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June 2019

The Secretary-Treasurer's Notes . . .

Legislative Year In Review



IFL Secretary-Treasurer Charlie Wishman

The 2019 Legislative session finally wrapped up on Saturday, April 27th. While it was overall not a good session for workers, a few positive things happened this year too.

First off, some very good news. We successfully fought off every attack on the unemployment insurance system this year. Much of the focus of the Senate and House labor committees were on things like instituting a one week waiting period for benefits, eliminating 13 weeks of unemployment in the case of a business closing, and more. A bill that would revoke unemployment for people who apply for jobs an employer feels they are not qualified for was rejected because of the pushback that legislators received from union members who attended the sub-committee meeting during

the IFL legislative conference. Other proposals such as having unemployment automatically taken away for a long list of infractions such as "creating animus towards and employer or employee of the business" and other nonsense did not become law. This was a major victory for labor as well as the workers of Iowa. Though these bills were defeated this year, the general assembly is a two-year session and has the ability to call up these bills again.

Last summer we were all told that the University of Iowa Labor Center will be closed in 2019, the decision was final, and there was no discussion to be had about it. Through everyone fighting back together and some skillful advocacy at the state-house from many friends of labor education, the Labor Center received funding through the Economic Development Appropriations bill and

numerous other sources. You helped set the stage for this kind of appropriation to even happen. Thank you for every action, letter, phone call, and lobbying effort put into this. It truly made a difference.

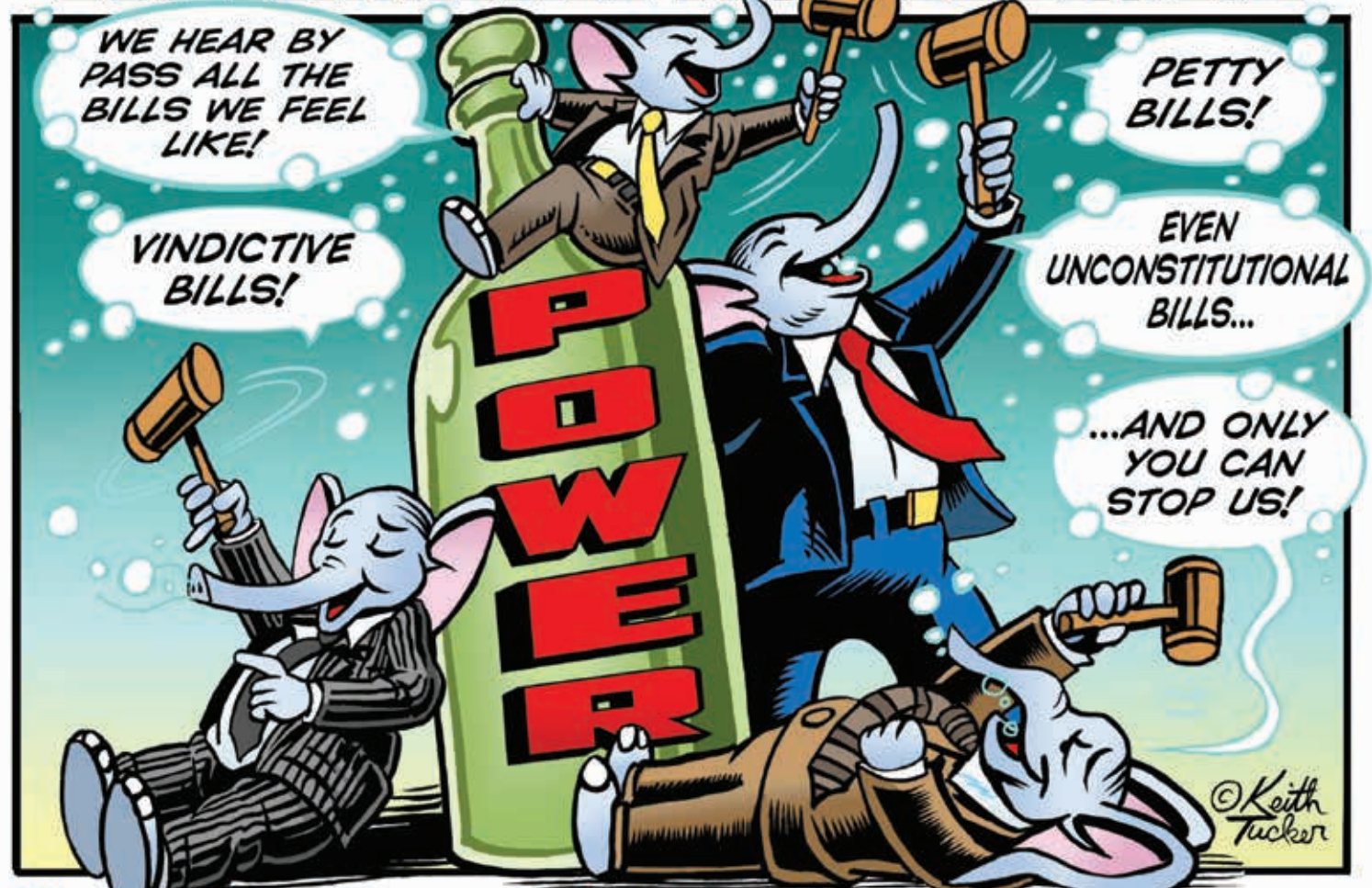
Another piece of good news is that SF 304 also became law, and now if a person falls into default on their student loans you don't automatically lose your license. We believe that economically punishing people for having trouble with finances makes no sense and that's why we supported this legislation.

The Senate Labor Committee also drafted at least five bills aimed at changes to public assistance programs. However, when confronted with actual facts that there was not widespread fraud in Iowa's public assistance programs and these bills were unnecessary, these bills did not advance.

There were, however, plenty of bad things that became law. HF 327 was a bill that dealt with the relationship between franchisees and franchise owners. This bill totally absolves all responsibility for labor law and protections from a large franchise and puts that liability on the small business owner. One major flaw in this legislation that we saw was that it would be very easy to use this law to commit wage theft or misclassify people. Misclassification is when an employee is classified as something other than an employee so that the employer doesn't have to pay workers compensation, unemployment, and abide by basic worker protections. This bill was passed and signed into law. We are concerned that employers may exploit this law to misclassify workers. As this law is implemented, if

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GOP CONTROLLED STATE LEGISLATURE



WHAT NOW?!!

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Labor And United Way Working Together . . . Page 2

Look Behind The Curtain With Us Page 7

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Legislative Year In Review

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you hear of such instances, please let us know.

We also saw changes to Worker's Compensation. While just a short bill, SF 507 made any unexplained medical fall non-compensable. The IFL's position was that there may or may not be employer liability, but you'll never find that out unless fact-finders are allowed to investigate. This bill ensured that these cases will never be looked into by making all of these cases non-compensable. This bill was passed and signed into law.

SF 634 was a bill that caps the amount a city or county can increase its spending to at 2% unless a supermajority of the council or board of supervisors approves. This takes away local control from local officials, and also poses other dangers.



Unfortunately, retirement systems like 411 and IPERS are under a cap, pitting services like infrastructure, police, and firefighters against the retirement of those workers within city and county budgets. The legislature is putting local governments and future legislatures in a position where they may have to make bad choices regarding their commitment to providing a secure retirement for workers because of this burden.

This bill has been approved by the House and Senate and the Governor has an ability to sign or veto it, and we have urged her to veto it.

Iowa's judicial system unfortunately became much more politicized this year in more ways than one. The Governor now appoints a majority of those who sit on the judicial nominating commission, and the chief justice only has a two-year term. In addition, even though the

Attorney General is elected in their own right, in order to join lawsuits the office of Attorney General will be required to seek the permission of the Governor, Legislature, or the Executive Council. In our view, this is an unnecessary and political overreach by the legislative branch. If people do not like the Attorney General's stances or legal actions, they have had and will have the ability to vote that person out of office. That is the accountability that all elected officials have.

There will be further updates from the IFL as appropriations bills are signed or vetoed by the Governor. Keep in mind that the Governor has the ability to "line item veto" sections of appropriations bills and sign the rest of them and has 30 days to do so.

While we wait for that to happen, on behalf of everyone at the Iowa Federation of Labor, we'd like to thank each and every one of you for making a call, sending an email, going to forums, agitating, and doing what needs to be done. When we fight together, we can, and did win on many issues important to workers.



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Betty Brim-Hunter Retires

Betty Brim-Hunter has worked for the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO for the last 12 years. She started as an AFL-CIO paid staff working in the Labor 2006 campaign. She worked for the IBEW as lobbyist, and returned to the Federation in 2007 for Labor 2008 and has continued since as Political Director.

Her efforts have led to many successful political campaigns on the local, congressional, and state-wide level. Betty's efforts to create political literature, such as campaign mailers and fliers have provided the basis for many successes

in state and local elections.

The Federation tried to convince Ms. Betty of the need for a retirement dinner to celebrate her many achievements and her many contributions to labor, but she insisted that she did not want one. We have abided by her wishes.

You may send her wishes to bettybrim@aol.com. She is not scheduled to formally retire until the end of April, but she has enough leave accumulated to finish out the month of April.

The Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, its officers and staff, and affiliates collectively thank Betty



for all her efforts over the years and hope you join us in wishing her a long and healthy retirement.

IFL Welcomes Julianne Frosolone As Incoming Political Director



Please welcome Julianne Frosolone as the new Political Director for the Iowa Federation of Labor

(IFL), AFL-CIO. She will be replacing Betty Brim-Hunter who will be retiring from many faithful years of service to the IFL in the near future.

Julianne grew up in a union family, and understands the core issues working class people in Iowa care about. Julianne has worked in Iowa politics and particularly with labor her entire professional life. Over the course of her career, she has taken on many political roles for both gubernatorial and congressional campaigns in Iowa. She has worked for the different campaigns in a state-wide capacity twice, as well as in Iowa's 3rd, 4th, and 1st congressional districts.

Julianne worked most recently as the Deputy Campaign Manager for

Congresswoman-elect Abby Finkenauer's successful congressional campaign in Iowa's 1st District. She was also recently named by the Des Moines Register as one of the "50 Most Wanted Democrats" for 2020 presidential candidates.

"I'm excited to join the Iowa Federation of Labor as State Political Director. I look forward to standing with the thousands of private and public sector workers that make up our organization to ensure that Iowa working families have a strong voice in our local, state, and national political process." Said Julianne Frosolone.

The IFL staff and officers are excited for Julianne to join Iowa's labor movement in this role.

The President's View . . .

Labor And United Way Working Together Makes Our Communities Better



IFL President Ken Sagar

Every year, local United Ways hold fund raising drives. Labor, as long-time partner of the United Way, typically works to encourage participation in these drives. Both labor and United Way work to improve their communities.

Labor focuses on directly on making members' lives better by improving wages, hours and working conditions like safety. Indirectly, labor raises the wages for the community, improves laws by lobby-

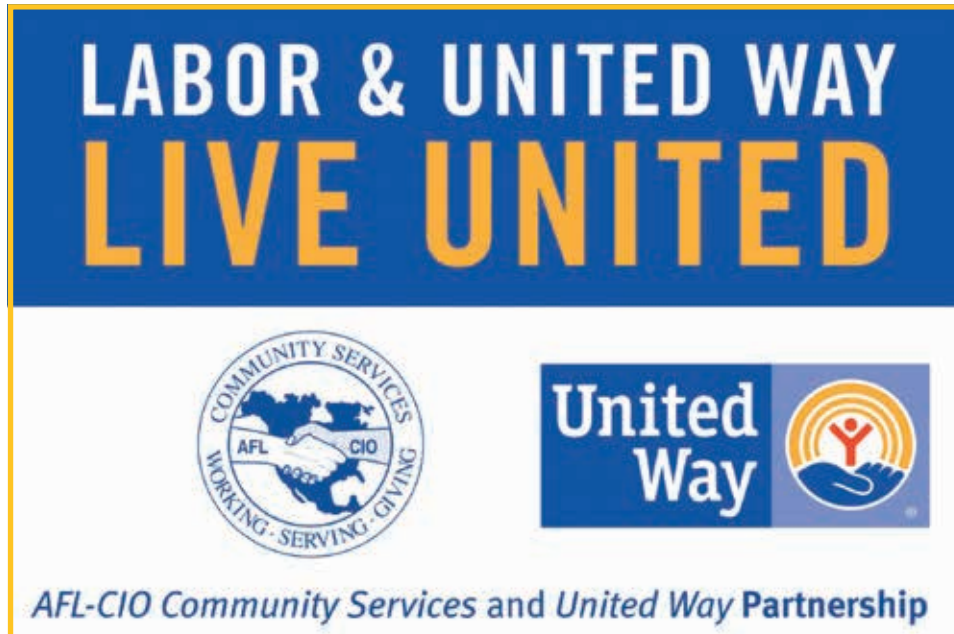
ing in Des Moines and Washington, and steps into leadership to assist in many community efforts like Habitat for Humanity.

community leaders and community groups to enhance the quality of life in the community. Larger communities have a position of "Labor Liaison"

efforts by labor to negotiate a reasonable Memorandum of Understanding, this United Way made a conscious effort to cut out their labor partner. After much discussion among labor partners, Hawkeye Area Labor Council has decided to pursue a separate 501(c)3 to ensure that they could continue to help in the community without supporting the organization that refused to work in partnership.

While we hope that someday the United Way in the Cedar Valley will come to recognize the importance of having a full partnership with Labor, we can not condone these anti-union efforts. We continue to work with the United Way in other communities and urge everyone in those areas to support our joint efforts to make our communities better for families. Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Quad Cities and Sioux City continue to have good relationships and work well with labor.

We are willing to work with those who are willing to work with us. We urge you to support the efforts of ethical United Ways to make our communities better.



United Way focuses on fund raising, supporting non-profits in the community and coordinating community efforts. Typically, United Way brings together many commu-

on their staff. These individuals act as intermediaries between the labor community and the United Way efforts.

Recently, the Cedar Valley United Way in Waterloo, decided to cut out their Liaison position. Despite

Punteney Elected WILF President

Scott Punteney has been elected President of the Western Iowa Labor Federation (WILF), replacing Ernie Colt.

Scott worked for Griffin Pipe Products Co. for over 25 years until the plant closed in 2014. He was a member of United Steelworkers local 3141, where he held several offices including Grievance Chairman, 2 term Vice President, and 2 term President. He also has been a member of the Teamsters local

543M, and is currently a member of BCTGM 433.

He was elected President of the Southwest Iowa labor council in 2014, was hired as a full time field organizer in September of 2016 for the Western Iowa Labor Federation, and elected President in April of 2019.

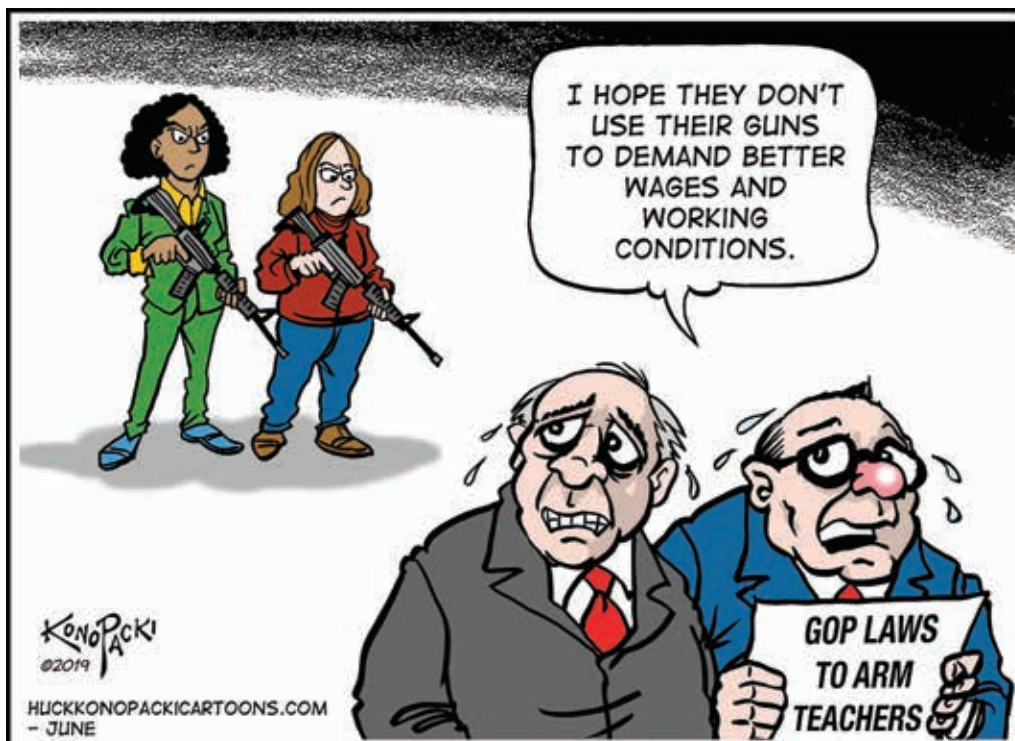
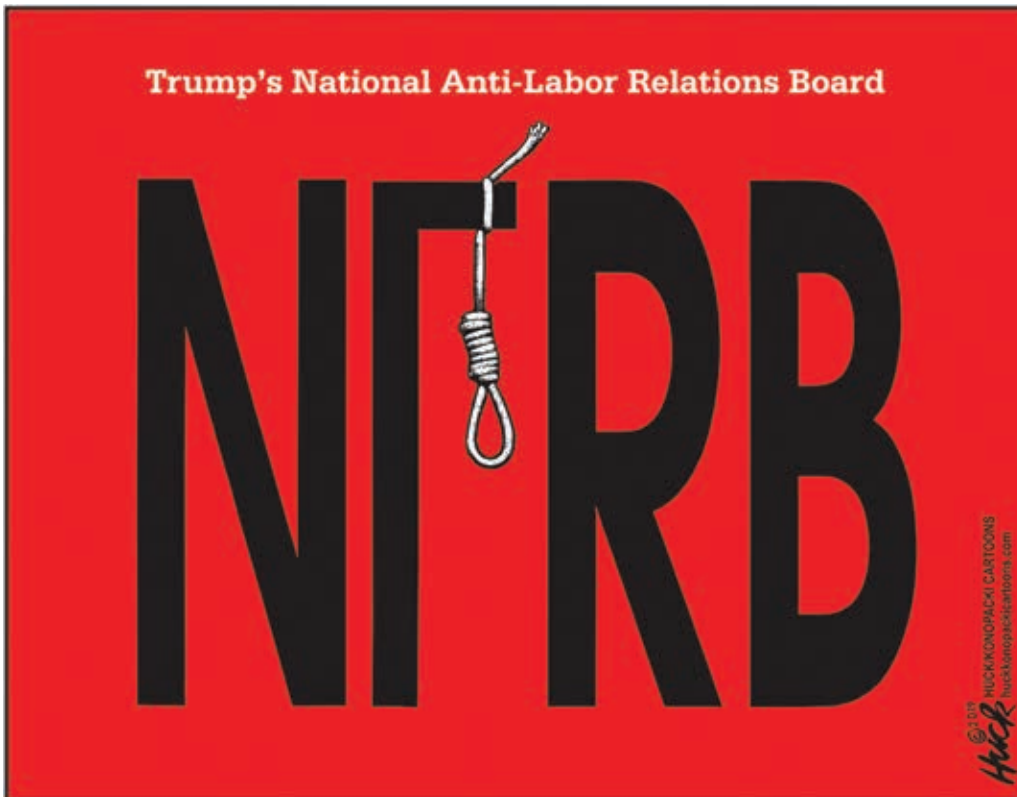
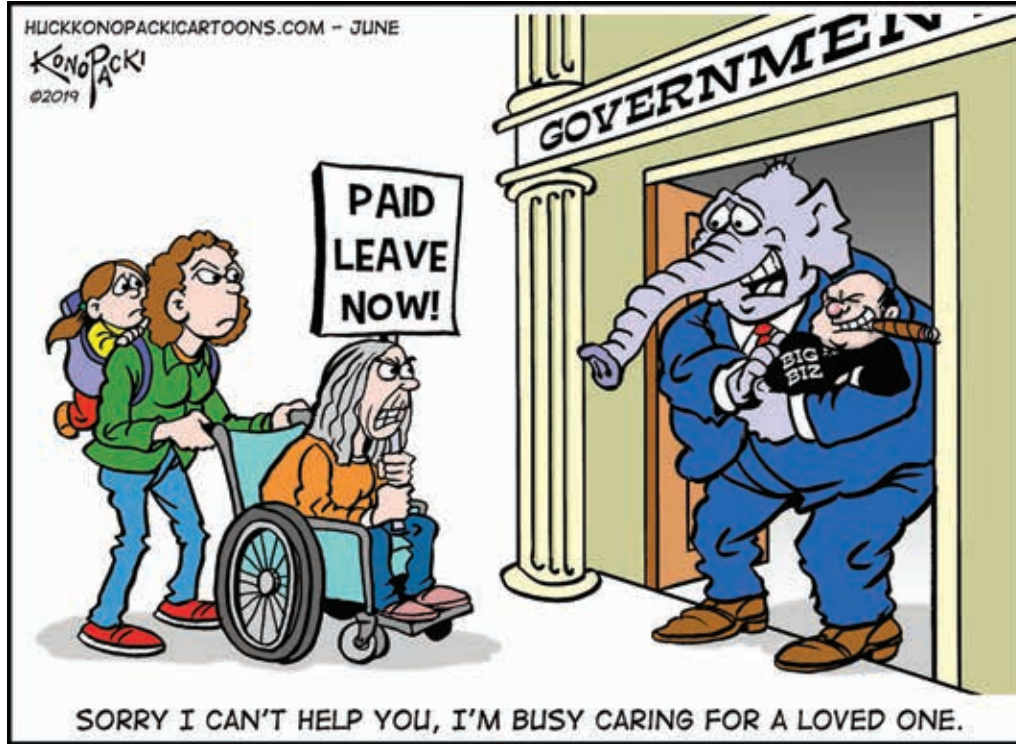
Scott and his wife Wendy were married in 1994, They have three daughters Madison, Tessa, and Kaitlyn.

Great River ALF Stays Focused

In August 2016, five central labor councils were merged to form the Great River Area Labor Federation. These five labor councils cover the Mississippi River in both Illinois and Iowa. It's been almost three years and during that time we've made significant progress by focusing on internal organizing. With a coordinated effort to host classes, engage members, and proactively lobby on behalf of public workers, the labor movement can continue to make local strides that can positively impact the lives of working families. In the City of West Burlington, six public employees were going to see their contract stripped down to a handbook and after publicly advocating for a contract that has been in place for over 30 years, those employees were able to keep permissive contract language in

their contracts. From Dubuque to Keokuk, we've been able to host University of Iowa Labor Center classes that engage our union members to advocate for safety and to know their rights as Union Stewards. Our next focus will be to host Candidate Academies in Burlington, Keokuk, and Davenport to introduce candidates running for school board, city council, or county board of supervisors to local issues that have a major impact on working families. Legislatively, we are focusing our attention on the Federal Swap Program passed by the Iowa General Assembly, creating a money laundering scheme that bypasses American-Made Steel provisions and the Davis-Bacon Act. We hope to continue our work to fight on the behalf of working families in Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois.





DEADLINE TO PURCHASE HALL OF FAME TICKETS

WEDNESDAY, August 14



Todd Anderson

SEIU/National AFL-CIO

Ron Koppes

IAMAW

Marcia Nichols

AFSCME

Labor Hall of Fame Dinner & Ceremony

The Meadows, Prairie Meadows Casino, Altoona, IA

Thursday, August 22nd

6:00 pm Hospitality

7:00 pm Dinner

Tickets \$50 each

Table for Eight (8) \$400

To Order Tickets Call 515-262-9571 and ask for Jamie
Mail to IFL, 2000 Walker Des Moines Iowa, 50317

Labor's History, Labor's Future

By John McKerley

The Iowa labor movement has long understood the importance of labor history. In the 1970s, IFL president Jim Wengert, together with Mark Smith, spearheaded the creation of the Iowa Labor History Oral Project (ILHOP), an innovative oral history project designed to document workers' stories. As Wengert later told an ILHOP interviewer:

It was my position, and really the position of all the [Iowa labor movement], that if we were going to do a history project . . . we were going out there and we were going to interview a railroad worker or an Auto Worker or a Teamster . . . so that we got the total history.

Today, ILHOP has become arguably the largest and longest-running, labor-focused oral history project in the world. Now directed by the University of Iowa Labor Center, ILHOP has collected over 1,200 interviews recording workers' memories stretching from the 1890s (when some of the first interviewees were children) to the present.

These memories include stories from growing up in Iowa's coal mining camps during the 1910s, organizing industrial unions during the 1930s and 1940s, building labor's political influence during the 1950s, the rise

of the public-sector unions during the 1960s, struggles in the face of deindustrialization since the 1970s, and labor's innovative efforts to survive and thrive in the new century.

Anyone interested in Iowa's labor history can access these stories through ILHOP's partners at the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI) and at the University of Iowa Libraries. Visitors to SHSI's research center in Iowa City can request copies of ILHOP interview transcripts and other documents in the Iowa Labor Collection, and everyone can access over one thousand audio recordings and transcripts online through the Iowa Digital Library's ILHOP page: digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/search/collection/ilhop.

Today, Iowans also have a new opportunity to become involved in preserving and promoting the state's labor history: the Iowa Labor History Society (ILHS). The society is a statewide non-profit dedicated to bringing Iowa's labor history to new audiences. In 2018, ILHS won a grant from Humanities Iowa—the state's affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities—to develop a new traveling exhibit based on the ILHOP interviews.

The exhibit, "Speaking of Work,"



is made up of six banner stands that tell the story of the Iowa labor movement through the voices of people who represent different generations of workers and the movement's diversity. They include IFL president Jim Wengert; Des Moines CIO organizer Don Harris (who ended his career with the UAW); Waterloo packinghouse worker, AFSCME member, and civil rights activist Anna Mae Weems; Janet Fife-LaFrenz, who participated in the 1970 Keokuk teachers strike; Davenport UFCW union representative Mario Ruiz; and Cedar Rapids Iron Worker Joe Zahorik. Each stand is accompanied by an audio player (built by union apprentices from the Carpenters and Painters) that lets visitors listen to clips from the ILHOP interviews.

Now, ILHS is excited to report that the exhibit is finished and ready for unions and coalition part-

ners to display in their halls or for special events. Speaking of Work is a wonderful way to bring Iowa's labor history to your members and communities. To check on exhibit



Iowa Labor History Society

availability, please contact ILHS president John McKerley at johnmckerley@uiowa.edu or by phone at 301-789-4164. To learn more about the society and find information about membership, visit iowalaborhistory.org.

Support Bridge City Strikers

For almost a year, workers from Bridge City Construction continue their strike.

Construction workers Jorge Martinez of Ottumwa and William Ragen of Martinsburg claim Bridge City Construction has employees working in unsafe conditions. When they confronted the employer, nothing changed,

so they went on strike June 15. The strikers claim there is a lack in instruction in operating heavy equipment, access to safety training and lack of safety equipment.

For more information and a way you can assist these workers, contact them at tristateworkerscoalition@gmail.com



ATTENTION VETERANS!

The Iowa Federation of Labor AFL-CIO would like to recognize members who have served our country at this year's Iowa Federation of Labor convention, this August. If your local plans to send delegates to the Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO Convention August 21-23, please make sure the IFL knows who are veterans. **Please send the Veterans Info form, back with your local's credentials to Jamie Miller, 2000 Walker, Suite A. Des Moines, IA 50317.**

Iowa Supreme Court Deals Blow To Public Sector Unions

By Jay Smith & McElwain

On Friday, May 17, 2019, the Iowa Supreme Court issued five opinions. Each of the opinions dealt with issues concerning organized labor, and specifically, each of the opinions concerned public sector labor unions in Iowa. The two main cases before the Court were *ISEA, et. al. v. State of Iowa* and *PERB, et. al. and AFSCME, Local Council 61 v. State of Iowa and PERB, et. al.* Both involved the question of whether the changes contained in H.F. 291, which substantially curtailed public sector bargaining in Iowa, were constitutional under the Iowa Constitution. Not surprisingly, in 4-3 decisions, the majority on the Court upheld the changes contained in H.F. 291.

At this point, as the Labor community begins to digest the ramifications of these decisions, there is one important takeaway from the decisions. That is, the only way Labor will make any headway in not only reinstating but strengthening public sector bargaining rights for all public sector employees is through the political process. Indeed, writing for the majority in the *ISEA* case, Justice Waterman said as much:

House File 291 reflects lawful policy choices by the legislature. The 2017 amendments did not infringe on a fundamental right of speech,



association, or equal protection that could justify judicial intervention . . . We reach the same conclusion and leave this issue for the democratic process.

Thus, the Court determined that

the State's asserted rationale for its blatant and unwarranted attack on organized labor met constitutional muster.

While the Labor community obviously disagrees with the Court's conclusion, as did three of Justice Waterman's colleagues on the Court, the conclusion that the issue is left for the democratic process should serve

as a reminder to Labor that, absent constitutional protections, Labor is always vulnerable to the whims of anti-labor majorities and executives at the highest levels of government.

For example, Justice Darryl Hecht retired from the Court due to a terminal illness the day after the arguments were heard in these cases. Justice Hecht was appointed to the Court by Governor Vilsack, and his replacement was appointed by Governor Reynolds. Justice Hecht's replacement sided with the majority in each of the cases. While no one can say for certain how Justice Hecht would have decided the issue, common sense suggests that Labor may have had a more favorable audience on the Court but for Justice Hecht's illness or a more Labor friendly governor to appoint his replacement.

This example illustrates what should be an obvious fact – elections matter. And, as Labor begins to ready itself for another election in November 2020, we need to remind ourselves that the anti-union attacks will continue until we help elect Labor friendly candidates and put those candidates in the majority at all levels of government.

\$35,000 Raised In One Day For MDA



For 37 years these two cities have been competing against each other to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) of Iowa.

Cedar Rapids and Waterloo have held a friendly Union challenge for years at the Annual Union Bowl Challenge, and this year was they raised close to \$35,000, collectively.

Waterloo fielded 14 team and raised \$9,192 and Cedar Rapids had 38 teams raising \$25,406. Last year the event raised over \$30,000.

"The Hawkeye and Black Hawk Labor Chapters have been supporters of MDA for over 35 years and this event really showcases their incredible generosity. Each and ev-

ery dollar that is raised goes toward families living right here in Iowa. We put these funds toward MDA Care Centers, medical equipment loans, life-saving research, and a summer camp for children ages 8-17. We are beyond grateful for the amazing Union members that support MDA of Iowa." Said Molly Zmudka, Development Coordinator, MDA, Cedar Rapids.

Zmudka continued "Together in 2019, over \$34,000 was raised for MDA of Iowa. This was another huge year for Union Bowl, and we are already looking to make next year even better. Absolutely any union can get involved and we love seeing new faces. Not only is this

event fun, but it provides funds that are crucial to so many of our families."

The MDA of Iowa serves 1,700 individuals living with muscle-disease.

Funds raised go toward making

the MDA Summer Camp at Camp Courageous possible, and also toward groundbreaking research, life-enhancing programs, and care at the MDA Care Center at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

WANTED

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Look Behind The Curtain With Us

Look behind the curtain when policy makers start talking about “transparency.” They have used the word and concept to hide attacks on working families and public services during the last three years.

Attacks on unions, workers’ compensation and a host of attacks on the way we make public policy in Iowa rarely happen in the public light. The new laws usually are crafted in the back rooms and rammed through the Legislature at the last minute with little scrutiny. The wheeler-dealers are quick to tell the public, “Don’t worry,” or “Nothing to see here.”

By all means, worry. There is plenty to see — which of course gives us something to do at the Iowa Policy Project, seeing behind the curtain and helping you to see too.

Examples? We know what happened to collective bargaining and workers’ compensation in 2017-18 — severe limits designed to punish public employees that hurt private workers as well. The Legislature and Governor have also “modified” the tax system in favor of the wealthiest with new tax cuts that most of us will not see.

You might remember: A quarter of taxpayers, earning \$30,000 to \$60,000 per year, will see only 10 percent of the tax cut in 2021, while the wealthiest 2.5 percent of Iowans will take almost half of it. All services, including education, will have to be cut more than \$300 million to compensate for the reduction in revenue.

In the most recent session, lawmakers effectively pitted public worker pensions against other pub-

lic services by wrapping them into spending limits on city and county taxes. The Legislature passed an arbitrary 2 percent cap on local property tax revenues that can only be exceeded by a supermajority of a city council or county board.

Contrary to the promotional spin about “transparency,” the legislation is actually part of a long-term effort to erode support of public workers and public services. It will penalize growth in some communities and take away authority of locally elected officials. It is one more attack, like prohibiting county minimum wage increases, on the legitimate job of local governments.

Lawmakers snuck in yet another break for private schools (increasing tax credits for private-school scholarship contributions) while only pretending to enhance support of public schools. Do not be misled: Iowa public school funding per pupil has now been held below 2 percent on average for a decade. Meanwhile, the drive for private school vouchers was put off to another year, in the face of a mobilized defense by public-school teachers and advocates — but it will be back, as will new moves for tax breaks. Be on guard.

And don’t forget lawmakers’ own neglect to act in other areas, including:

- No solution to Iowa’s growing water quality crisis affecting the public health and quality of life for all.
- No action to raise the now 11-years-stagnant minimum wage, or to stop unchecked wage theft.
- No serious enhancement of

access to child care, a significant challenge for low- and moderate-income families who need to work to advance their own opportunity.

For 18 years, it has been our job at the Iowa Policy Project to offer solid analysis and responsible solutions for public policy that gives Iowa’s working families and their advocates a better chance — in debates at the State Capitol and discussions at the family table or over the backyard fence.

It is only with good information, sorted from the spin of right-wing, antiworker ideologues and corporate skills, that Iowans can expect to put themselves back on the road to opportunity. We have to put a barricade on the public policy low road forever. We encourage you to look at our “Roadmap for Opportunity” two-pagers and other resources on the IPP website, www.iowapolicyproject.org.

Because Iowans have stepped up to support the work, IPP staff members have been able to develop and share expertise and insights to all. It is how we all work together. Please consider a substantial contribution in 2019, from your union organization and, if you can, personally as well.

Thank you for your support in getting our work, and Iowa working family issues, on the table in the Statehouse. Contact me at mikeowen@iowapolicyproject.org if you would like to have an IPP presentation at your local or a community forum in the coming months.

Mike Owen is executive director of the nonpartisan Iowa Policy Project in Iowa City.

The Midwest School For Women Workers

The Midwest School for Women Workers will be held in Iowa City, July 23 – 27.

The Midwest School for Women Workers brings together working women to develop leadership skills, understand challenges and issues facing the labor movement, and learn from each others’ experiences. Held annually since 1976, the Midwest School has a proven track record of equipping women to lead effectively in their workplaces and organizations. Common features of the Midwest School each year include:

Core courses on key labor rights and representation skills. Plenaries featuring national speakers, interactive workshops on current issues, leadership training, and networking opportunities.

There will special events featuring Midwest labor history, culture, film, arts, and activism and instruction from experienced university, union, and community-based educators.

The school is open to all work-

ing women in the Midwest region, with a primary focus on meeting the educational needs of women in unions, worker centers, and community groups that work on



labor issues. Participants typically include women active at all levels including rank-and-file activists, elected leaders, stewards, board members, and staff.

Participants will attend core skill-building classes each morning and afternoon, along with plenary and workshop sessions on priority economic and policy issues affecting workers. Course and work-

shop topics including: Rights in the workplace; Grievance and bargaining basics; Leading with strength and solidarity; Communicating and mobilizing to win; Combating sexual harassment; Labor’s history and labor’s future; Work-life balance, FMLA, and family leave; Racial justice at work and in our unions; Immigration and labor rights; Building community coalitions; Women and the economy Special events; Engaging with presidential candidates on working women’s issues; Field trips, films, and cultural events; Spotlight on Midwest women in the trades.

Inclusion and Nondiscrimination: The Midwest School for Women Workers welcomes participation of all working women and transfeminine, non-binary, intersex, and gender non-conforming workers, regardless of occupation, race, creed, religion, ethnicity, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or immigration status.

Tuition: Commuter: \$400 In-

cludes daily lunches, two dinners, snacks Double room: \$575 Single room: \$750 Includes hotel lodging, parking, daily breakfast and lunch, two dinners, snacks Registration options: Online: visit laborcenter.uiowa.edu By mail: The University of Iowa Labor Center, 100 BVC, Room W130, Iowa City, IA 52242-5000. By phone: call (319) 335-4144. Please register by July 1 to insure availability of housing. Registrations received after July 1 will only be accepted if space is available. Cancellation policy: Registrations cancelled after July 12 will incur a \$75 fee. Questions? Please call or email: 319-335-4144 / labor-center@uiowa.edu

A limited number of partial scholarships may be available for women whose organizations are unable to pay the full cost of tuition. Please approach your local union and/or area labor federation to request support before applying for a scholarship. To request a scholarship application, email labor-center@uiowa.edu or call (319) 335-4144.