

The Professionals Guild of Ohio



PGO UNION NEWS

May 2013

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PGO Staff Employees Union*

Republican Lawmakers Introduce Ohio Right to Work Bills

Republican representatives have introduced three separate bills calling for the implementation of so-called right to work laws. One bill would apply to the private sector, a second to the public sector and, to make sure all the bases are covered, the third would put a comprehensive right to work issue on the ballot as a constitutional amendment.

The sponsors of these bills continue to perpetuate the lie that they just want to free employees from having to join unions by outlawing forced unionism. Of course, you know that it's already illegal to require employees to join a union. Stay tuned for further developments.

Ohio AFL-CIO Plans Right to Work Meetings

In addition to the push by anti-union politicians, the group behind the effort to get a right to work amendment on the ballot is stepping up its efforts to gather signatures. To combat these efforts the Ohio AFL-CIO will be holding meetings around the state to provide educational information about how right to work is wrong and to encourage more people to get involved in halting the effort.

If you are interested in getting more information and/or getting involved, meetings will be held around the state over the next month. Please check the Ohio AFL CIO website, <http://haflcio.org/urgent-member-meetings-to-stop-so-called-right-to-work/>. Dinner will be provided at each location by the Central Labor Councils at 5:30 and the meeting will run from 6 p.m. to 7p.m.

PGO Says Goodbye to John Campbell-Orde

General Counsel John Campbell-Orde is leaving PGO. After nearly six years fighting for PGO members in negotiations, arbitrations, court hearings, and administrative hearings, John is returning to his home state, Tennessee. John came to PGO after graduating from University of Cincinnati College of Law, where he had focused his studies on labor and employment law.

After several years as a field representative, John was promoted to general counsel. We have greatly enjoyed working with John over the years and saw up close his hard work and dedication to our members. John has done an outstanding job for PGO and we wish him all the best.

A search for John's replacement is underway.

Employees' Jobs Protected When Reporting Injuries

By Amelia Woodward, Esq., PGO Field Representative

Most workers are familiar with the name of the federal agency responsible for investigating workplace hazards: the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA extends protections to employees working in the private sector and, in some states, to employees working in the public sector as well.

Michigan is one state in which public employees are protected from retaliation for whistleblower activity by a state run workplace safety and health agency similar to OSHA. Recently, an administrative Law judge in Michigan extended the whistleblower protection to employees who are disciplined for the act of suffering an injury on the job. In this case, AT&T maintained an employment policy that disciplined workers for injuries. A Michigan technician was suspended for incurring a "preventable occupational accident" when he fell on ice at work. Michigan's OSHA office ruled that AT&T violated the employee's right to report an injury without retaliation.

It is important to note that Ohio public employees are not covered by OSHA. Ohio statutes, however, provide protection under ORC § 4123.90 for public employees, as well as employees in the private sector. These laws protect employees from any type of discrimination, including demotion, reassignment, termination or any punitive action because he or she has filed a claim under the worker's compen-

sation act for any injury that occurred during the course of and arising out of his or her employment.

To invoke legal protections, employees must notify the employer in writing of the violation of ORC § 4123.90 within ninety days of the discriminatory action. An employee must then file an action in common pleas court within one hundred and eighty days of the discriminatory action.

If you believe your rights on the job have been violated, please let your local Union leadership know and call the Columbus PGO office immediately.

SB 47 Limits Ohio's Referendum Process

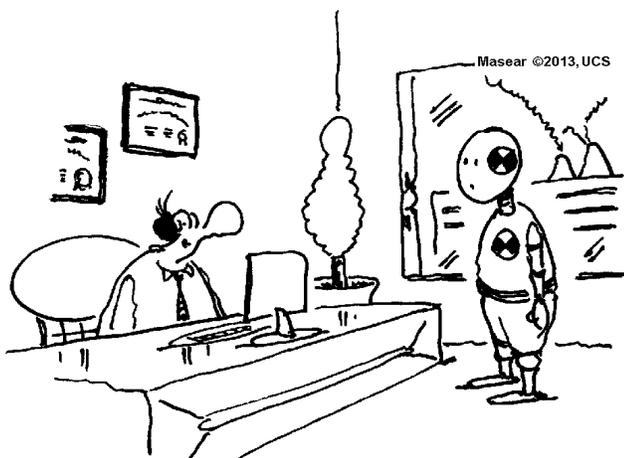
By Amelia Woodward, Esq., PGO Field Representative

Last month, Governor Kasich signed into law a new limit on the time allowed to collect signatures during a referendum petition drive. Prior to the introduction of this bill, organizers of petition drives had ninety days to collect the signatures needed to get a referendum on the state-wide ballot for a vote. Once the initial petitions were submitted to the secretary of state for verification, organizers could continue to collect signatures during the verification process, which could add another sixteen to fifty-eight additional days to collect signatures. At that point, if the secretary of state determined the number fell short of what was needed, organizers would have ten days to collect more signatures.

The law, if it goes unchallenged, will eliminate the ability for organizers to collect signatures during the secretary of state's verification process. Groups opposed to the law, such as We Are Ohio, the League of Women Voters and the Ohio Fair Elections Network, have not launched a petition drive to overturn the law, but they are reportedly paying close attention to it.

PGO Council 14 Elects Officers for Second Term

PGO members at the Aurora Academy in Toledo, Ohio recently re-elected *Carrie Dlugas* as president, *Megan Pollauf* as vice president and *Shaina Hutson* as secretary/treasurer. These local Union officials will continue to represent the members of Council 14 until May 2015. Thanks and congratulations go out to these dedicated officers!



"You're just what we're looking for."

**Work Ethic:
The Price of Being Stylish**

By John Campbell-Orde, Esq., PGO General Counsel

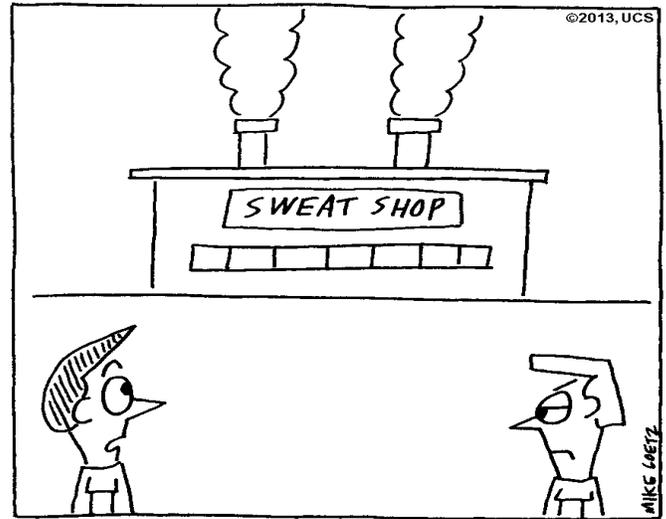
Do you know where your shirt was made? How about your pants or your shoes? I'll guess. They were made in China or another Asian country. Why should we care about this? Because Americans care about whether their money is funding unethical or immoral treatment.

I have written about the choices we make as consumers in an earlier article. It is, for instance, essentially impossible to buy an ethically produced cell phone. I am a realist. I don't expect people to do without cell phones because essentially all are unethical in their production. That does not, however, excuse us from the responsibility to buy other items that are made in fairly and safely when we have the opportunity.

Clothing is a great example. Most clothing is imported from countries where dangerous, sweatshop conditions are the standard. However, basically everything you need—from t-shirts, to dress shoes, to suits, to work boots, to running shoes, to dress shirts—is made in America. Often these goods are better made than their foreign counterparts. While many companies make some products in America and others abroad, you can usually see online where each item was made, or at least whether it was made in America or not.

Redwing, for example, is an old American brand that makes excellent (though somewhat expensive) work boots—you can see on their website which ones are made in America, as some production is done abroad. New Balance makes many, though not all, of its running shoes in America. American Apparel (a trendy brand targeting college kids) makes sweaters, shirts and basically everything in between in their California manufacturing facility. Several newer companies have been founded on the idea that clothing should be made close to home. American Giant, for example, makes high-quality sweatshirts, t-shirts, and similar gear in America

The list goes on. In fact, with internet shopping so popular, it is increasingly easy to buy clothes made in America since many small clothing companies have started selling directly to customers, rather



“Who would wanna buy sweat?”

than through department stores. From conservative to casual to trendy, whatever your look, you can find high quality clothing that is made in America. You may pay a little more, but you will get better quality and a better conscience. And, with a quick search you can find several online lists of high quality American-made clothing.

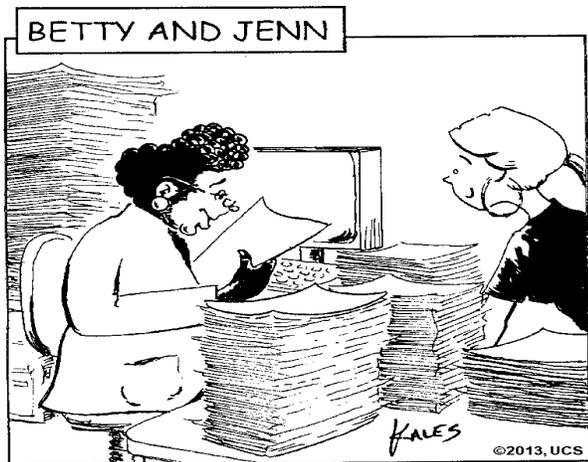
PGO Election Underway

Ballots for the election of state PGO officers are in the mail! To exercise your right to vote for the people you want to lead your Union, you must fill out your ballot and mail it to PGO in the postage paid “secret ballot” envelope that is provided with each ballot. To be counted, your ballot must be delivered to PGO no later than June 15, 2013.

The following members have been nominated and will have their names appear on the ballot:

- President - Eric Kanthak, Council 12;
- Vice President – Joe DeStazio, Council 13;
- Treasurer – Dan Rice, Council 12;
- Secretary – Lynn Pinkelman, Council 13.

You will be permitted to write in your choice for each office if you do not want to vote for the person nominated. Write in candidates must be card-signed dues paying members of the PGO. Please contact the PGO executive director if you have any questions or concerns during this election.



"This is great. The new union contract gives us two bad hair days a year."

PGO Council 13 Settles Contract

PGO and the Lucas County Children Services Board have ratified an agreement that will pay members a five hundred dollar lump sum payment in May of this year and another five hundred dollar lump sum payment in January, 2014. The Union agreed to maintain the current wage schedules and suspend annual step increases. Additionally, the parties agreed to modify vacation and sick leave pay-outs to satisfy the county commissioners' demands that the agency reduce its severance pay obligations.

Members have been permitted to accrue up to three years of vacation. In 2014, members with more than two years of accrued vacation will be allowed to cash-in up to one year of vacation. Members will continue to be allowed to accrue up to three years of vacation, but the agency's severance pay obligation will be capped at two years in 2014. The following year, 2015, members with more than one year of accrued vacation will be permitted to cash-in up to one year of vacation and the agency's maximum severance pay obligation will be one year. Sick leave severance pay will be reduced on a seniority-based graduated scale that will range from a maximum of thirty to sixty-five days.

PGO was represented by Council 13 president, *Joe DeStazio*, vice presidents, *Lynn Pinkelman* and *Dave Rudebock*, treasurer, *Nancy Reineke*, chief steward, *Becky Davenport*, nurse steward, *Melinda Meehan*, *Vonda Williams*, AFSCME regional director, *Steve Kowalik* and PGO executive director, *Chauncey Mason*.

PGO Council 12 Settles Wage Negotiations

PGO and the Montgomery County Commissioners have ratified an agreement that provides for a 2.5 percent general increase retroactive to January 1, 2013. The Union agreed to suspend anniversary merit increases and longevity payments. PGO represents all employees working in the children services division of the county's job and family services department.

The Union bargaining committee included: Council 12 president, *Eric Kanthak*, vice president, *Dan Rice*, secretary, *Jane Hay*, treasurer, *Clarissa Gresham*, PGO vice president, *Joe Atkinson* and PGO executive director, *Chauncey Mason*.

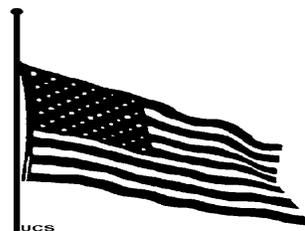
Strongsville Teachers Settle Strike

Nearly four hundred teachers represented by the Ohio Education Association ended their eight week strike by reaching an agreement on a new two-year contract. Among other things, the new deal reportedly converts the 9.3 percent retirement contribution the board of education paid in addition to the employers' required share for retirement by increasing the base salary by 10.3 percent. Additionally, the deal will restore raises that were frozen in the 2011-12 school year.

Insurance Benefits

Following a trend that pre-dates the Affordable Care Act, employers continue to shift health care coverage to employees or the government. A recent Gallup survey reports that employer-sponsored insurance covered fewer than 45 percent of U.S. adults in 2012, down from about 49 percent in 2008. The biggest losses occurred among people earning less than \$90,000 a year and among minorities. Government-sponsored health coverage (Medicare, Medicaid and veterans programs) during this period increased from 23 percent to 25 percent.

Memorial Day



Remember Those Who Served