

The good, bad and ugly of current events demands compassion not division

By **DAVID A. COOK**
President



COOK

It's hard to deny the fact that our nation seems to be at the peak point of polarization.

A few weeks ago, St. Louis braced itself yet again for a series of protests after the announcement of a verdict in a case regarding an officer-involved shooting. Those protests continue, and anyone with a cable news subscription or a Facebook account knows just how different and passionate opinions are on the matter.

More recently, Donald Trump decided — bafflingly — to publicly weigh-in on NFL players who choose to “take a knee” during the national anthem at football games. Once again, cable news and social media reminded us just how divided opinions are on the issue.

Just a few days ago, a man murdered dozens of men and women in Las Vegas and wounded hundreds more. The hate it requires to commit such an act is atrocious and mind-boggling. The debate it created surrounding the nation's gun laws once again felt like a reminder of our divisions and disagreements.

As a Labor Union, we've always held that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us, and we've consistently been attacked in Missouri by greedy CEO's and special interests who would gut unions and, by extension, the entire middle class in the state. Organized Labor in Missouri has been in defense mode for some time now, responding to the numerous attacks on workingmen and women. It is exhausting to our leaders, our staff and our partners.

Despite the feeling of constantly being on alert for the next fight, and despite a political climate in this country that feels as though it's continuing to trend toward division, I am moved to feel optimism.

I am optimistic because I have seen firsthand that unity, love and a little compassion

beats suspicion, division and hate every single time.

When thousands of St. Louis residents turned out last month for 'Light the Night' in Forest Park and helped raise more than \$1 million for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, they didn't attend as Democrats or Republicans.

When residents of Ferguson came to our BBQ last week to eat and help raise money for Sickle Cell Anemia, they weren't conservatives or liberals.

When dozens of generous men and women, some from across the country, attended our golf tournament in September and helped us raise a record amount of money for LLS, they weren't on the left or the right.

And when police and ordinary citizens in Las Vegas lead each other to safety, they didn't do so based on party affiliation. They did it because they wanted to help one another.

We engage in many political fights that directly impact hard-working families on the job, and it's hard to ignore the tense and sometimes bitter nature of our disagreements with the political opposition. We are a large union with vast diversity of opinions and cultures, and with that diversity comes the simple fact that we will not always agree, even with each other.

But where we seek to raise the minimum wage out of compassion for working families and the need to help lift them up, our opponents seek to keep it lower in a cynical ploy to win more donations from corporate masters. Where we seek to stop so-called “Right-to-Work-for-Less” from lowering wages and making workplaces less safe, those who support it seek bigger campaign checks from special interests.

We are proud to be on the side of compassion. We are proud to be on the side of love and unity. We are not as divided as our politics suggest, and we are not afraid to declare our values to the world.

We won't always agree, but we refuse to be disagreeable. We won't always win, but we will always lose with dignity. We are a proud

Sickle Cell fundraiser a huge success



LOCAL 655 wrapped up a month of charity events with a BBQ last weekend which raised money for Faces of our Children to fight Sickle Cell Anemia. The event raised more than \$10,000 to fight the deadly disease as shoppers at the Ferguson Schnucks stopped by to buy BBQ grilled by volunteers. Thanks to all our sponsors and helpers!

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Local 655 hosts “#HealthyMo” statewide tour stop

Several Democratic lawmakers stopped by the Local 655 Union Hall last week as one of many stops on the statewide tour aimed at increasing awareness of healthcare proposals being offered by Democrat lawmakers in the Missouri legislature.

Party Chairman Stephen Webber was joined by members of the House and Senate to discuss a wide range of healthcare issue including the expansion of Medicaid, the need for a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, better access to healthcare in rural Missouri, access to birth control, and much more.

“If you're a working Missourian or older Missourian worried about your healthcare — the bold reforms in our ‘Healthy Missouri’ plan will provide you with more options and lower costs,” stated Webber.

President David Cook said the tour was an important step as lawmakers continue to debate a wide-range of healthcare issues in the state.

“Regardless of party, we can all agree that

there are several issues in healthcare that need immediate attention,” Cook said. “We need to address the opioid crisis, we need to talk about healthcare in rural parts of this state, and we need to talk about more choices and lowering overall costs. I'm glad to see some lawmakers are taking action.”

Missouri House Minority Leader, Rep. Gail McCann-Beatty said the plan was a stark contrast to plans offered by other politicians this year, which included cuts to vital services.

Missouri House Minority Leader Gail McCann Beatty said, “Missouri Democrats are fighting to protect healthcare for Missourians, but it's not enough to just be against the GOP's harmful cuts. That's why we're offering a clear vision of bold healthcare reforms that will increase access, reduce costs, and improve coverage.”

The #HealthyMo tour visited numerous parts of the state including Kirksville, Hannibal, St. Joseph, and more.

Light the Night brings bright prospects for Leukemia & Lymphoma Society



THE ANNUAL LIGHT THE NIGHT event in Forest Park was a success! More than \$1 million was raised to benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Local 655 and Local 88 joined together to provide food and beverages for the event as part of the UFCW's long-standing partnership with LLS.

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