

HOPE LOCAL 123 NEWS

Fall 2019 Edition

Political Updates



HOPE Endorses Re-Election Campaign of Mayor Turner

HOPE Local 123 held our Fall Membership Meeting at the Harris County AFL-CIO. At this meeting, members from the HOPE Strategic Planning Committee updated the membership on recent successes in negotiations for the Department Labor Management Corporation Committee (DLMCC) and the endorsement process before we introduced endorsed candidates to the membership.

As you know, we individually screened over 40 candidates for municipal offices, and we voted to endorse candidates who have demonstrated their commitment to empowering Houston's public employees and their families. We are the librarians, public works employees, sanitation workers, public health professionals, and public servants who work to make Houston a world class city and we chose to endorse candidates that will continue to move Houston forward.

The following candidates have been endorsed by HOPE:

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| • Mayor | Sylvester Turner |
| • City Controller | Chris Brown |
| • District C | Abbie Kamin |
| • District I | Robert Gallegos |
| • District J | Freddie Cuellar & Sandra Rodriguez |
| • District K | Martha Castex- Tatum |
| • District AL -1 | Raj Salhotra |
| • District AL -2 | David Robinson |
| • District AL -3 | Michael Kubosh |

Strategic Planning Committee Corner

There have been monumental gains for HOPE Local 123 members over the past quarter. The 2018 Meet and Confer Agreement between the City of Houston and the Houston Organization of Public Employees (HOPE) provides that beginning the first full pay period after July 1, 2019, every bargaining unit member except for Police and Fire Trainees will receive a 2% across-the-board pay increase. Employees covered by this provision, including supervisors and managers, received a pay increase on their August 2, 2019 paycheck.



HOPE members may have seen some of your HOPE Leaders at City Council over the last quarter speaking to City Council on behalf of the members in Solid Waste. Solid Waste members were expressing concern about overwhelming mandatory overtime schedules and broken and/or outdated equipment. HOPE members urged City Council and Mayor Turner to look into the members' concerns. Our concerns were heard. From this direct action, HOPE members were able to secure an agreement with the Solid Waste Department to establish a Departmental Labor Management Cooperation Council (DLMCC) as a means to address and resolve issues that may arise in the Solid Waste Department, together!

The commitment from Director Harry Hayes and his leadership group, inspired HOPE leaders to secure commitments from other Department Directors to establish a DLMCC. HOPE Leaders set up several meetings with Directors of various departments to explain what the purpose and goals are for an effective DLMCC. Through our meetings, we have commitments from the following departments to establish Departmental Labor Management Cooperation Councils:

Director Jane Cheeks - Human Resources

Director Stephen Williams - Health

Director Takasha Francis - Dept. of Neighborhoods

Director Tina Paez - Administration of Regulatory Affairs

Director Harry Hayes - Solid Waste Department

Director CJ Messiah - General Services

Members in the above-mentioned departments are more than welcomed to contact your union organizer or department union rep (DUR) if you are interested in getting involved with the DLMCC in your department. Follow future developments in the next HOPE newsletter!

From the International President



Workers Need the Freedom to Negotiate

For AFSCME sister Tina Suckow, helping people struggling with mental illness is a calling. She always wanted to be a nurse, and while she knew her job at Iowa's Independence Mental Health Institute could be dangerous, nothing could have prepared her for what happened last October. A

patient brutally attacked and beat her, leaving her unconscious with injuries to the head, knee and shoulder.

It has been a long road to recovery. But in March, Tina's nightmare took another horrific turn. After her sick days ran out, her employer, the state of Iowa, refused to grant her request for unpaid leave. And then, the state fired her just a few weeks after she had major surgery.

For decades, Iowa had a robust collective bargaining system that allowed state employees like Tina to negotiate virtually all terms of employment. But a new state law, rammed through the legislature in 2017 with barely any debate, stripped the system down to its bare bones.

People like Tina who devote their careers to public service deserve better. They deserve a seat at the table with their employer to hash out a fair contract. A new bill introduced in Congress would give them just that.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act would extend to public employees the same rights and protections enjoyed by those working in the private sector. It would allow them to join together in a union if a majority of employees vote to have one; to bargain collectively

over wages, hours and working conditions; and to access dispute resolution mechanisms like arbitration and mediation, as well as the ability to sue.

If this bill were law, Tina could have filed a grievance through her collective bargaining contract after she was terminated. And she would have had the chance to negotiate for more rigorous workplace safety standards in the first place, perhaps preventing the incident altogether.

Workers nationwide are organizing and mobilizing to secure just these kinds of freedoms, with strong unions as the vehicle for progress.

Thanks to a surge of bold activism from AFSCME members, the governor of Nevada recently signed an historic law empowering 20,000 state employees with collective bargaining rights. They now have the ability to negotiate for a fair return on their work and for resources their communities need. In Delaware, AFSCME members recently won improved access to wage bargaining. New state contracts in both Illinois and Pennsylvania include strong wage increases, demonstrating respect for the work we do. In Texas, AFSCME Texas Corrections won \$84 million for retention of experienced employees.

From strikes by teachers, hotel workers and grocery workers to vigorous new organizing in media, behavioral health and other industries, we're seeing the most dynamic wave of worker activism in decades. Public approval ratings for labor unions are at a 15-year high, and nearly half of all Americans say they would join a union if given the choice.

Now is the moment to harness that energy and momentum, turning it into lasting change. We can start by passing the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, giving Tina Suckow and so many like her the voice on the job they need and the basic respect they deserve.

Upcoming Events



HOPE AFSCME Local 123 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

When:

October 24, 2019

Address:

Houston AFL-CIO 2506 Southernland St, Houston, TX

Time:

6 P.M. – 7 P.M.