



# AFSCME Council 81 THE DELAWARE DIFFERENCE

APRIL | 2023

## LOCALS FROM ACROSS STATE GATHER FOR SHOP STEWARD TRAINING

When the global pandemic hit and shuttered many work places, AFSCME Council 81 kept our doors open--so long as our members were expected to work our offices were up and running. We took precautions at the height of COVID, including limiting our trainings for our shop stewards and leaders. In February 2023 we held our first of several post-pandemic in-person Shop Steward and leadership trainings at Council 81. Our new officers and shop stewards gathered at the hall at 8:00am and Staff Representatives from Council 81 spent the day training them on the ins and outs of being officers of a local union and shop stewards. Everyone went home that day ready to serve their locals. We have two more leadership and shop steward trainings scheduled in June and October. Stay tuned for more training opportunities



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# The Delaware Difference

## AFSCME Exec. Dir. Appointed to SEBC

In January, with the support of AFSCME Council 81, the largest public sector union in Delaware, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 29 which updated and expanded the State Employees Benefits Committee (SEBC). This committee is vital to more than just our State Locals, but to our locals at the University of Delaware, the City of New Castle and other locals who buy into the state's healthcare benefits. Council 81's Executive Director, Mike Begatto was appointed to the SEBC subcommittee on retiree benefits and IU Staff member Shaun O'Brien was appointed as Council 81's designee to the full SEBC. Securing two spots where our members' voices and votes are undoubtedly heard and recognized as subject matter experts.

## Legislative Update

Senate Bill 29 (Updating and expanding membership to the SEBC) was not the only legislative priority for Council 81 this year. We are working with Senator Jack Walsh on legislation that will expand organizing opportunities to smaller towns and municipalities (Bill number forthcoming) and legislation that will help the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) render decisions quicker than previously able. We are also working with Senator Spiros Mantzavinos on SB 36 which updates Delaware Code to define 9-1-1 Dispatchers throughout.



## Calendar--April 2023

**Friday, April 7--** Good Friday

*Council 81 Offices Closed*

**Sunday, April 8 --** Easter Sunday

**Tuesday, April 18--** Last day to file taxes

**Friday, April 28--** Workers Memorial Day

**Tuesday, April 11-Thursday, April 20--**

Legislature on Spring Break

**Saturday, April 22--**Earth Day

**Sun, April 23-Sat, 29--** National Library Week

**Wed. April 26--** Administrative Professionals Day



# The Delaware Difference

## Shop Steward Corner

In each newsletter we will provide some insight or helpful tips for shop stewards. This month we're briefly covering the

### Weingarten Rights:

- Thanks to the US Supreme Court, in a decision *NLRB v. J. Weingarten*, any Union Member has the right to a Union Representative in a meeting that they believe could lead to discipline or termination.
- A member must make this request. Management is NOT required to offer this representation.
- The union representation can be a Shop Steward or a member of the Executive Board that is currently on the shop floor (or at the job).
- Council 81 has cards that can and should be handed out to each member, so they know their rights. Your Presidents and Shop stewards should reach out to get more cards.

## Organizing Update

During Council 81's Shop Steward Training one of the most important topics we cover is New Employer Orientation or NEO. This is the first time a new member will meet the union and it's our chance to make a great first impression. Unfortunately during COVID a lot of employers skipped over NEOs and did orientation one-on-one, so many of our locals missed the opportunity to introduce new members to the importance of the union.

Since December 2022 Council 81, along with your local union leadership, have been working diligently to meet those members and ask them to sign up and become members. Many already thought they were and that's good news, all they have to do is sign a card.

Membership numbers are not about dues or about free benefits from the International, they are really about the power you have when everyone comes together in solidarity. We see that every day when we are at the bargaining table or at grievance hearings. The stronger a local is with more dues paying members, the more power that local has in the work place.

If you have questions about how to get more members to sign cards, reach out to Mike Burns at [mburns@council81.org](mailto:mburns@council81.org).

If you have co-workers who are not part of a local union (unorganized) and they want to organize, we know that AFSCME is the strongest and most powerful public employees union in Delaware--ask them to call us at 302-323-2121 or email [afscme@council81.org](mailto:afscme@council81.org) for more information!

