



SENTINEL

Advocate

The Official Newsletter for the
State Employees Attorneys Guild
 Division of the Federation of Physicians & Dentists / AHPE

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Don't Let Them Fool You! What's REALLY Behind the War on Unions

Message from the Director, Jack Seddon

They say their financial woes are because unions are too extravagant with their wages, pensions and benefits. But don't let them fool you!

This "we're broke" theme being used by anti-worker governors and legislatures across America is built purely on rhetoric that is being force-fed to the public to disguise the fact that what they're really trying to do is make sure that unions don't have a voice anymore. All across America, the largest assault on workers' rights is being fueled by a well-funded network of conservative front groups that you've probably never even heard of and exist for one thing alone - to derail unions.

Union busting is a dirty business, a billion-dollar industry sympathetic to corporate interests that has been around for decades, centuries even. And with politics in the United States being what it is, a game played on multiple levels, what we really have here is a renewed Republican fight to not necessarily advance the party's agenda but to actively undermine the infrastructure that allows the opposing party to even exist at all. I know, pretty scary!

But what this current anti-labor conservative movement didn't count on was the absolute resolve and tenacity we unions have. You saw rallies occur all across America, heck, still going on even. And poll after poll shows that an overwhelming majority of Americans oppose taking away some of the collective bargaining rights that public employee unions now have and almost as many oppose cutting the pay or benefits of those workers.

So you see, GOP backlash has actually boosted union support. And SEAG will continue its own fight against an anti-labor legislature right here in Florida. In fact, labor won big here as efforts failed to cripple public service workers' dues deduction ability. So, know this - we will not let up on the pressure. As legislators head home for the summer, we will continue to make sure they know that we know that while they say it's our fault they're "broke," we know they're just really trying to get rid of us all together. And that just ain't happening! **[SEE related story on back page.]**

New NLRB Election Rules A Step In The Right Direction!

On June 21, 2011, the *National Labor Relations Board* proposed reforms that, if adopted, could significantly simplify the process wherein workers vote whether or not to unionize. Such reforms will clean up a system plagued by delays, bureaucracy and litigation and is intended to streamline pre- and post-election procedures as well as facilitate the use of electronic communications and document filing.

For a summary of these proposed changes, see inside.

MEMBER BENEFIT CENTER



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Planning on sending your kids to college?

Looking for a career?

Need help completing college admission forms?

Start here!

The **Union Plus College Planning Center** is your one-stop education website that has the information you need to find a career, choose a college, university or career school, apply and pay for post-secondary education, then move into the working world.

[For easy links to your "Money Saving Member Benefits" visit SEAG's web page at SEAG1199.org](#)

College Scholarships for Union Families

Applications are now available for the **2012 Union Plus Scholarship Program** and award amounts range from \$500 to \$4000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the fall of 2012. Students may re-apply each year.

Application Deadline:
January 31, 2012.

[Learn more through the "Money Saving Member Benefits" link on your SEAG web page at SEAG1199.org.](#)



In tough economic times, we could all use a leg up. If you're looking to increase your earning potential, or advance within your union, consider additional training or even a cost-effective degree from the **National Labor College**.

And union members get exclusive discounts on NLC's tuition rates.

Register now for
Unions Skills Classes.

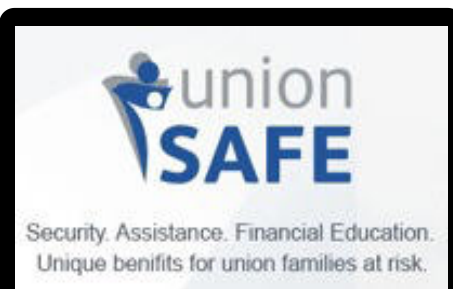
[Visit "Money Saving Member Benefits" at SEAG1199.org for details.](#)

Put Your Membership Dues to Work For You Right Now

Just because you may not be at the bargaining table right now doesn't mean your dues aren't hard at work. Did you know that you and your family can save up to \$3000 per year simply by using your **Union Plus** benefits?

Thanks to the collective buying power of millions of union members, **Union Plus** is able to offer valuable, discounted products and services exclusively for working families.

Start using them today and every day!



Hitting Hard Times?

Union SAFE grants provide a SAFETY NET for union families struggling in today's tough economy.

[Visit "Money Saving Member Benefits" at SEAG1199.org](#)

ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH DEBT?

You're not alone! Americans are getting deeper and deeper into debt. As a dues paying member, you have resources through our website that can help you identify any problems you might have as well as provide tips and resources to help you take action.

In addition to these resources, eligible union members may apply for **Union SAFE** grant money (which does not need to be repaid) and access *Union Plus* benefits and advice to help combat the problems in today's economy.

[For easy links to find out more about "How to Manage Your Debt," visit the Union Plus Member Benefits page through your web page at SEAG1199.org](#)



Summary of New NLRB Election Rules

The new election rules proposed by the NLRB would, in short, give every American worker the right to sign a contract that ensures fair treatment on the job. As such, it's sure to fuel the fierce political attacks being waged by powerful CEOs and the political machine they fund who believe workers should have no rights at all.

Here's what the proposed changes from the NLRB would do:

- Allow for electronic filing of election petitions and other documents.
- Ensure that employees, employers and unions receive and exchange timely information they need to understand and participate in the representation case process.
- Standardize timeframes for parties to resolve or litigate issues before and after elections.
- Require parties to identify issues and describe evidence soon after an election petition is filed to facilitate resolution and eliminate unnecessary litigation.
- Defer litigation of most voter eligibility issues until after the election.
- Require employers to provide a final voter list in electronic form soon after the scheduling of an election, including voters' telephone numbers and email addresses when available.
- Consolidate all election-related appeals to the Board into a single post-election appeals process and thereby eliminate delay in holding elections currently attributable to the possibility of pre-election appeals.
- Make Board review of post-election decisions discretionary rather than mandatory.



For a more detailed fact sheet, check out <http://www.nlr.gov/node/525>

New Rule Interpretations

Pursuant to **Article 5, Section 1** of the **SES Attorneys Unit Agreement**, SEAG has been informed by the *Department of Management Services' Division of Human Resource Management* that they have posted a rule interpretation for # **60L-34-2011-#002, Timesheet Submission and Approval Deadlines**, effective June 10, 2011.

The rule interpretations address 2 questions, (1) What are the agency responsibilities concerning employee time records (timesheets)?, and (2) Is there a specific deadline prescribed for submitting and approving timesheets?

In short, agencies are responsible for monitoring employee attendance and leave, as well as maintaining accurate records of all regular and overtime work and leave taken by employees, and that the primary tool for recording this information is the "timesheet," whether electronic or paper form. Further, there is no specific deadline for submitting and approving timesheets since the state does not have one standard pay period and various other factors such as nature of work, eligibility for overtime, etc. cause employees to have different work periods and therefore it is not feasible to prescribe a uniform timesheet submission or approval deadline for biweekly and monthly agencies. Nonetheless, the Bureau of State Payrolls (BOSP) establishes payroll processing deadlines that can serve as a guide to avoid salary underpayments and overpayments for a particular pay period.

You can further review this rule interpretation at the *Division of Human Resource Management's* web site at

http://dms.myflorida.com/human_resource_support/human_resource_management/for_state_hr_practitioners/hrm_correspondence/rule_interpretations

OR simply go to our web site at www.SEAG1199.org, click on the "News & Updates" button in the sidebar, and look for a link that will take you directly there.

Florida Teachers' Union Class Action Over Pension Reforms Affects Us, Too

In case you haven't been following what's been going on in the Florida Legislature this past spring, we've been trying to keep you up to speed on the legislation that Governor Rick Scott has signed into law that is most repugnant and reckless. As you read in the *Message from the Director* on the front page, labor won big here in Florida as efforts failed to cripple public service workers' dues deduction ability. However, Governor Scott along with the leadership of the Republican Party did impose a new law that will force government workers to pay into the state pension system.

But the perception that the too-generous retirement benefits for state and local governments does not coincide with reality. There's too much documentation supporting this to include here, so relevant material will be accessible through the SEAG web site at www.SEAG1199.org. Suffice it to say for now, though, pension contributions from state and local employers didn't cause the budget shortfall, nor are the funds "broke," as Scott and his cronies are so fond of saying. Sure, they became underfunded because of the Great Recession of 2007-2009, but so did the rest of the market, including the investments held in 401(k)s by the private-sector. But even underfunded, research shows that there's still enough to pay benefits for years to come. In fact, the *Florida Retirement System* is funded at 87% of its liabilities.

So while anti-government, anti-union elected officials continue to grossly exaggerate and down right lie to make the people think that the state's budget woes are all our fault, the *Florida Education Association*, the state's largest teachers' union, filed a class-action lawsuit to prevent the 3% salary "contribution," aka, 'pay cut,' from state workers. The basis of the law suit is that the new contribution requirements for all workers hired prior to July 1, 2011 violates the state Constitution.

Although the new pension reforms took effect July 1, the judge has set the case for final hearing on cross motions for Summary Judgment on October 26, 2011. And know this - we will not let up on the pressure. As legislators head home for the summer, we will continue to make sure they know that we know what's really going on here! The corporate CEOs who give them gobs of money might not like having to deal with us unions, but we're not going anywhere. That, you CAN bank on! Stay tuned as we provide updates at www.SEAG1199.org.

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