

Part of our mission is to grow

Growing the number of union workers gives all workers greater clout in negotiating

By **DAVID A. COOK**
President



While Organized Labor continues to spend much of its energy surviving political attacks on working Missourians, it's important to remember that a critical piece of our mission is to grow. Continued growth of the number of union workers gives those workers greater clout in negotiating a better life. However a point few realize – union wages and benefits help drive up wages and benefits for non-union workers as well.

This cycle means that greater union density benefits all workers. This trend is plainly self-evident. During the time in this nation's history when union density was at its highest we had the single greatest middle class in the world. As union density has slowly declined thanks to shifts in the job market and political machinations designed to benefit the wealthy few, we've seen that same middle class shrink in size and relative power.

So growth must be a focus of our movement. That's why Local 655 is currently undertaking a number of steps to aggressively grow our union family.

Many of you may have heard about our historic organizing win at Dollar General last December, and we're pivoting that win into more organizing at Dollar General stores around the state. In many ways, Dollar General employees are far too characteristic of today's modern non-union retail worker. These employees are overworked, underpaid, and treated unfairly

by management.

YOU'RE THE KEY

We'll continue to fight for the workers at Dollar General because, sadly, it appears no one else will. While our organizing staff are doing incredible work, we have to be able to admit that the best advocate for a union isn't a staffer, it's a member like you.

The entire staff here at Local 655 can talk until we are blue in the face about the value of being a union member. We know the value, we've seen it firsthand. But ultimately we work for Local 655, and our effectiveness with non-union workers or the general public is limited.

The best advocates for the value of being a member of a union family is you:

- **Our partners in the stores who get regular raises** that they fought hard for in the contract are our best advocates.
- **Our partners in workplaces with good health benefits** are our best advocates.
- **Our partners who have gotten their jobs back** thanks to union representation, retired with dignity, enjoyed paid vacation, taken advantage of paid leave, or had the comfort of knowing they won't be discriminated against are our best advocates.

JOIN US

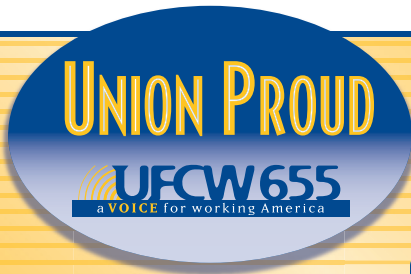
That's why we're making a strong push for the Volunteer Organizing Program. VOP allows for our partners to join our organizing team as they work to grow this union.

If you participate, we can guarantee you two consecutive set days off every week.

Participants in VOP might be asked to do any number of things like handing out leaflets at non-union employers, or speaking about the value of a union contract with non-union employees in businesses targeted for organizing.

During our political fights, Local 655 partners have proved to be invaluable. You are hard-working, passionate, and capable.

AN EXCLUSIVE
TWICE MONTHLY
REPORT FOR



UFCW 655
MEMBERS &
THEIR FAMILIES

www.ufcw655.org

West Virginia can teach Missouri a lesson

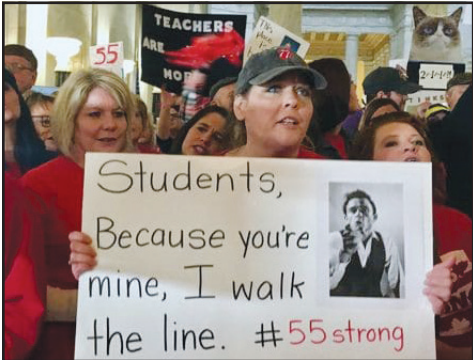
Last week, teachers in West Virginia ended a nine-day strike and returned to work with something they hadn't gotten in years: a pay raise. Not only is teacher pay ranked 48th in West Virginia, but the educators there are some of the only ones in the country where take-home pay went down in recent years.

A sustained strike, fearless leadership on the ground, and the hard work of their union ultimately won the day, and now they have their raise.

Missourians can learn something from West Virginia.

Here in the Show-Me state, we have the lowest paid government employees in the nation. Teacher pay in Missouri ranks 40th in the nation, and right now Missouri politicians are considering bills that would make it even harder for the people that educate our children to negotiate for a better life.

"Paycheck Deception" would wound all public employee unions by making it far more difficult to collect membership dues. The cost of membership in any union helps



JENNIFER HANNER, a first-year teacher from Harts, WV, had a sign outside the Senate chambers in Charleston, WV.
— John Raby/AP

keeps the lights on, hire a robust staff, and engage in political activity to keep the membership strong.

Unfortunately, in Missouri too many politicians care more about endorsements and campaign cash than they do about paying our local teachers for the incredible work they do.



WEST VIRGINIA TEACHERS cheer pay hike deal to end their strike.

— U.S. News photo



March 22 • 6:30 pm
St. Louis City
Membership Meeting
Covenant House

March 27 • 10 am & 7 pm
Monthly Membership Meeting
UFCW Local 655 Union Hall

April 3-4
Annual UFCW
Legislative Conference
Jefferson City, MO

Get vital information about your workplace, your contract and more.

Text 'Join' to 738-674 to get signed up for our text program!



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

UFCW Local 655 members and their family can attend up to 2 years of college **ABSOLUTELY FREE!**



No tuition fees.
No expensive books.
No debt.

Enroll in free college classes today.

Enroll now at UFCW.org/College

UFCW.org

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