

Legislature adjourns with a mixed bag for workers

By DAVID COOK
President

Another Missouri legislative session has come and gone, and another year of politically motivated attacks on workers has ended. While UFCW Local 655 and our brothers and sisters across the Labor movement have spent so much of our time and resources in the past few years fighting against disastrous so-called “right-to-work” legislation, I am happy to report that, at least for another year, “right-to-work” won’t come to Missouri.

Unfortunately, this does not mean that Union families came out of this year’s legislative session unscathed. Indeed, we saw too many lawmakers and wealthy donors look to weaken or break Unions for their own cynical political motivations.

Paycheck Deception, which would weaken public-sector unions that represent our first responders, teachers and nurses was unsuccessfully considered by the legislature. Even more disturbing was witnessing the methods used by leadership in the Missouri Capitol to rally votes for this atrocious piece of legislation.

Deals were made, arms were twisted and good bills were held hostage as a way to force senators and representatives to go against their own beliefs and the beliefs of their constituents



COOK

just to attack our teachers and nurses across the state.

Fortunately, despite these underhanded tactics, Paycheck Deception was defeated in the Missouri Senate, and our brothers and sisters in the public sector were spared this bill meant to weaken their power to negotiate for a better life. We are thankful to each and every one of the lawmakers who stood against these attacks on the middle class.

But these issues are not the only ones that impact working people across the state. Union or non-Union, we saw a Missouri legislature that failed to seriously consider an increase in minimum wage, that ignored the need for some form of paid family leave, and continued to refuse to protect our LGBT workers across the state by giving them the respect they deserve and making it illegal to fire them for their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Soon you will see flyers in your workplace and information across all of our online platforms about the issues facing hard-working families like yours. We’ll post surveys online to gauge how you feel about these issues, and, because we are here to represent you, we will use your feedback to craft an aggressive campaign this election cycle to support the lawmakers on either side of the aisle that stand with us, instead of standing with greedy donors.

As your President, you have my word that I will fight for a candidate of any party who supports middle class families. I am proud to fight those fights.

Find your chapter in our story Support your Union with non-profit and charitable activities

Local 655 is working to put a new emphasis on the wide variety of non-profit activity that our Union so regularly supports.

UFCW is the single largest organizational donor to the **Leukemia and Lymphoma Society**, having raised a whopping \$77 million to fight deadly disease in the past 30 years. Local 655 is deeply proud of its involvement with LLS, hosting an annual charitable golf tournament to directly benefit LLS. The 2015 tournament yielded more than \$55,000 in donations to LLS, the single best year Local 655 of our ongoing involvement.

Along with this tournament, Local 655 is joining UFCW Local 88 in this year’s “**Light the Night**” walk. The event will feature walking teams from a wide variety of organizations, and Local 88 and Local 655 will have multiple teams present as well.

The effort is aimed at raising funds for LLS specifically in the Tri-State area that includes Missouri, Illinois and Arkansas.

The “Light the Night” walk will take place Sept. 24 at Forest Park’s Central Fields. Anyone interested in forming their own UFCW walk team can contact their Union Representative or Jane Smith with LLS at 314.590.2236 or jane.smith@lls.org.

Local 655’s long partnership with the **United Way of Greater St. Louis** shows commitment from its leaders in supporting not just Union partners, but the community at large.

United Way in St. Louis is one of the largest in the country, and Local 655 President David Cook is a member of the executive

board and strong partner with the organization that not only dedicates resources to UFCW members in times of great need, but also strongly supports community-building charitable actions aimed at fighting poverty in all forms.

This summer, UFCW Local 655 will participate in our annual fundraiser to raise awareness and funds to fight **Sickle Cell Anemia** at our BBQ. Any members interested in helping to grill, setup, cleanup, or simply lend a hand where needed should contact Levi Eddins at 636.736.2791.

These events barely scratch the service of UFCW Local 655’s non-profit efforts that focus on helping to raise funds through charitable donations to fight a number of important battles.

As in recent years, Local 655 will have a float in the annual **St. Louis Pride Parade**. As of last year’s parade, Local 655 remained the only Labor Union local from St. Louis to participate in the event to show solidarity with their LGBT brothers and sisters.

In June, UFCW Local 655 will once again march in the **St. Louis Komen Walk for a Cure**, one of the largest walks of its kind in the country.



“Which one of these stories do you want to be part of?” asked President David Cook. “Or is there another story you want to write? If so, let us know. Reach out to your Union family.” Continue to watch our “Upcoming Events” box on this back page for more information on how you can get involved.

AN EXCLUSIVE
TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR

UFCW 655
MEMBERS &
THEIR FAMILIES

www.ufcw655.com



Karen Settlemaier-Berg speaks at the recent Stewards' Conference. To left, President David Cook shows his support.

- Labor Tribune Photo

UFCW's Karen Berg campaign for State Rep takes off

The political campaign of Karen Settlemaier-Berg, a UFCW Local 655 Union Representative running as State Representative for House District 113, is off and running as she begins speaking to groups about her candidacy and the need for strong, honest fighters for middle class families in Jefferson City.

Settlemaier-Berg’s campaign website, BergforChange.com, is up and running, and will continue to have more content added as she continues to campaign in her Jefferson County District.

She is running as a Democrat against first-term incumbent, Rep. Dan Shaul, who became a target for an electoral challenge from many individuals after lying to a group of his constituents about how he would vote in a right-to-work veto override last year.

Settlemaier-Berg, who has lived in the

District for 13 years, began considering challenging Shaul for re-election when she encountered his shocking lack of honesty. After consulting with family, friends and co-workers, she decided to fight against dishonest politicians and file for office herself.

“I feel that it is important that we have honesty in politics,” Settlemaier-Berg said. “This isn’t about just labor issues. And this isn’t a campaign just for show. This is because I’m sick of people going to Jefferson City and serving only themselves instead of serving the people who voted for them. The one promise I know I can make is that I will never lie about where I stand on any issue.”

Visit bergforchange.com to donate to Settlemaier-Berg’s campaign, to sign up to volunteer or to get updates on her campaign activities.

Honoring our fighting men and women on Memorial Day

UFCW Local 655 is a diverse Union family with partners of many backgrounds. As Memorial Day approaches, we are looking to honor our partners and their family members that served their country in the Armed Forces.

Local 655 is collecting photos of current or former partners or their close relatives in their uniforms that served their country. On Memorial Day, we will post the photos on all of our social media accounts in order to show our support and gratitude to the many hard-working men and women that fought to keep America strong, safe, and free.

Too many service men and women return home from their service and struggle to find work, get the help they need and return to civilian life as valued members of society. UFCW Local 655 remains committed to strengthening our Union so that anyone who served their country will be able to find a job with good wages and benefits.

If you are a current or former UFCW part-

ner and you or a close relative served in the United States Armed Forces, please submit a photo of yourself or your family member in their uniform, along with the following information: Name, branch of military, rate, rating or rank, years of service, location of service and the name of the company you currently work for (if photo is of a current Local 655 partner).

Submit photos online to CReischman@ufcw655.org with the above information.

You can also mail a copy of the photo to the Union Hall directly. Mail any photos to Collin Reischman at 300 Weidman Road, Ballwin, Missouri, 63011.

Local 655 wants to show the world that our Union family is composed of many families with men and women who fought for their country, and the benefits and wages negotiated by Unions directly support veterans all over the country.

Send us your photos, and help us honor the men and women who defend our country every single day.

