting, and delegates made several important decisions, including adopting the 2021 budget.

Delegates were welcomed to the meeting by PROTEC17 President Rachael Brooks, and the meeting minutes from October were approved. Trustee Emily Tabachnick swore-in new Executive Board members and REC delegates.

PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin asked delegates for a moment of silence to honor fellow members who were lost within the last year. She then asked delegates to engage, listen, and ensure the day's

activities are moving our union's mission forward. Estevenin then recapped the top 10 wins of 2020, and introduced our goals for 2021.

Jessica Garcia, PROTEC17 Secretary/Treasurer, then presented the 2021 budget, highlighting several line items and the rationale for their change from the previous year. Because of the pandemic and the abrupt change to virtual meetings, many budgetary items were drastically different from what had been projected in early 2020. After questions and discussion, REC delegates unanimously approved the budget as proposed.

After the budget discussion, Vice President Sean Simmons, representing the Constitution Committee, brought the next amendment of our constitution to the REC. This amendment would allow for electronic voting for Executive Board elections. Delegates adopted sending this amendment to the full membership for a vote.

Next, REC delegates had the opportunity to hear about specific wins

from their fellow members in Portland, Clark County, Seattle, King County, Tacoma, Spokane Regional Health District, Chelan-Douglas Health District, and the State of Washington.

Organizing staff members Xuan-Trang Tran-Thien and Melissa Mafua then shared a report on our union growth efforts, with many campaigns led and supported by PROTEC17 member leaders. These efforts include bringing new classifications into PROTEC17, as well as harnessing our member power to sign up newly hired employees to our union.

Estevenin and Elliot Levin, PROTEC17 Research Director and Oregon Legislative Advocate, summarized our political priorities and which bills we are following during the 2021 legislative sessions in Olympia and Salem.

The meeting ended with recognition of long-time PROTEC17 member and activist Art Pedersen, who is retiring, as well as 'Good of the Order' and the RSVP drawing for prizes. ■

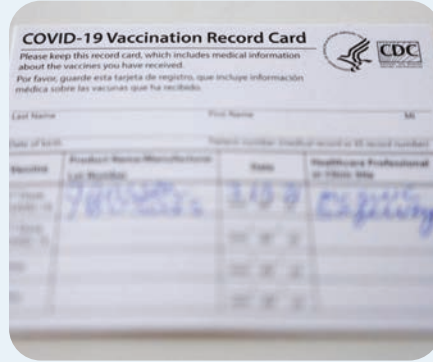
Vaccination efforts continue:

Unions help get workers protected from COVID-19; 200 new PROTEC17 positions hired for massive Seattle clinic

As vaccination efforts have ramped up over the last several months to prevent the spread of COVID-19, labor unions and community partners have been tapped as trusted resources to help get people immunized against this deadly virus.

The Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) – a statewide coalition of unions of which PROTEC17 is a part – has compiled an extensive list of information to help union members and their families understand how the vaccine works, with supporting testimonies from union members about its importance. You can find these resources at: wslc.org/covid-vaccine.

In King County, MLK Labor has partnered with the City of Seattle to bring together unions to help in the effort to reach the most vulnerable populations, including the elderly, immigrant communities, and people of color, who are being disproportionately impacted by the virus. Through this effort, PROTEC17 is working with MLK Labor and the City to help members secure a vaccination appointment at one of four clinics in Seattle, including at Rainier Beach, West Seattle, North Seattle,



and at the new mass vaccination site at Lumen Field in the heart of the city.

The Lumen Field site – currently the largest vaccine clinic in the country – takes place at the spacious event center just south of downtown Seattle. It is now fully up and running, just in time for the expansion of vaccine eligibility to all people over the age of 16 on April 15. This clinic will be able to vaccinate over 22,000 people per day.

Prior to April 15, the vaccine was being rolled-out in phases starting with the most vulnerable community members, including those over the age of 60, or with multiple medical conditions, or those working in public-facing industries such as health care, grocery, and transit, to name a few.

PROTEC17 also worked with King County Metro to help spread the word to our transit members about a special vaccine pop-up clinic at the South Training Center in Tukwila on April 9. This clinic served Metro members who have been working onsite throughout the pandemic, and used the two-dose Pfizer vaccine. Members will be getting their second dose on April 30.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two shots to get the full immunization against COVID-19, so these clinics will be busy for many months in order to administer both doses, in an attempt to reach herd immunity. Scientists and health experts suspect that about 60-70% of the population needs to be immunized against the coronavirus before we reach the point at which the virus cannot as easily be transferred from person to person. In the meantime, face masks and social distancing remain the recommended norm.

Back at Lumen Field (pictured at right before the grand opening), the City hired nearly 200 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) – who are represented by PROTEC17 – to help many thousands of people through the vaccination process there.

The CSRs will be guiding patients through the lines, answering questions, and being a friendly (masked!) face during the process, much like the CSRs that were hired last summer to help at the COVID testing sites throughout the City.

“I’m excited to welcome the many new members who’ve been hired to help get us all vaccinated,” said PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin.

“So many of our members have played a key role in keeping people safe during this crisis, as well as helping move us toward an end to this pandemic,” she continued. “From our frontline members to everyone who’s worked behind the scenes to keep our government services going, I am proud of all of the work our members have done over the last year, and continue to do, for the greater good.” ■

Resources:

covidvaccineWA.org

wslc.org/covid-vaccine

covidvaccine.oregon.gov

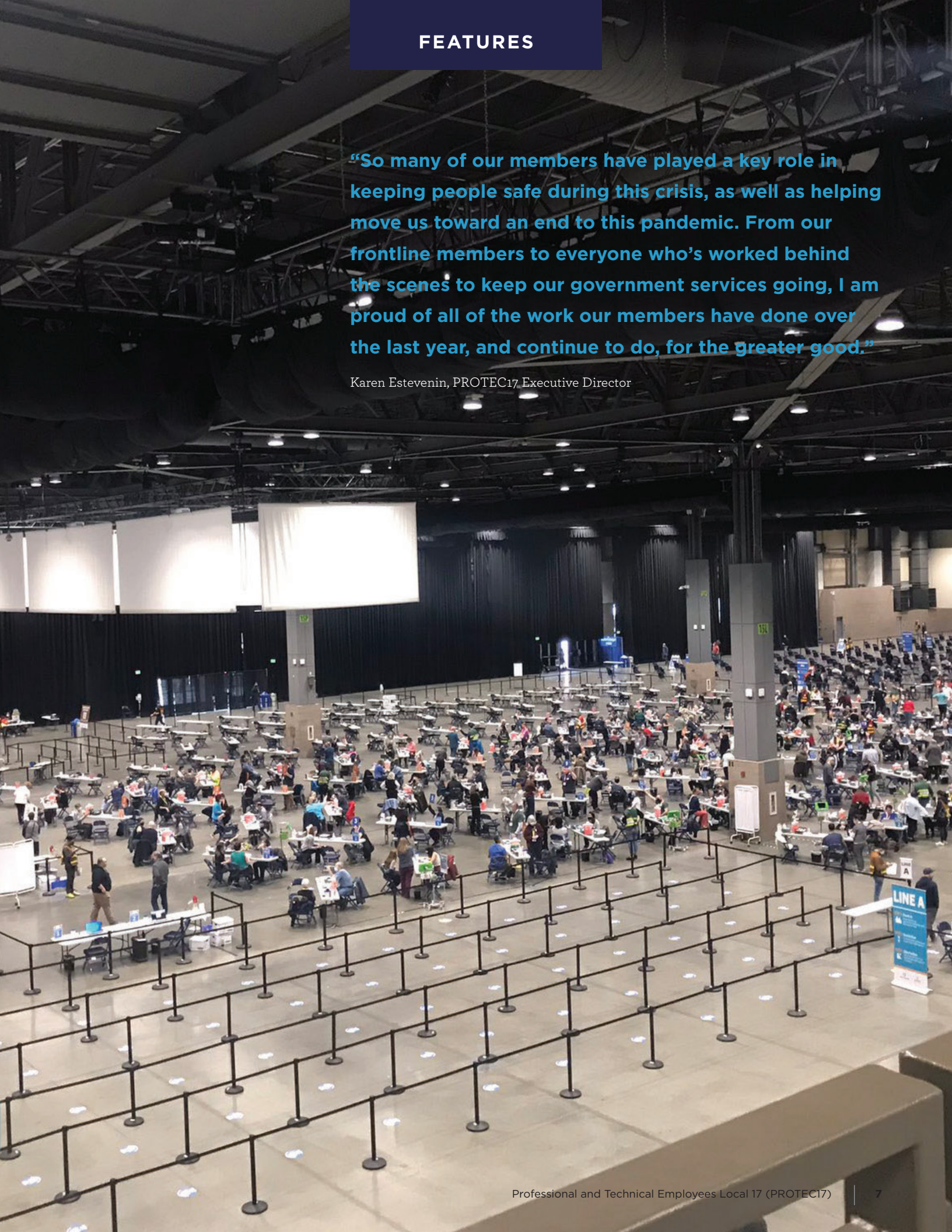
At right, the Lumen Field Event Center in Seattle will be the largest mass vaccination site in the country, vaccinating over 22,000 people each day.

For more COVID-19 information, visit: protec17.org/covid19

FEATURES

“So many of our members have played a key role in keeping people safe during this crisis, as well as helping move us toward an end to this pandemic. From our frontline members to everyone who’s worked behind the scenes to keep our government services going, I am proud of all of the work our members have done over the last year, and continue to do, for the greater good.”

Karen Estevenin, PROTEC17 Executive Director



Labor and PROTEC17 condemn anti-Asian violence and xenophobia as incidents climb during pandemic

PROTEC17 stands alongside our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) members and communities to condemn racism in all forms in the wake of rising anti-Asian violence and xenophobia.

While racism against people of Asian descent is not new, several high profile incidents of violence across the United States in March, along with growing anti-Asian sentiment related to the coronavirus, has ignited the Labor Movement and other allies to root out these biases so that our fellow workers, neighbors, and community members can live safely, with dignity, enjoying the same freedoms that many take for granted.

In Washington, the State Labor Council (WSLC) called on all workers to “unite and speak out against any and all acts of racism” against members of our family. The WSLC released a statement and a wealth of anti-racist resources via their daily labor online newspaper, *The Stand*, amplifying the many community organizations who are leading the way on AAPI issues, such as the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), the AAPI Coalition Against Hate and Bias, and more. You can find their list of resources at: <https://www.thestand.org/2021/03/labor-condemns-atlanta-shootings-racism/>.

Before the high profile incident in Atlanta, Georgia on March 17 where eight workers – including six of Asian descent – were murdered across several massage businesses, the AFL-CIO and APALA had already released a joint statement on March 5 about the increase in violence toward Asian people in the U.S.

In that statement, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said: “The entire labor movement is appalled by the continued rise in anti-Asian racism across the country. Acts of physical violence, yelling



of racial slurs and intimidation tactics used against our Asian American friends, family and communities must be called out and stopped.”

After the Atlanta incident, APALA President Monica Thammarath stated: “We grieve for the eight workers who were killed in Atlanta. We take a moment to acknowledge that many of them were the aunties and immigrant women in our communities who face immense barriers to finding work and supporting their families.”

The Oregon AFL-CIO echoed the AFL-CIO and APALA’s sentiments, and amplified ‘Stop AAPI Hate’ on their social media channels.

Launched in March 2020, ‘Stop AAPI Hate’ is a resource and reporting center that tracks incidents of violence, harassment, and discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. In a year’s time, this organization has become well-known for tracking incidents across the country, and for offering rapid response and resources to people experiencing anti-Asian hate and harassment.

In their most recent report encompassing data submitted between Mar. 19, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021, nearly 3,800 incidents, ranging from verbal harassment, physical assault, and civil rights violations,

were reported via their online reporting feature.

“The recent uptick in violence and harassment in our Asian communities is a disturbing and sad trend in our country, and one that is rooted in centuries of xenophobia,” said Karen Estevenin, PROTEC17 Executive Director. “As a union of workers committed to equity and justice, we cannot stand by while our community suffers.”

There are many things you can do to show your support and to be a better ally when it comes to combatting racism and harassment against the AAPI community, as well as in the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community. We have created a webpage devoted to sharing racial justice resources. On it, you can find toolkits, links to trainings, and more: protec17.org/racial-justice.

Another community group, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, has also been tracking hate incidents since 2017. They have partnered with the organization *Hollaback!* to offer bystander trainings to combat anti-Asian harassment. APALA also hosted a series of trainings on racial and immigrant justice for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. You can find links to this information on our racial justice webpage as well.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders make up a vital part of our workforce and our labor movement, and as a movement, we must take actionable steps to stop harassment, discrimination, and violence against our fellow workers.

“As laid out in our strategic plan, PROTEC17 members have committed to the work of dismantling racism, and we will continue on this path until all of our members can live safe and healthy lives,” said Estevenin. ■

For more resources, visit: protec17.org/racial-justice

Meet Carina, the platform that supports good union jobs and quality care for your loved ones

Imagine an online platform to connect families and individuals to the care support they need but with a fierce commitment to advocate for care workers so they can provide the best care possible for those who need it. That, essentially is Carina in a nutshell.

On Carina (carina.org), families, individuals and providers can meet and discuss opportunities for support. It's an easy, mobile-friendly website where individuals can find verified, trained and available care when needed, such as home care for seniors and people with disabilities and child care for working families. Regardless of income, anyone who needs care can find what they need with resources such as child care vouchers, Medicaid home care support, and other subsidy programs.

Carina is committed to bringing unionized work to more caregivers by working closely with labor unions. All care professionals on Carina are represented by a union so they get the support training and benefits they need to support their family and be successful on the job. Carina acknowledges the incredible work labor unions and their members have done to uplift working people and fight racial injustice.

"It's a really easy system to figure out and navigate," said Patrick, a caregiver from Puyallup, WA. "It really helped me put myself out there and it was a lot faster than a referral agency."

For Patrick, Carina is more than a site for job search. It's an online platform that enables him to connect with clients he can share interests and foster friendships with, which makes the job easier.

He had been looking for a new client for several weeks before he updated his Carina profile. Within one day, he received three interview requests, one of which was from Jeannie. They met and connected immediately.

Since then, Patrick has been by Jeannie's side. He helps her around the house

and works with her property manager to keep things on track. They love to garden together and have a few projects lined up for the spring and summer. And often they simply sit and talk with Patrick listening while Jeannie shares stories about her life.

They both have the same photo on display in their homes. In it they are standing close together, with big smiles. In fact, their smiles and laughter extend far beyond a picture frame – this has been an everyday occurrence for the past 15 months.

It's stories like this that motivate the staff at Carina to create a platform that makes a difference. Carina believes that providing good care to children, older adults, and people with disabilities is a team effort. By being empathetic to users' experience, Carina can take action to make life a little easier.

"When our daycare closed due to COVID-19, we turned to Carina," said Danielle. "We found a provider quite quickly and we love the atmosphere with her."

The primary users of the site are working families, individuals or older adults looking for care. They may have heard about Carina from their union, employer, from a state resource list, or

through Carina's advertising to promote care options for families.

"After searching for three years, I had great luck finding the perfect match for our situation," said Linda who heard about Carina via word of mouth. "She's a great match for my disabled grandson's needs and his personality. He loves her and trusts her."

The platform aims to increase access and ease of use for women, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income families and all marginalized communities who are most impacted by our nation's broken care system.

The Carina story started when home care workers joined together as a labor union to advocate for better working conditions and wages in 2002. In 2015, unionized home care workers in WA (SEIU 775) fought for and won a new benefit in their labor contract. With the investment from these workers and the State of Washington, Carina was created with the commitment to a more just and humane world.

Carina envisions a care economy that strengthens our communities by respecting and supporting workers, families and people who need care. For more information, visit carina.org. ■



Caregiver photo courtesy of SEIU 775 Benefits Group.

Public Health Legislative Education Day a virtual success!



In March 4, Public Health employees from across Washington state - including many PROTEC17 members - gathered online for the first virtual Public Health Legislative Education Day. While the annual event has been taking place in Olympia for many years, the pandemic changed the format - to much success!

Legislative Education Day is typically a day where Public Health professionals meet with their representatives to educate them about the important work they do every day to keep us safe and healthy. Due to the online format, this year's event was a bit different, though still highly valuable to both workers and legislators alike.

Participants were welcomed by Jeff Ketchel of the Washington state Public Health Association (WSPHA), which organized the event. They were then introduced to many Senators and Representatives from throughout Washington State who shared the status of specific Public Health-related policy and budgetary bills. And finally, par-

ticipants learned how best to contact their legislators to talk about important Public Health issues, as well as make public comment on a bill, or provide virtual testimony in a bill's hearing - two tools that are new, and wildly popular this year, given the need to maintain social distancing.

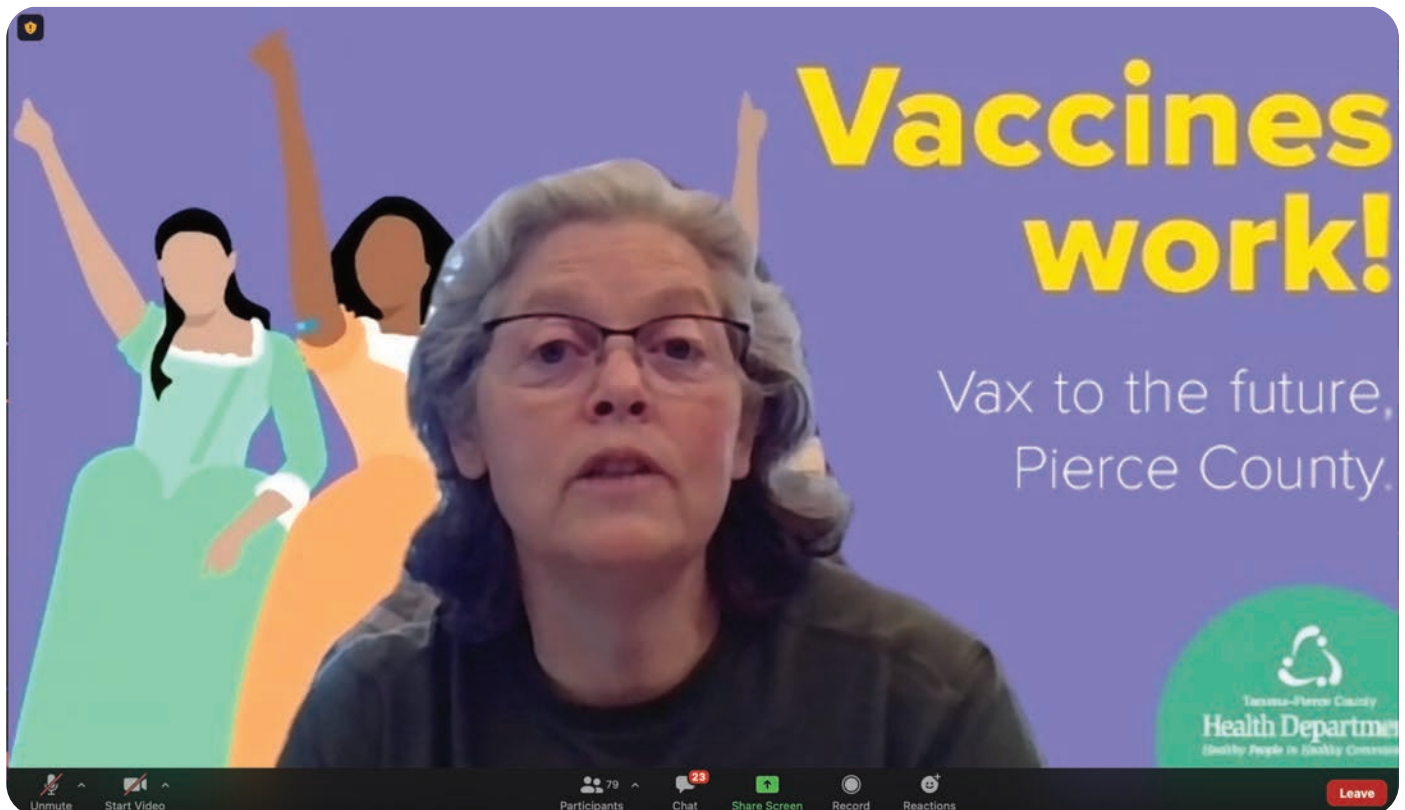
With the coronavirus on everyone's minds, awareness about Public Health has increased, and with it, the sense of urgency for adequate funding. For years, Public Health funding has fallen short of what is needed for foundational health services, as well as programs to tackle homelessness, the opioid crisis, infectious diseases, and more.

While Public Health Legislative Education Day is not a day for public health professionals to directly ask for funding, it is an important opportunity to teach them how to give legislators a sense and scope of the most important issues and how budgetary constraints and limitations impact the health and safety of our communities.

There are several bills being heard this year that would greatly impact Public Health, including two budgetary bills. At this point, it appears that some better funding streams are on the horizon, although both packages currently fall short of meeting the true need.

The legislative term is slated to end on April 25, but it will likely be extended. We will be tracking the status of Public Health bills and funding and will post updates on our Political Action webpage: protec17.org/political-action. There, you can also learn about our legislative priorities and how to contact your Senators and Representatives.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that PROTEC17 Public Health members provide essential services that are integral to the health and safety of everyone in Washington state. Whether you are a Public Health employee or not, let your legislator know that you support Public Health and that it's time to adequately fund these vital programs and services. ■



Rep. Laurie Jinkins speaks about the importance of Public Health and funding for programs at the 2021 virtual Public Health Legislative Education Day.

Sessions continue in Olympia and Salem; some progress made

While the regular legislative session in Washington state is rapidly coming to its April 25 closing date, it will likely be extended to a special session to allow our elected officials to finish their work of passing budgets and policies in this very busy and consequential year. Meanwhile in Oregon, the session is scheduled to run through June 28, and with two months remaining, there is still a lot of work to be done.

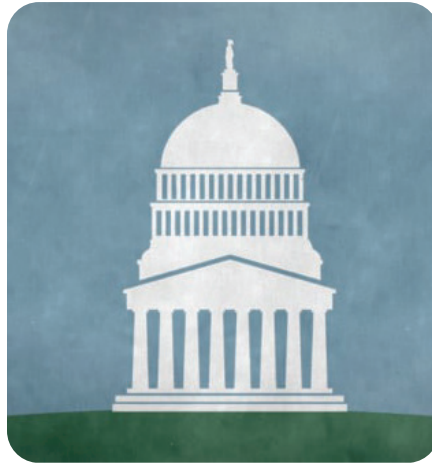
Response to the pandemic and attention to the accompanying recession have been a priority in both states, and the decisions that are made this session will shape relief efforts and the economy for years to come. *It is more pivotal than ever to make your voice heard!* And with the legislative sessions being held largely via virtual video conference, it is easier than ever for PROTEC17 members to show support or opposition to a bill, submit public comment, or provide testimony.

Bills related to the four political priorities that PROTEC17 laid out at the beginning of the year continue to move, albeit slowly. You can find highlights of some of the bills we are tracking below. For more details, or for a complete list of our 2021 legislative priorities, visit our website at: protec17.org/political-action.

Washington

We are tracking bills in Olympia related to Public Health, transportation, capital gains, workers' rights, and safe communities, see below:

- House Bill (HB) 1135 and Senate Bill (SB) 5165 are two funding packages that would appropriate money for transportation infrastructure projects for the next 16 years. While differing in amounts, the packages would provide vital spending for projects that directly affect PROTEC17 members. We support both of these bills.



- SB 1297 – the Working Families Tax Credit has passed and is making its way to the Governor's desk. This bill is a significant win for working people, particularly lower income earners, and will provide much needed tax relief.
- SB 5051 and HB 1054 are two police reform bills that would provide greater oversight for tactics and misconduct helping make our communities safer.
- The capital gains tax bill (SB 5096) is still alive. If passed, it would implement a tax on extraordinary wealth in an attempt to fix our upside-down tax code where the wealthy pay the smallest percentage of tax relative to their incomes.

Oregon

In Oregon, we are tracking bills and issues related to union organizing, protection from retaliation and harassment in the workplace, police oversight, wildfire safety rules for workers, and expansion of the Oregon Family Medical Leave Act, detailed here:

- HB 3029 would allow for electronic signatures in union organizing campaigns, and would be a significant step towards modernizing what is often a cumbersome process of organizing new employees in Oregon.

- SB 621 would allow the police oversight board passed by Portland voters in the fall to go into effect. PROTEC17 is supporting this bill because we believe it provides important police oversight and reform and is an important step to increasing the safety of Portland's BIPOC citizens.
- SB 483 provides protection from retaliation if an employee has recently raised health and safety concerns in the workplace. We consider this an important worker protection step that is especially relevant during the pandemic, but will be valuable in the future for increasing safety and the power of whistleblowers.
- SB 477 would lower the "severe and pervasive" standard for proving workplace harassment as established in 2019's major SB 726, which greatly increased workers' ability to take action against employers for such conduct.
- HB 2474 expands coverage under the Oregon Family Medical Leave Act. It would include school closures as a qualifying event, allow coverage to part-time employees, and modernize the definition of family and the use of gendered terms amongst other improvements.
- A workgroup of stakeholders is meeting with the goal of establishing safety rules around outdoor worker exposure to wildfire smoke and extreme heat. While Washington and California have guidelines in place on these subjects, Oregon currently lacks rules. PROTEC17 is participating in these meetings and we hope to provide member testimony in the process.

If you would like more information about the bills we are tracking, please visit protec17.org/political-action. ■

**To learn more about the current legislative session, visit:
www.protec17.org/political-action**

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