

## Inflation Effect on Our Economy

*By Frederick Wright*

Every day that we venture into the grocery store or pull up to the gas pump we feel the effects of inflation on our economy. Since the pandemic of 2020, consumer prices and services have been steadily increasing while our take home pay has been struggling to keep pace. Fortunately, because we have a union in the workplace, we can go to the bargaining table with our employer to demand salary increases to keep up with inflation. Not all workers have that option. Union members of AFSCME Local 1739 have been able to achieve pay increases over the rate of inflation. I would like to thank the hard work and determination of our members who serve on negotiating teams representing their coworkers during the bargaining process.

Inflation such as we have experienced for the last two years disproportionately burdens everyday workers more than the upper middle class and wealthy. Most of us live on a budget where all our money is dedicated to daily living expenses. When prices rise, the cost of food, gas, and housing force us to make tough decisions.

Since 2020, the price of a year's worth of food, utilities and gas alone have risen more than \$2000. We have witnessed striking increases in monthly rents and mortgage costs that are now limiting where working people can live. Without a strong and effective union, our members would be struggling just to maintain their standard of living.



Charting our path forward in these economic times, we, as a union, will have to be more militant at the bargaining table. Demanding that our salaries reflect the current economic realities will also require even more unity and solidarity within the workplace.

Strategic planning and action is essential to achieve our goals for fair contracts and meaningful wage increases.

In the words of Frederick Douglass "if there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who prefer to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.

This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will."



**Frederick Wright, President**



Negotiating team for Community Integrated Services

### Academy House Service Workers

The Academy House Service workers, the most recent chapter to our union, has hired several additional employees and created two senior lead positions for the housekeeping and maintenance departments. As a result of additional employees, management has created a new staffing schedule which created some concerns for our incumbent members. The union will be meeting with the Director of Human Resources to discuss our concerns. At the Academy House Condominium Association meeting (the governing body of Academy House) the President of the Board expressed his new found appreciation for the unionization of the workforce, stating that "now they have a centralized way of dealing with the workforce."

### American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

The Union at AFSC has started the process of preparing for their upcoming contract negotiations with management. A survey was circulated to the AFSC membership in order to solicit their input and prioritize their issues. The Union will also be working in coordination with our sister union, UNITE HERE, in the northeast region. Both Unions have been meeting to discuss strategies of similar concerns with management.

The members representing the union are: Regina Dongilli, Beth Hallowell, Ralph Medley (Shop Steward), Michael Merryman-Lotze, Annalis Mitcho, Melissa Stoner (Shop Steward), Zackery Taylor-Major and three alternates.

### Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS)

The Agency is concerned about the current political climate in the country and is taking precautions to ensure staff safety. JFCS lost some funding which resulted in the retrenchment of a position in the suicide prevention program. Fortunately, Zakiyyah Snead (Shop Steward) worked with the Human Resource department to have the affected employee(s) placed elsewhere within JFCS.

### JEVS Human Services (JEVS)

In accordance with the collective bargaining agreement that was negotiated in 2023, a labor/management committee was formed to explore the conversion of personal, sick and vacation time to a leave time system. After several meetings, JEVS requested an end to the meetings due to the complex transition of the conversions. We are sure that this issue will be raised and revisited when our contract expires in June 2026.

JEVS Orleans Technical College has added several new trades and programs starting in 2024 for Certified Medical Assistant, Licensed Nurse Practitioner, as well as a Construction Management program.

### Kaiserman JCC

Kaiserman JCC has notified the Union that the Agency will be starting a satellite Pre-School in the King of Prussia area. We anticipate that this expansion will take place in September of 2024. The Union will be meeting with management to discuss the details and specifics of the expansion.

### Special People in Northeast (SPIN)

SPIN has experienced an increase in open Direct Support Professional (DSP) and Early Childhood Education positions in this post COVID period. This continues to be problematic thorough out the Agency. Since 2022, SPIN efforts to maintain staff, include a retention bonus program to attract and retain employees. In accordance with the program, the employee receives \$750 upon the completion of their probationary period.

The Union and SPIN still have an active Joint Apprenticeship Committee for Direct Support Professionals and Early Education Staff.

This committee is supported in partnership with State Representative Joseph Hohenstein, City Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore Richardson, Philadelphia School District, Philly Works, and Apprenticeship PHL. This joint effort brings a better understanding of alternative career paths for graduating seniors and young adults entering the workforce.

**The Union Shop Stewards for SPIN are:**  
 Lisa Anderson (Chief Steward) (215) 880-1479;

### Adult Services:

Cherill Hagans (215) 431-8671, Shante Jenkins (267) 596-4532, April Pettus Murry (267) 975-4815, Tamara Tully (484) 431-2688, Shante Williams (267) 326-3773, Yvette Wilson (215) 651-2883.



**Children's Services:**

Tania Holloway (267) 254- 6025

**SPIN Lehigh:**

Mia Pullom (484) 809-5132,  
Randy Williams (610) 349-9123.

**Tenant Union Representative Network (TURN)**

TURN, which operates the "Philly Tenant Hotline" offers thousands of residents of Philadelphia referrals, recommendations, and counseling on tenant rights. The collective bargaining agreement expires on June 30th. The union circulated member input forms to the membership and had a membership meeting on May 21st. The Union and management have already scheduled a date to start negotiations in June.



Potential New SPIN members

## Notice to Members and Non-Members



**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 benefits 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) 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-member's 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.



# BIG PHILLY CLEAN UP STARTS THIS SUMMER



**M**ayor Cherelle Parker is targeting your block for a big clean up this summer. She pledges to clean every block in the city over 13 weeks starting in June. On May 18, the new mayor signed an executive order which established Philadelphia's Clean and Green Cabinet and the Office of Clean and Green Initiatives. The new offices will focus on quality-of-life issues: litter, abandoned cars, graffiti, nuisance businesses and illegal dumping.

Beginning June 3, city workers will be picking up trash, cleaning streets, towing abandoned cars and fixing abandoned buildings. The new office will oversee the cleanup.

This will be Parker's first major move to keep her campaign promise to make Philadelphia the safest, cleanest, greenest big city" in the country. As part of the Clean and Green Initiative, the city is recruiting crews of neighborhood residents who will also be trained to help clean up their council districts. Carlton Williams, newly appointed Director of the Clean and Green project, estimates crews will be able to clean up 30 blocks each day.

They will work from Tuesdays to Saturdays, following the routes taken by City Sanitation trucks one day after the regular trash pick up. Look out for a schedule to be posted so you will know when the cleanup is coming to your neighborhood.



**Mayor Cherelle Parker and President Frederick Wright**

1606 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103



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## RAISING FUNDS AND HAVING FUN AT PAC FISH FRY-LOU AND CHOOS, MAY 19

The PAC (Political Action Committee) raises money to support local and State candidates who support non-profit social service agencies where our members are working. Monies are donated to candidates endorsed by the membership. We also pay members lost time if they work on election day for endorsed candidates. We raise approximately \$4000 every year.

