

# Workers are Raising Up!

By Frederick Wright

In 2023 we are witnessing more workers standing up and manning picket lines across the country for higher wages and better working conditions. The one sure thing that the COVID pandemic has shown us is that most if not all front-line workers are essential and necessary to keep our country and the economy operating.

However, when it comes to compensation, we are always an afterthought. For years at the bargaining table, workers heard their employers argue to keep wages at the current cost of living. The COLA (cost of living adjustment) was generally a government manipulated rate of two and three (2-3%) percent. Now, when inflation is standing at more than five (5%) percent, the employers' position is to resist that increase as unaffordable but still demand more productivity from their workforce. In essence, they want us to work more for less.

During the pandemic, workers were required to place themselves and their families at risk while CEOs and Executives stayed home and got richer without any risk to their health or wellbeing. However, workers in every occupation across the country are taking action, from airline pilots to writers who work for the entertainment industry.

They are going on strike, not only demanding an increase in compensation, but also shedding light on their working conditions and the demands of their daily job routine.



I would encourage everyone to be respectful of picket lines and assist workers on strike in any way possible. There is a time when every person says, "enough is enough, we must take a stand". Our Local is currently training its staff in strike preparation for when our members decide to take that drastic measure.

In closing, I would like to announce that nearly everyone that our union members decided to endorse on May 16th won their election. Many of the candidates presented their platforms to us during our March membership meeting. We witnessed the historic win of Cherelle Parker, the first African American woman to capture the democratic nomination for Mayor. As well most of our City Council endorsements, both District and at-large candidates have won.

With your help and support, they will be assuming office in January. Keep an eye on their progress in the November, 2023 general election. Hopefully, positive change for working people and our families is on the way!



Frederick Wright, President



## JCC Kaiserman

Kaiserman Early Childhood Education program experienced some challenges at the start of this year. It was reported that the Department of Human Services (DHS) made a surprise visit to the school to complete an audit and discovered some violations within the school's files. The school received a warning and was told that DHS would return to the school within a couple of months to complete another audit with the hopes that all violations would be corrected.

As of April 2023, it was reported that the DHS audit was a success and all previous violations were rectified. Additionally, the contract between Local 1739 and Kaiserman is due to expire on September 15, 2023. The union will begin to meet with the negotiating team sometime in July 2023 to discuss proposals. If any member would like to participate in the upcoming contract negotiations, please feel free to contact Maria Voight or Phil Johnson at [Pjohnson@afscmelocal1739.org](mailto:Pjohnson@afscmelocal1739.org).

And lastly, Maria Voight, the union shop steward has been out on Family Medical Leave (FMLA) for the past several months due to some health issues. The Union is happy to report that Maria is making a speedy recovery.

## Jewish Family & Children Services (JFCS)

The Union has a wage reopener with JFCS, scheduled to begin in September 2023. The shop steward, Zakiyyah Snead, has already conducted one wage proposal informational session with employees, which occurred on March 30, 2023. There will be another session (virtually) in the coming months. The Union will seek to negotiate a decent living wage increase for its members.

## Academy House Condominiums

Local 1739 is proud to announce that there is a new Chapter within the local, Academy House Service Employees. The workers at the Academy House reached out to the local for representation in August of 2022, authorization cards for representation were completed by the majority of the workers and the National Labor Relations Board was petitioned for an election. The election was won by the employees and on November 3, 2022, the National Labor Relations Board certified the American Federation State County Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 1739 as the exclusive bargaining representative of the Academy House front desk, maintenance and housekeeping employees.

Academy House union negotiation team and the Academy House Condominiums Council have been in negotiations to try and secure a contract for the past 5 months. We have addressed most of the non-economic issues and will begin to negotiate the economic proposals in the coming weeks. Given the inexperience of management as it pertains to negotiating a union contract, the discussions have been challenging.

## American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

During the last past six months, AFSC has been doing organizational restructuring at the 1501 Cherry Street location. Some of the restructuring has resulted in one employee's position being eliminated. AFSC created another job description that closely resembled the job functions of the affected employee, which resulted in the union filing a grievance on their behalf. As of April 2023, and with much negotiation between the union and AFSC, a settlement agreement was reached, with the employee receiving a very satisfactory separation package. Much thanks goes to shop stewards Ralph Medley and Melissa Stoner.

Additionally, Local 1739 and AFSC will be meeting in July 2023 for wage re-opener negotiations. As a result of some major changes within the organization, the membership is bracing for tough wage re-opener discussions. The Union Coordinating committee will be scheduling a meeting with the AFSC negotiating team in June 2023 to get feedback on the wage increase for this year.

## JEVS Human Services (JEVS)

JEVS has made a lot of significant changes within their organization, specifically with their Executive Leadership Team. As reported previously, JEVS has a new President/CEO Cynthia Figueroa, who used to be a Deputy Mayor in Mayor Jim Kenney's administration, and the Commissioner for the Department of Human Services of Philadelphia. The Union met with the JEVS Executive Leadership team in December of 2022 for a brief introductory meeting and to also get a sense of the new President's leadership style.

The contract between the Union and JEVS is due to expire on June 30, 2023. The union negotiating team has been meeting since March and the parties started joint negotiations in April. There are several significant proposals on both sides of the table that will present a major challenge for a settlement. Depending upon the outcome of the ongoing negotiations between Local 1739 and JEVS, the Union is making preparations in the event the members choose to strike.

The Union has also discovered a number of discrepancies with several programs within JEVS concerning our members' salaries, which is a violation of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The Union has filed a class action grievance concerning the discrepancies. The Union will keep the membership abreast of the class action developments.

## Special People in Northeast (SPIN)

On March 27th, the Union and SPIN management started wage reopener negotiations for a wage increase for 2023. On April 4th, the parties reached a tentative agreement which was ratified by SPIN union members on April 14th. The new agreement will cover wage increases for both 2023 and 2024. Commencing the first full pay period of April 2023 and 2024, all bargaining unit employees will receive a three (3%) percent pay increase and one-thousand-dollar (\$1000) bonus. Bonuses will be issued on the first non-pay week in July of both years.

The local would like to thank the SPIN negotiating team: Lisa Anderson, Chief Steward; Sharina Blackshear, Health Services; Tracie Funderburk, Program Specialist; Tania Holloway, Children Services; April Pettis, DSP; Randy Williams, Lehigh DSP and Rob Wallington, Staff Representative.

On April 26th, State Representative Joe Hohenstein and Philadelphia Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore-Richardson visited SPIN's Early Childhood Education and Direct Support Professional Apprenticeship programs. This meeting was designed to bring awareness and sustainable funding from the State and local government. Both Representative Hohenstein and Councilwoman Gilmore-Richardson were very impressed with the services our members provide to the community.

## Tenants Union Representative Network (TURN)

The Union has a wage reopener with TURN in June 2023. The first negotiation session is scheduled for June 14th. The Union will be meeting with the shop steward, Marcella Joe, and the negotiating team in the coming weeks to discuss wage proposals. Local 1739 and TURN agreed to have a mediator oversee the wage proposal negotiations.



Dancing at the 1739 PAC fundraiser

# NOTICE TO MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS OF AFSCME LOCAL 1739



## Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act gives employees these rights:

- To organize to form, join or assist any union to bargain collectively through representatives of their choice
- To act together for other mutual aid or protection
- To choose not to engage in any of these concerted activities

## Section 8 (a)(3) of the National Labor Relations Act states:

It shall be an unfair practice for an employer(3) by discrimination in regard to hire or tenure of employment or any term or condition of employment to encourage or discourage membership in any labor organization: Provided, that nothing in this Act, or in any other statute of the United States, shall preclude an employer from making an agreement with a labor organization...to require as a condition of employment membership therein on or after the thirtieth day following the beginning of such employment or the effective date of such employment, whichever is later, if such labor organization is the representative of the employees as provided in Section 9 (a), in the appropriate collective bargaining unit covered by such agreement when made.

The membership required under a union security clause pursuant to the above proviso is merely the payment of periodic dues, and initiation fees if applicable. While actual union membership is not required, employees choosing not to join the union must make required payments; will not be entitled to attend union meetings; cannot vote upon the ratification of contracts or other agreements between the employer and the union; will not have a voice in the internal affairs of the union; and will not enjoy "members only" benefits.

All non-members of AFSCME Local 1739 who are obliged to pay an amount equal to period union dues are hereby notified of the Union's procedure for those seeking a reduction of the amounts to be paid based upon union expenditures for matters other than collective bargaining and contract administration.

Non-members who timely object to the payment of an amount equal to union dues and initiation fees, are charged for expenditures for activities, training, communications, research, legal and administrative costs related to collective bargaining, contract administration and grievance adjustment; representational activities involving terms and conditions of employment, discrimination, pension reform/retirement, social security, employee evaluations, unemployment compensation, overtime and minimum wage provisions, environmental issues which effect conditions in the workplace; union meetings of the membership, the executive board, the district council and the national convention, if any; administrative expenses including office rent, utilities and supplies; expenses for publication of newspapers or newsletter to the extent that said publications cover chargeable

activities; and educational and training programs or conferences for the rank and file or staff on issues relating to negotiations, grievance adjustment, duty of fair representation, and other employment related and governance issues.

Objecting non-members are not charged for expenses, if any which are paid from dues which support or contribute to political organizations or candidates; voter registration, get-out-the-vote campaign techniques (i.e. training programs designated to prepare leaders, staff and or members to work in support of candidates for any public office); support for ideological causes not germane to the work of the union in collective bargaining; portions of publications which involve non-chargeable issues; members only benefits and certain lobbying efforts; certain legal services related to basic representational functions with only a remote theoretical benefit to the unit employees.

***You are advised that the union has established the following procedure for obtaining a reduction of fees. Please follow these following instructions carefully:***

1. Non-members who are obligated to pay an amount equal to period dues and initiation fees to the Union may request a reduction of 5% of the regular dues amount by filing an objection. The objection must be made in writing each year during the month of June.
2. Employees who newly become subject to a contractual union security clause after June or who otherwise do not receive this notice, shall file any objection

within thirty days after the mailing of the notice of the Beck rights. Additionally, members who resign after June must object, if at all, within the thirty (30) days from postmark or delivery date, whichever is earlier, of their individual resignation. Any objection under this provision must be received at the below official address within the thirty (30) day window.]

3. Objections must be sent to the Union Treasurer, James Baylor at 1606 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103. Objections not sent to the above address are void.
4. Objections must contain, at least, 1) the objector's name; 2) the objector's address; 3) the name of the employer; 4) the non-members employee identification number (where applicable). Objections must be signed by the objector. This information must be provided in order for an objection to be valid.
5. Objections will be processed as they are received. All properly objecting non-members will receive a detailed explanation of the basis for the fee reduction if any.
6. The objector fee will be reduced commencing July of the year in which the objection is filed through the following June. For employees electing to object pursuant to the provisions of paragraph two, objector fees will be reduced within sixty days after the expiration of the individual's challenge period ending the following June.

7. Anyone filing an objection that disputes the detailed explanation and calculations:

Be advised, a challenge is not necessary to reduce your fees. Any challenges to the report/and or calculations must be specific and made in writing, to be valid, challenges must be received by the Union only within twenty-one (21) days after the mailing of the report.

Challenges must be sent to the Union Treasurer, James Baylor at the address listed in paragraph 3 above. Valid challenges, if any, will then be submitted jointly to an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association. In the event of such challenge, the reasonably disputed portion of the challenger's fee, shall be held in escrow until the challenge is resolved by the arbitrator.

8. Employee's right may further be affected by previously executed check off/authorizations.
9. The request for a reduction must be renewed each year by filing an objection during the appropriate period. The above procedure shall apply to any subsequent requests unless modified.
10. The official mailing list as of the date of printing shall be the official receipt of the mailing of this notice.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!  
 TO



Democratic Mayoral Candidate  
**CHERELLE PARKER**

**CITY COUNCIL  
 Endorsed Nominees**

- District 2 - Kenyatta Johnson
- District 3 - Jamie Gauthier
- District 4 - Curtis Jones
- District 5 - Jeffrey Jay Young
- District 8 - Cindy Bass
- District 9 - Anthony Phillips

**AT-LARGE**

- Nina Ahmad
- Katherine Gilmore Richardson
- Jim Harranty
- Isaiah Thomas

1606 Walnut Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19103



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## SPOTLIGHT ON SPIN

**State Representative Joe Hohenstein and Philadelphia Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore Richardson visit SPIN with President Fred Wright and Union Rep Rob Wallington**



State Rep Joe Hohenstein and Pres. Fred Wright at conference table



Rob Wallington, Kathy Brown-McHale, Fred Wright, Rep. Hohenstein, Councilwoman Gilmore-Richardson, Judy Dotsman, Ms. Lutz



Visit to SPIN classroom



Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson with SPIN management