

# Look at life from both sides, but let the best in us prevail

By **DAVID A. COOK**  
President



COOK

A few months ago, the nation was struck with tragedy in Las Vegas when a single man killed more than 50 people and wounded hundreds more. I then used this space a few days later to talk about why these tragedies and the national debates they trigger should not divide us.

This year, 2018, is going to feel like a divisive year. It is, after all, an election year. I've promised to talk at length all year long about the issues facing hard-working families and I intend to keep that promise.

And while Missourians approach the election year, they will disagree. You'll likely disagree with ads you see on television, with political flyers in your mailbox, with people you know at work or in your family and with strangers on social media.

Local 655 does not take positions on issues that do not impact working families. This is not because we do not believe in facing controversial issues. This is because we know our role as a labor organization is to advocate for our partners every single day.

After the tragedy in Parkland Florida earlier this month we have seen one of America's most controversial issues rear its head: Guns.

I'm not here to advocate for or against guns. But I do want to remind all of my partners — regardless of their thoughts on heated topics — to disagree on the issues without being disagreeable with one another. This union has a diversity of opinion, race, creed, faith and background. We have different lives and families, but we share a single common thread. We are union brothers and sisters.

You've probably heard me disagree, sometimes strongly, with politicians who don't have the best in mind for working families. While I

may disagree with their positions, while I may even find their rhetoric dishonest or damaging, they remain my fellow Americans and Missourians.

Right now in the Missouri legislature some politicians are seeking to gut teachers' unions, create on-call scheduling for all workers who do not benefit from a union contract, lower the wages for those in the construction industry and raise our utility rates. We send partners down to Jefferson City every week to lobby against these bad policies. We hear strong debate, and we offer strong opinions.

But we don't hate one another. We don't believe someone is evil simply because they are on what we believe is 'the wrong side of an issue.' And while it's easy to believe that too many of these issues are not moving in our favor, I remain, as always, optimistic.

I have seen the movement to defeat Prop A and stop so-called "right-to-work" for less grow. I have seen volunteers turn out in droves to gather petitions to raise the wages for all workers in Missouri. I have seen our own partners make time in their busy schedules to take the trek down to the Capitol to speak from the heart to the men and women elected to represent Missourians.

I have seen you, my incredible partners, vote to give a little extra money for the next year to fund the important fight against Prop A. I've even heard countless Local 655 partners ask where they can go to give even MORE to the fight, because the minimum simply wouldn't do.

I've seen politicians on both sides of the aisle take up positions, sometimes unpopular among their peers, to defend hard-working Missourians.

Like many of you, I've seen the worst of the world on television too many times.

But like many of you, I've seen the best of it as well, and I choose to believe that the best of us will prevail.

**AN EXCLUSIVE  
TWICE MONTHLY  
REPORT FOR**

**UFCW 655  
MEMBERS &  
THEIR FAMILIES**

[www.ufcw655.org](http://www.ufcw655.org)

## Look for the 'Union shop card'

### Circulating cards at union employers

Local 655 has begun circulating "Union Shop" cards at all of our worksites!

As Local 655 continues to work to raise awareness with the public about where to shop to patronize and support good union jobs, Local 655 is committed to making sure our shop cards are posted at all of our work sites.

"The general public needs to know when they are shopping at a union employer," said Local 655 President David Cook. "Union jobs provide better pay and benefits than non-union jobs. That's just a fact. The public ought to know when their dollars are doing the most good, and we want people to know when a local workplace supports better lives for their employees."

Cards like the one pictured are being distributed to work sites. If you want to make sure you have one in your workplace, be sure to contact your union representative."



## VOP Program to start in March

Would having two set consecutive days off make your life better?

That's what Local 655 is asking our partners as they roll out the 2018 Volunteer Organizing Program (VOP). Any partner who participates in the VOP program will be guaranteed the same two consecutive days off by their employer, thanks to language negotiated by Local 655 in their union contract.

What does it mean to participate in VOP? It means you'll be helping grow your union

family and reduce non-union competition, which helps to drive up wages and standard of living for all workers. Volunteers might be asked to do a range of things like hand billing at non-union workplaces or speaking with non-union workers about the value of coming together for a better life.

Our first VOP training program will be held at the Local 655 Union Hall at 6 p.m. on March 14. Anyone interested or wanting more information should contact Billy at 636-736-2776.

### SPECIAL NOTICE: UNION MERGER VOTE

At the March 27 regular business meeting for Local 655 there will be a special order of business to vote on the proposed merger of UFCW Local 655 and UFCW Local 534.

Following the merger, both Locals will be known as UFCW Local 655.

### 2018 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM Get up to \$8,000 for a better life!



UFCW members of all ages who want to further their education may qualify to receive up to \$8,000 in scholarship funds.

For more information and to see if you are eligible visit:  
[myufcw.org/benefits/ufcw-charity-foundation-scholarship](http://myufcw.org/benefits/ufcw-charity-foundation-scholarship)

Apply Online from  
February 12 – May 13, 2018

**Apply Now!**

If you are unable to apply online, you may request an application by mail at UFCW Charity Foundation, Attn: Scholarship Program, 1775 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 or by e-mail at [chscholarship@ufcw.org](mailto:chscholarship@ufcw.org). If you need the scholarship rules or an application in another language, please contact us at 1-800-551-4010 and we will obtain assistance for you. UFCW employed officers, staff, and their immediate families are not eligible.

# JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER ORGANIZING PROGRAM

**GET SET CONSECUTIVE DAYS OFF, GROW YOUR  
UNION FAMILY, HELP BUILD THE MOVEMENT**

**TRAINING BEGINS MARCH 14. CONTACT BILLY MYERS  
WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION:  
636.736.2726**

**Share Your Pride: Share this page in your break room.**