

Summer 2024 Vol 29 No. 3









On the Cover:

On June 1st, we held our first Solidarity Summit — and it was a great success! PROTEC17 member leaders from across Washington and Portland came together to learn, collaborate, and celebrate our union wins and solidarity. Read more - and see more photos! - on pages 6-7. Photos thanks to PROTEC17 Political Director Brandon Hersey.

News and Features



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PROTEC17 Executive Board **Election Notice**

Nominations are now open for the following PROTEC17 Executive Board positions: City of Portland Trustee, currently held by Emily Tabachnick, and Greater Northwest Trustee, currently held by Angeles Ize. The terms are three (3) years and will expire in 2028.

- (1) Only members who work for the City of Portland are eligible to be nominated for the City of Portland Trustee position. Members other than those at the City of Seattle, King County, State of Washington and City of Portland can run for the Greater Northwest Trustee position. The City of Seattle, King County, State of Washington, and Membership-at-Large Trustee positions will be up for election in ensuing years.
- (2) To be eligible for nomination to an Executive Board position, a member must have been in good standing in PROTEC17 for a period of at least six (6) months immediately prior to the nomination.
- (3) No member of PROTEC17 shall run for more than one Executive Board office concurrently
- (4) Nominations must be in writing by the person making the nomination, and must be at the PROTEC17 office, 2900 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite #300, Seattle, Washington 98102, by 5 p.m. on Mon., Oct. 7, 2024.
- (5) Names of all nominees, except those who declare in writing that they decline the nomination, will appear on the ballot.
- (6) Candidates may submit a statement of up to 200 words and a photo of themselves. These will go out with the ballot and must be received at the union office by 5 p.m. on Fri., Oct. 11, 2024.
- (7) An electronic ballot will be emailed to each member in good standing at their last known email address the week of Oct. 14, 2024.
- (8) The ballots will be counted after 5 p.m. on Mon., Nov. 18, 2024.

To request a paper ballot, or if you have any questions regarding the election, please contact the PROTEC17 Election Chair at: PROTEC17 Election Chair, 2900 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98102, or union@protec17.org.

insight

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insight

Summer 2024 Vol 29 / No. 3

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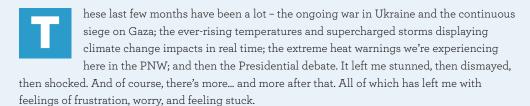
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Choosing to persist



This state is unusual for me. I believe in finding and creating joy - that it runs deep and can sustain us even through immense challenge. In moments like these, the poem below has helped me push through - to keep going. And that is what we need to do now - to not give up. The articles in this issue of *Insight* also remind me that choosing joy and pride are key to carrying on with the work we value, even - *and perhaps more importantly* - when it feels most difficult.

Persistence is a choice. It's rooted in the heart and carried out through hard work.

You'll see this persistence, and the pride it generates, through the unity of Snohomish County members who took collective action at their County Council meeting in their fight to win a fair contract (p. 5). Persistence is what it takes to run for elected office, like PROTEC17 Portland member Sarah Silke (p. 10). And joy and pride were front and center as PROTEC17 union leaders came together for the 2024 Solidarity Summit and the 'Proud to be PROTEC17' project (p. 6-7).

We are in the midst of some deeply troubling times and there are more challenges to come. Summer is the perfect time to get grounded in those things that bring you joy, and to rest and have fun. A vacation, a break, or a pause even, can help us realign with our values, which we will need in the months ahead. Then, join with us and get back at it. We have a choice. The world, our country, and our movement are calling us to continue on and to choose persistence.

In compassion and solidarity,





Karen Estevenin Executive Director

Instructions on Not Giving Up

Ada Limón, 1976 -

More than the fuchsia funnels breaking out of the crabapple tree, more than the neighbor's almost obscene display of cherry limbs shoving their cotton candy-colored blossoms to the slate sky of Spring rains, it's the greening of the trees that really gets to me. When all the shock of white and taffy, the world's baubles and trinkets, leave the pavement strewn with the confetti of aftermath, the leaves come. Patient, plodding, a green skin growing over whatever winter did to us, a return to the strange idea of continuous living despite the mess of us, the hurt, the empty. Fine then, I'll take it, the tree seems to say, a new slick leaf unfurling like a fist to an open palm, I'll take it all.

From The Carrying (Milkweed Editions, 2018) by Ada Limón. Copyright @ 2018 by Ada Limón. Used with the permission of Milkweed Editions. milkweed.org.

Pierce County Engineers ratify 2024-25 contract



fter a challenging negotiations that included 23 bargaining sessions over a 10-month period, the Pierce County

Engineers' Bargaining Unit reached a tentative agreement on May 8, and ratified the agreement on May 24.

The new contract includes a four percent retroactive general wage increase for 2024, and an additional four percent increase for 2025. The agreement also includes new strong and positive language about the County's change to the job requirements of the Civil Engineer 2 classification, and a new pathway for Civil Engineer 2's without a degree to become Civil Engineer 3's.

Negotiations with Pierce County were especially difficult due to anti-union leadership in the County Executive's office. Although the process was extremely frustrating and challenging, the team – consisting of Aaron Erickson, Troy Lee, Mike Manley, John Mauger, and Kirstin Thornton – did a skillful job bargaining the best contract possible under these strenuous circumstances.

Negotiations for the next contract will begin again in a year, hopefully with a new pro-union County Executive in office so that we can negotiate even stronger contracts for Pierce County members.

King County members vote 'YES' on one-year contract extension



ing County members in the Coalition of Unions were poised to begin negotiations for their next contract when

the County made a one-year extension offer in June. After some quick counterproposals, a tentative agreement was reached that includes a 5.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment for 2025. In early July, PROTEC17 King County Coalition members voted 'YES'. Bargaining for the next contract will begin in January 2025.

State contract negotiations continue; wages and healthcare up next



he PROTEC17 State negotiations team has been hard at work since March on the 2025-2027 State Collective

Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the Department of Licensing (DOL), and the Washington State Patrol (WSP). The team has already achieved several non-economic victories. Discussions on wages and cost-of-living adjustments began in late June after the State's economic forecast was released, and will continue in the coming weeks.

Some of the items that we've already come to agreement on are: adding anti-discrimination language to the contract; improving transfer language and compensatory time rollover for WSP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officers (CVEOs); improving overtime language for WSP Communication Officers (COs); increasing the maximum comp time from 160 to 240 hours without having to cash it out each biennium; increasing vacation accrual maximum from 240 to 280 hours;

improving the Reasonable Accommodation process; improving the WSP residency requirement language; strengthening safety language for DOL employees; maintenance of plexiglass in DOL offices; and protections for those who seek treatment for substance use disorders.

The team is still actively negotiating the following: expanding bereavement leave, expanding licensure incentive for certain WSDOT classifications; adding more robust contracting out language at WSDOT; adding Artificial Intelligence (AI) language; lifetime ferry access for Washington State Ferries employees and their families; and strengthening telework language.

Per State statute, we must come to a final agreement by October 1 for inclusion in the Governor's budget. We will start bargaining over healthcare benefits in coalition with other State employee unions in July. For the latest update, reach out to your Union Representative or visit our website: protec17.org/members.

New King County Public Health funding option takes shape

n our last issue of *Insight*, we highlighted a campaign to Save public health clinics in Seattle-King County. At that time, a budget shortfall of \$23 million put the clinics at risk of closure, potentially leaving 80,000 patients without the vital services they need in 2025. But since that time, a funding option has taken shape that may help stabilize the clinics.

Earlier this year, the State legislature passed a bill granting tax authority that could allow Harborview Medical Center (HMC) to expand its capabilities. HMC is managed by UW Medicine, which, in turn, is contracted by King County for its acute trauma care and specialty services.

With this funding now a viable possibility, PROTEC17 has been working with King County leadership and the HMC Board to ensure that clinics and services remain accessible and equitable to those who need them most.

While there is some uncertainty about how the clinics will be managed moving foward, PROTEC17 is strongly advocating to keep the continuity of care and long-standing community trust that Public Health Seattle-King County is known for. The ultimate decision will come in September when King County Executive Dow Constantine releases the County budget. You can find updates on our campaign website at: https://savepublichealth.org.

PROTEC17 members at Snohomish Health take their fight for a fair contract to County Council

n June 26, seven PROTEC17
members walked out of the
Snohomish public health
department building in unity
to deliver public comment at the County Council meeting in support of a fair

ty Council meeting in support of a fair contract. Since November, the bargaining team has been in negotiations with Snohomish County, and has hit a wall on two items - a fair cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and anti-discrimination language.

In their testimony, members spoke about the importance of fair wages in their upcoming contract. Between inflation, lack of market wage adjustments, and a COLA that was below other County employees in the last contract, PROTEC17 members are fighting to close the gap.

"We know we have the statistics and facts on our side, but it was important to make sure the people with decision-making power also heard our stories," said Sara Lidstrom, Snohomish County Epidemiologist and PROTEC17 Chapter President who testified at the meeting.

Members also spoke about the importance of including anti-discrimination language, enforceable through the grievance procedure, in the next contract – a proposal that the County has thus far rejected, despite claiming to be committed to a workplace free from discrimination.

"As Public Health workers, we advocate for our community every day to ensure they are treated without discrimination and that people have what they need to thrive, but this time it was important to advocate for our colleagues and friends," continued Lidstrom.

In addition to the members who delivered in-person testimony, two members testified virtually, and dozens of members submitted written comment to encourage the Council to do the right thing. Also, two fellow County union members from AFSCME attended in solidarity.



PROTEC17 Snohomish Health members getting ready to testify at the June County Council meeting.

"It was so exciting to join my colleagues in this collective action," said Lidstrom. "While we were mostly all pretty nervous to get up there, it helped to know we were there together and there was power in our collective voices! I'm so proud of our chapter for showing up the way we did."

"Without the strength of a union, far fewer of us would feel empowered to speak up for ourselves when things don't seem right," concluded Lidstrom.

Thanks to everyone who signed up to testify in support of our bargaining team and our Chapter! To get the latest information on negotiations, check your personal email or reach out to PROTEC17 Union Representative Steven Pray at steven@protec17.org.

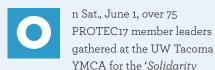
"We are not going to concede until a fair contract is agreed upon. Anything less is inadequate. We hope the Council members truly heard us and take to heart what my colleagues and I shared."

Sara Lidstrom, Epidemiologist and PROTEC17 Snohomish Health Chapter President

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

Solidarity Summit

PROTEC17 leaders gather to learn, connect at new event!



Summit' - a first-of-its-kind leadership workshop for our union. The all-day event created space for members to learn, grow, and connect with fellow leaders from across Washington and Oregon, and to collectively strategize about continuing to build our member-powered union.

Packed with inspiring speakers and valuable, practical tips, the Solidarity Summit agenda was kicked off by PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin who welcomed members and provided inspiring remarks about building the union we want to become. Estevenin then introduced keynote speaker April Sims, the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) Secretary-Treasurer. In her remarks, Sims reflected on her journey from a young single mom and low-wage worker to the first woman to hold the highest office at the WSLC. She also weaved a beautiful metaphor about the many ways to fly with the value of having a diversity of perspectives and ideas.

After the keynote, participants rotated through two workshops - How to Welcome New Members to Our Union, and a moving

"I was incredibly inspired by everyone's passion for our union, and the thoughtful discussions around improving member's experience and engagement."

Rachael Brooks
PROTEC17 Executive Board President
and Seattle Chapter member



and powerful racial justice workshop called *Unspoken Truths*. The later workshop was hosted by Delbert Richardson, a community scholar, ethnomusuemologist, and second-generation storyteller of this national award-winning American History traveling museum. In his presentation, Richardson displayed tactile artifacts that tell the history of the enslavement and oppression of Black and Brown people in America, from authentic shackles to a KKK replica robe to Jim Crow signs. You can learn more about this powerful exhibit at www.unspokentruths.org.

During lunch, leaders had a chance to connect, then hear from a panel of Seattle members – Jamie Fackler, Amy Reichenbach, and Lisa Ueomoto – about their campaign for a fair contract last year. From building a contract action team, to organizing 6,000 signatures on a petition against a 1% COLA, to coordinating a rally of 1,500 Coalition union members at City Hall, to staging practice pickets, panelists spoke about how they were able to successfully engage members throughout the 18-month process, as well as some lessons learned to improve the process for next time.

After lunch, members gathered in their Chapter or area groups to talk about the issues and strategies that could mobilize their co-workers over the next year. With a plan of action in hand, members left the summit with new tools and a renewed enthusiasm to build better workplaces together.

"I was incredibly inspired by everyone's passion for our union, and the thoughtful discussions around improving member's experience and engagement," said Rachael Brooks, PROTEC17 Executive Board President (pictured on the next page in the bottom-right corner).

In addition to attending the Solidarity Summit, some leaders (including several pictured on our cover!) were recorded for an upcoming video called *Proud to Be PROTEC17*. In it, members talk about what they're proud of, why they chose public service, and how being in a union has improved their lives. Keep your eyes peeled for the video, slated to be released this September!

After the Summit, members gathered for a social event at nearby 7 Seas Brewing to connect and reflect. Many attendees, including guests from the City of Portland Professional Workers union, expressed their appreciation for the event, and are already looking forward to the next one!

PROTEC17 Membership Organizing Coordinator Brenna Stroup and the Strategic Planning Committee spent many hours ensuring the day was a success. We anticipate that this will become a regular event happening once every two to three years.

Both the Solidarity Summit and the *Proud to Be PROTEC17* video were ideas generated during the 2023-2025 Strategic Planning process. In member surveys, meetings, and dialogue about our union's priorities, building pride in union membership and expanding our leadership programming rose to the top, alongside fostering community and political connections. Now at the halfway point of the three-year plan, we continue to make great strides towards our goals and objectives.

FEATURES













Solidarity Summit photos, clockwise from top left: Seattle member Ariska Thompson; PROTEC17 Executive Director Karen Estevenin; Presenters April Sims from the WSLC and Delbert Richardson from 'Unspoken Truths'; PROTEC17 Executive Board President Rachael Brooks; WSDOT member Daniel Jones; and Cheryl Bolin from the DOL-Kennewick.

Labor for a Ceasefire NOW! PROTEC17 calls for the liberation of all people and an end to systemic violence

ince last fall, PROTEC17 has called for a permanent cease-fire and an end to the systemic violence that has impacted

thousands of innocent lives in Palestine and Israel. In addition, PROTEC17 has committed to continued education and action that supports the liberation of the Palestinian people.

In her November statement on behalf of the PROTEC17 Executive Board and our union, Executive Director Karen Estevenin proclaimed that: "We are unwavering in our shared vision that human rights, safety, and the ability to thrive should belong to all people, and we stand firm in our stance against occupation, genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and antisemitism." You can read the full statement by Estevenin on our racial justice webpage: protec17.org/racial-justice/.

In the months since the violence began, PROTEC17 members have been working to lift up the voices of those who've long suffered from oppression by being vocal in our own Labor community.

MLK Labor, which represents tens of thousands of union members in King County – and where Estevenin serves on the Board and several PROTEC17 mem-

"We are unwavering in our shared vision that human rights, safety, and the ability to thrive should belong to all people, and we stand firm in our stance against occupation, genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and antisemitism."

Karen Estevenin, PROTEC17 Executive Director



PROTEC17 members Dani Hurula and Jen Rheuben with Executive Director Karen Estevenin and Alexis Mercedes Rinck, candidate for Seattle City Council, at the Labor for Ceasefire event at the Federal Building in Seattle in April.

bers serve as delegates – was instrumental in helping the AFL-CIO change course on their stance. In a letter to AFL-CIO President Elizabeth Shuler in January, the council urged the largest Labor organization in the country to revise their statement on the conflict to be more aligned with union values of justice, which it ultimately did.

Additionally, the PROTEC17 contingent of MLK Labor made a motion to hold an educational workshop on the political history of the region, which was held in April. The 'Labor Teach-In', was attended by over 60 union members representing a wide spectrum of historical knowledge and ideologies, and was hugely successful in

holding space for learning and dialogue.

Most recently, Estevenin and PROTEC17 Union Representative Youssef El Hamawi have been actively speaking at rallies and marches around Seattle, including at Labor for Ceasefire and Labor for Land Day held in April, and Labor for Liberation in May, where many PROTEC17 members were in attendance.

As PROTEC17 continues on our liberation journey, we are committed to standing in solidarity with oppressed communities. If you would like to connect on upcoming opportunities to stand in solidarity, please contact youssef@protec17.org.

PROTEC 7 EVENT CALENDAR

July						
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August						
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

September						
Su	Мо	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

July 2 - WSP CVEO Meeting

July 3 - Steward Training - Part 1

July 4 - Independence Day

July 9 - PROTEC17 Presents: Union 101!

July 10 - WSDOT Chapter Meeting

July 10 - Steward Training - Part 2

July 11 - Seattle Chapter Meeting

July 15 - Kitsap Health Union 101 Meeting

July 16 - Benton-Franklin Chapter Meeting

July 17 - Portland Chapter Meeting

July 18 - King County Contract Action Team Meeting

July 25 - Seattle Steward Meeting

July 31 - PROTEC17 2024 Scholarship Deadline

Aug. 6 - Portland Chapter Meeting

Aug. 8 - Seattle Chapter Meeting

Aug. 14 - WSDOT Chapter Meeting

Aug. 15 - King County Contract Action Team Meeting

Aug. 20 - Benton-Franklin Chapter Meeting

Aug. 20 - Leader Training: Talking to Your Coworkers About Forming a Union!

Aug. 21 - Portland Chapter Meeeting

Aug. 22 - Seattle Steward Meeting

Aug. 27 - Leader Training: Talking to Your Coworkers About Forming a Union!

Sep. 2 - Labor Day!

Sep. 3 - Portland Chapter Meeting

Sep. 4 - Steward Training - Part 1

Sep. 4 - WSDOL Revenue Auditors Meeting

Sep. 11 - Steward Training - Part 2

Sep. 11 - WSDOT Chapter Meeting

Sep. 11 - Tacoma Chapter Meeting

Sep. 12 - Seattle Chapter Meeting

Sep. 17 - Benton-Franklin Chapter Meeting

Sep. 18 - Portland Chapter Meeting

Sep. 19 - King County Contract Action Team Meeting

Sep. 26 - Seattle Steward Meeting

This is not an exhaustive list of events, as things get added all the time! Please visit protec17.org/events for current listings and logistics.

PROTEC17 member runs for Portland City Council

his fall, Portland voters will elect an entirely new City Council, and PROTEC17 member
Sarah Silkie is a candidate for one of the new council seats.

Back in November 2022, Portland voters passed a full overhaul of the City governance structure, which will change from four at-large commissioners and a mayor to twelve council members. The new structure, which will take effect in January 2025, features three members elected from four districts through ranked choice balloting, plus a mayor, and a city administrator. This is a huge change, but it also represents a once in a generation opportunity to shift the balance of power in City hall.

So far, over 80 candidates have registered to run for the twelve new positions, including many Portlanders who are working people hoping to make the City a better place for those that have been historically underrepresented.

Silkie has worked for the Portland Water Bureau for 12 years, and is currently an Engineer in Development Services. In this role, she makes sure that new buildings have enough water and that the drinking water lines aren't too close to the sanitary sewer lines, among many other duties.

In addition to her job, Silkie serves as a PROTEC17 Steward, where she's able to

"I love being able to lift up the voices of people who are too busy working and leading their lives to be constantly tracking what the City government is up to."

> Sarah Silkie, PROTEC17 Member and Candidate for Portland City Council



PROTEC17 member Sarah Silkie is on the ballot this fall for Portland City Council.

advocate for her coworkers and provide vital support when people are in need of workplace assistance. She has also testified before Council asking for more frontline workers rather than high-level managers, and worked with City racial justice cohorts to fight for equity in City employment.

Silkie decided to run, in part, because she believes that the perspective of City employees is crucial in City decision making and has been lacking in the past. To prepare, she attended the Oregon Labor Candidate School in 2023 where she learned many important skills needed for running for modern political office.

"Campaigning while holding down a full time job has been a lot of work, but it has been truly satisfying to connect with people from all different walks of life and learn about their hopes, dreams and fears," said Silkie. "I love being able to lift up the voices of people who are too busy working and leading their lives to be constantly tracking what the City government is up to," she continued.

Silkie's campaign is focusing on fiscal responsibility, climate and environment,

housing and homelessness, and mental health and addiction. She believes that frontline workers should always be at the forefront of decision-makers' minds when making difficult budgetary choices, and that the City's siloed bureaus need to do more to work together in order to preserve city funds for these workers who provide vital services. Additionally, Silkie wants to see a proactive equity policy in the City rather than a complaint-based system that provides more power to those with the privilege to engage with the system.

In May, PROTEC17's Portland endorsement panel interviewed Silkie, asking questions related to collective bargaining, City budget stability, diversity and equity, houselessness services, and recruitment, retention, and flexibility for City employees. The committee was impressed with her knowledge and perspective, and decided unanimously to endorse her campaign. Silkie has also received endorsements from the Portland Association of Teachers and Laborers' Local 483.

For more information about her campaign, please visit: sarahsilkie.com.

Learn more about our endorsements at: protec17.org/political-action

Member-led committee makes early endorsements on WA ballot initiatives; candidate interviews this summer

n late 2023, our union brought together member leaders across jurisdictions to form a member policy workgroup to discuss policy issues facing PROTEC17 members, to make political endorsement recommendations, and to support the advancement of our strategic planning priorities. Since then, this member-powered group has convened regularly to collaborate, and has been crucial in ensuring our policies are member-driven and address the needs and concerns of our community.

As we gear up for the 2024 election cycle, the workgroup has already made endorsement recommendations on two statewide ballot initiatives, as well as one local measure. For the statewide ballot initiatives, the committee has recommended 'NO' VOTES on two harmful initiatives appearing on the ballot this November - I-2109 and 2117.

Initiative 2109 would repeal the capital gains excise tax imposed on long-term capital assets by individuals with capital gains over \$250,000. Originally passed by the legislature in 2021, and upheld by the Washington State Supreme Court in 2023, the Washington State Capital Gains tax supports our state's early learning and educational investments.

Initiative 2117 would repeal provisions of the 2021 Washington Climate Commitment Act (CCA), a state law that provided for a cap and invest program designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 95% by 2050. By taxing the state's largest polluters, the CCA has created \$1.8 billion in state revenue which has been reinvested across the state in numerous sectors. Repealing the CCA would gut our state's budget resulting in catastrophic consequences for public sector workers and the communities we serve.

In Seattle, the workgroup has recommended a 'YES' VOTE on ballot initiative 137. This measure would impose a 5% marginal tax on *employers* who purchase the labor of highly compensated workers above \$1 million. The money from this tax would then be used to construct and acquire buildings for social housing, fund operations and maintenance of buildings, and staff up the Seattle Social Housing Developer (SSHD). Thank you to everyone who signed the petition to get I-137 on the ballot this November.

You can expect our full list of candidate and initiative endorsements to be announced on the website later this summer and in the fall issue of *Insight*. If you would like to get involved in any political action, please contact our Political Director, Brandon Hersey at brandon@protec17.org.

DONATE to the Political Action Committee!



As public employees, lawmakers at every level make decisions that impact whether your jobs will be funded, your retirement plans will remain solvent, or whether you can take time off to care for a sick loved one. That's why it's so important to support lawmakers who support public employees!

PROTEC17 members can help advocate for laws and policies at the city, county and state level that support our members and their families. In addition, members fund our political action committee (PAC), which makes endorsements for worker-friendly candidates. The PAC is funded through voluntary donations — NEVER DUES MONEY.



To donate to the PAC, scan the QR code or visit:

protec17.org/PAC

Professional and Technical Employees Local 17

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