

2023 THE YEAR OF LABOR



As we close out 2023, I am excited about the rebirth of the labor movement in America. From the men and women who make our cars to the writers who make the movies we enjoy, we have witnessed more than 450,000 workers standing up and sacrificing for higher wages, better working conditions and job safety and security.

While the eyes of the world spotlighted the walkout of members of the Hollywood Writer's Guild, 75,000 home health aides and medical technicians staged a 3-day strike against Kaiser Permanente. In the same period, thousands of hotel workers conducted staggered job actions against the giant hospitality companies like Hilton and Marriott.

Employees are sick and tired of the corporate greed that has taken over our country and economy for the past three decades. The wage gap between the average worker and the average corporate executive is shameful and wider than ever.

We were asked to make severe sacrifices during the pandemic even as corporate profits soared. Employees now see that a guarantee of fairness on the job requires a willingness to stand up, speak up and walk out on strike if necessary.

There has been a wave of unionization across the country with growing public sentiment supporting the value of having a union where workers come together and collectively bargain for their terms and conditions of employment. Currently, unions enjoy a 71% approval rating, the highest it's been since the late 1940's. This resurgence of unionization has contagiously spread throughout all sectors of the workforce, in both the private sector and public sector.

This year alone, our union has organized two new chapters within Local 1739. The first was Academy House Service workers, who voted to be unionized last November and ratified their first contract in August of this year. The second chapter is the employees of Community Integrated Services, who persisted through two union certification elections to be recognized as a union. In both union organizing drives, the employer hired "union consultants" to persuade employees to vote against the union. However, the employees remained strong and committed to having a union in their workplace, specifically AFSCME Local 1739.

Having a union in your workplace is a great benefit, but also a responsibility. It is in every member's best interest to stay active in their union and support the shop steward(s) at their worksites who represent the union every day. Attend union meetings to stay informed, bring workplace concerns to your shop steward and/or union representatives.

Finally, be a registered voter. The right to unionize is a privilege that could very well be lost through anti-union legislation. Frederick Douglass told us the price of freedom is constant vigilance. He was so right; we must stay alert.

I'm eagerly looking forward to 2024. On behalf of all the Officers and Staff of AFSCME Local 1739 I wish everyone a pleasant and safe holiday season.



Frederick Wright,
President

Academy House Service Workers

Last year, this time the service workers at the Academy House Condominiums voted to form a union within AFSCME Local 1739. After several months of negotiations, the employees ratified their first contract in August of this year. That initial three-year contract calls for more than a ten percent increase in salaries beginning in January 2024, along with medical benefits, additional holidays, a much-needed grievance procedure and most of all, the ability to collectively bargain to enhance future contracts with the employer.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

On October 18th the union negotiating team of Ralph Medley (Shop Steward), Beth Hallowell, Claire Hannapel, Robert Farrell, Annalis Mitcho, Mike Merryman-Lotze, Zackery Taylor-Major and Melissa Stoner reached a tentative agreement with AFSC on their wage reopener for 2023. The tentative agreement calls for employees making over \$75k are to receive a 4% wage increase; employees earning less than \$75K are to receive a 5% increase retroactive to October 1st. The tentative agreement was ratified on October 23rd. The negotiations were conducted over a three-month period with the assistance of a Federal Mediator specifically urging management to negotiate in good faith.

Kaiserman JCC

The union negotiation team of Maria Voight (Shop Steward) and Sandy Kassie negotiated a new three-year contract for the pre-school staff working at the Kaiserman JCC center. The new contract which was ratified by the workers on September 14th increases wages by 12% over the term of the agreement. The Union also achieved six weeks of paid parental leave, (which will be separated from their sick and vacation time) as well as the option to be paid over twelve months, instead of ten and an additional holiday.



Kaiserman (Shop Stewards) Maria Voight and Sandy Kassie

Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS)

In contrast to American Friends Service Committee, the JFCS management and Union negotiating team were able to reach a tentative agreement on a wage reopener for 2023 and 2024 after just one session of joint negotiations. On September 18th, the union members ratified the tentative agreement which calls for a 5% wage increase retroactive to the first pay in September and a 3.5% increase for the first pay period in September 2024. On a somber note, our prayers and wishes are still needed for Zakiyyah Snead (Local Vice-President) who was injured and lost both parents due to gun violence.

JEVS Human Services (JEVS)

JEVS and the Union reached a tentative agreement on June 26th which was ratified by the rank-and-file members in July. The new three-year contract calls for a twelve (12%) percent increase in wages over the next three years.

The starting minimum wage has been increased to \$16.00 per hour, all longevity bonuses were increased by \$100.00 and for the first time, JEVS will pay 40% for dependent medical coverage.



Hugh Simmons, JEVS Chief Human Resource Officer has announced his retirement effective October 27th; Kenya Barrett will be assuming the day-to-day operations and has been named Director of Operations. The Union will work closely with the new Director of Operations towards resolving several pending grievances scheduled for arbitration.

Liza Rodriguez, JEVS Chief Administrative Officer reached out to the Union to request activating the joint Paid Time Off (PTO) committee (as per the new CBA) to explore converting from annual, personal and sick time to PTO. These discussions will be challenging given our membership's lack of interest in bargaining over the accrual time method that has been in place since the formation of the Union at JEVS. Additionally, the membership is very uncomfortable with any potential scenario that could mean losing personal, sick or vacation days.

Special People in Northeast (SPIN)

After decades of service to Special People in Northeast, President and CEO Kathy Brown-McHale retired on July 1, 2023.

The Union, under Ms. Browns's administration received significant wage increases which made SPIN's Direct Support Professionals some of the highest paid DSPs in the region. The Union hopes that the new President and CEO, Judy Dotzman, will keep up that trend.

In early 2024, SPIN will be utilizing facial recognition technology to allow all employees to clock in and out of their worksites and shifts. The union will be monitoring that technology to ensure that it does not infringe on workers' privacy.



On Saturday, November 18th, Rob Wallington Union Representative, held a shop stewards training for SPIN and other local shop stewards who have the responsibility to enforce our contracts and represent their coworkers.

Tenant Union Representative Network (TURN)

TURN operates the Philly Tenant Hotline that offers thousands of callers referrals, recommendations and guidance. TURN also acts as a courtroom Navigator at municipal court, referring eligible tenants facing eviction to the "Free Lawyer of the Day Program", a source of free legal representation for qualified tenants. TURN continues to offer free weekly Renter's Rights workshops which the public can access through TURN's website.

TURN is a participating counseling agency of the City of Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program.

The Program enables landlords and tenants to arrive at a mediation agreement via telephone conference call that works for both parties without having to go through a legal eviction court process. The program also has targeted financial assistance funds for applicants with rent arrearages who meet eligibility requirements.

TURN and the Union reached a tentative agreement on a wage reopener on June 28th of this year. Marcella Joe (Shop Steward) and Jeffery Mann negotiated a three (3%) percent wage increase effective July 1, 2023 which was ratified by the union members of TURN.





Message from the Treasurer

Brothers and Sisters:

Please read the letter below, memorandum from AFSCME International Secretary-Treasurer, Elissa McBride, regarding the mandated minimum dues increase for 2024 based upon information from 88.08% of AFSCME's membership. The average wage increase received by AFSCME members over the 12-month period ending July 31, 2023, was 5.4164%. This equates to a minimum dues increase of \$2.20.

In accordance with Article III, Section 3 of our Local Constitution the monthly membership dues shall be \$20.31 per pay plus 0.95% of gross salary. These amounts shall be subject to and determined by the per capita tax increase stipulated by the International Constitution, District Council #47 and Local 1739.

Therefore, **effective January 1, 2024** the minimum dues will be:

- AFSCME International - \$15.55
- District Council 47 - \$28.00
- \$43.55 minimum dues
- Local 1739 - 0.95%

Following is the letter from AFSCME International

November 3, 2023

TO: International Vice Presidents
Council Presidents/Directors
Local Union Presidents and
Secretary – Treasurers

From: Elissa McBride, Secretary-Treasurer

RE: **MINIMUM DUES INCREASE FOR 2024**

Article IX, Section 6 of the international Constitution provides for an annual adjustment of the minimum dues and Per Capita Tax (PCT) rates. This letter deals specifically with the annual adjustment of minimum dues rates for 2024. You should carefully read the instructions below for determining your correct minimum dues rate, which has changed. At the 2014 International Convention, Article IX, Section 6 of the International Constitution was amended to provide an additional requirement for local unions and councils in calculating their minimum dues rate.

Article IX, Section 7 of the International Constitution explains how the yearly adjustment of the minimum dues rate is determined.

Information on wage increases was collected from **88.08%** of AFSCME's membership. The average wage increase received by AFSCME members over the 12-month period ending July 31, 2023 was 5.4164%.

Article IX, Section 7 also requires that this calculation be audited and certified by an independent certified public accountant who is not otherwise connected with AFSCME. The audit has been completed and confirms the above percentages. Upon request, a copy of the certification will be provided to any affiliate.

Full-Time Employee Minimum Dues

Applying this latest percentage (5.4164%) to the current minimum dues results in a required (unrounded) dues increase of \$2.2369732 per month. This unrounded increase is then allocated and rounded to the nearest five cents, resulting in an increase of \$2.20.

	<u>Allocation</u>	<u>Unrounded Annual Increase</u>	<u>Rounded Annual Increase</u>	<u>Jan 1, 2024 Full-Time Increase</u>
International PCT	30%	\$.6710920	\$.65	\$.65
Council PCT	60%	1.3421839	1.35	1.35
Local Share	10%	.2236973	.20	.20
		\$2.2369732	\$2.20	\$2.20

As a result, the 2024 minimum dues increase is \$2.20

	<u>Full-Time Increase</u>	<u>Full-Time Effective 1/1/24</u>
International PCT	\$.65	\$15.55
Council PCT	1.35	24.00
Local Share	.20	3.95
	\$2.20	\$43.50

What effect does this increase in minimum dues have on your local's dues rate?

If your local's dues rate is \$41.30 or less as of December 31, 2023 your dues must be raised to \$43.50 effective January 1, 2024, as allocated above, or the rate resulting from multiplying your current dues rate by 5.4164% if this results in an amount that is greater than \$2.20 (the "multiplied rate").

If your local is affiliated with a council and your dues rate as of December 31, 2023 is the minimum with no previously approved increase scheduled for January 1, 2024, then dues must be raised by \$2.20 effective January 1, 2024, as allocated above, or the rate resulting from multiplying your current dues rate by 5.4164% if this results in an amount that is greater than \$2.20.

If your local's dues rate is greater than the minimum for locals affiliated with such council as of December 31, 2023, you must raise your dues by \$2.20 on January 1, 2024 as allocated above, or your current dues rate multiplied by 5.4164% if this results in an amount that is greater than \$2.20, unless you request a credit/waiver using the attached form and receive approval of that request from the International Executive Board.

The local's constitution should be corrected to reflect your new dues rate. Any increase in a local's dues rate to reflect annual minimum dues increases do not require a vote by the local's membership. Employers will need to be notified of the new rates.





Rob Wallington training for Shop Stewards



Season's Greetings

With warm wishes from all of us @

