

The Professionals Guild of Ohio



PGO UNION NEWS

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President Trump – the TPP and NAFTA

Since occupying the White House, President Trump appears to be making good on his campaign promise to withdraw the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The President has now discontinued negotiations with the other foreign leaders involved in the development of the TPP.

The TPP deal, was intended to link a dozen nations from Canada and Chile to Australia and Japan in a complex web of trade rules, as a way to permanently tie the United States to East Asia and create an economic bulwark against a rising China. The unions have opposed the TPP arguing it would be a continuation of trade policies that have cost working Americans millions of good-paying jobs.

The Economic Policy Institute reports that one of the mistakes of the TPP was to leave currency rules out of the agreement. The trade deficit with TPP countries—attributable in large part to misaligned currency—cost America's working families 2 million jobs in 2015, more than half in manufacturing. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, "Omitting currency rules from the TPP benefits Wall Street, making the TPP a tool

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for off-shoring jobs, not for job creation."

Now the unions are hoping President Trump opens a real dialogue that will create changes in NAFTA. Clearly changing NAFTA will be difficult since it is an existing trade agreement with Mexico and Canada. However, any dialogue on this matter has been delayed since the meeting with President Trump and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto on January 31 was cancelled over the Mexican President's refusal to have Mexico pay for the wall between the two countries, which was a cornerstone of President's Trumps campaign promises.

In a concession to Nieto, President Trump has agreed not to mention "the wall" in any public comments for the time being. It may be a difficult issue for President Trump if it comes down to a choice between building the wall (and having Mexico pay for it as promised) or tearing down NAFTA.





"Yes, I did promise to be available 24/7. Twenty-four minutes an hour, 7 hours a day."

Andrew Puzder Nominated as Secretary of Labor

In contrast to the President Trump’s professed support for the concerns brought forward by union leadership is his nomination of Andrew Puzder as Secretary of Labor. Puzder, the CEO of the Carl’s Jr./Hardees fast food chain, is regarded by much of the labor sector as being anti-union and anti-worker, as well as being greatly scorned by his own workers.

In New York City, food workers, union leaders and City Council members rallied in front of a federal Labor Department in protest of Puzder’s nomination. Speaker after speaker provided evidence of Puzder’s anti-union and anti-worker agenda.

In 60 percent of Department of Labor investigations since 2009, restaurants affiliated with Puzder’s company were found to have breached wage and hour laws. After Puzder became CEO in 2000, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which falls under the Labor Department, has found 98 safety violations at Carl’s Jr. and Hardee’s locations—36 of which could cause death or serious physical harm.

The rally was part of a nationwide wave of actions to denounce Trump’s selection of Puzder. Workers were seen holding signs with slogans such as “I’m not a robot and yes, I will sue if sexually harassed,” “Andy Puzder makes more in a day than I do in a year!” and “Drain the swamp? 64 million Americans stuck in Puzder’s swamp.”

Bronx resident Jorel Ware, 35, a McDonald’s employee, told one reporter that the labor secretary should be someone who wants to support the 64 million people who “don’t make a living wage in this country.” “We need somebody that’s going to be our side and Puzder is clearly not on our side,” Ware said.

Twin-Cities Janitors Strike Against Low Wage Agenda

On January 21, retail janitors who clean the Home Depot store in the Minneapolis-St. Paul went on strike to protest poverty wages and President Trump’s anti-worker wage agenda.

One worker, Luciano Balbuena, who’s cleaned the same Home Depot store six hours a day, seven days a week, for eight years, says “It’s a poverty wage. We don’t have benefits, paid sick days, or vacation days. They should pay us more—a living wage so we can survive and live with our families.”

The strike was timed to coincide with Trump’s inauguration. “This is a guy who is very negative against us as workers,” said Balbuena. “He believes that the companies that we work under, like Home Depot, are already paying us enough.” It should be noted, Home Depot’s founders donated millions to Trump’s election campaign.

Home Depot’s co-founder, Bernie Marcus, was listed as one of Donald’s Trump top ten campaign contributors.



"Those aren't my footprints. Just who have you been letting walk all over you, Haskins?"



PGO Negotiations

PGO Council 20

PGO members working for the Montgomery County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently completed a wage reopener for the last year of its three-year agreement. The agreement will provide a two percent step increase and a two percent lump sum bonus effective January 1, 2017. Members at the top of the wage schedule will receive a three percent bonus. Council president **Patty Burcham**, vice president **Sheila Brannon** and PGO executive director **Chauncey Mason** served on the Union bargaining committee for these negotiations.

PGO Council 7

PGO members working for the Butler County Board of Developmental Disabilities approved a two percent wage increase for the final year of their three year contract effective January 1, 2017. The Union bargaining committee included Council 7 president, **Terri Elms**, PGO executive director **Chauncey Mason**.

2017 Minimum Wage

The minimum wage in Ohio has been increased to \$8.15 per hour, effective January 1, 2017. Please keep in mind that this is a minimum hourly wage for all hours worked in a work week in Ohio up to forty hours. Overtime (time and a half) rates apply to any hours worked beyond forty hours in a work week.

2017 IRS Mileage Rate

The 2017 IRS mileage rate for business miles is 53.5 cents, down one-half cent from the 2016 rate. The new rate went into effect January 1, 2017.

Ohio Implements Online Voter Registration System

As of January 1, Ohio residents can now register to vote or update their registration online. At Secretary of State John Husted's request, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 63, which authorizes the use of online voter registration in Ohio.

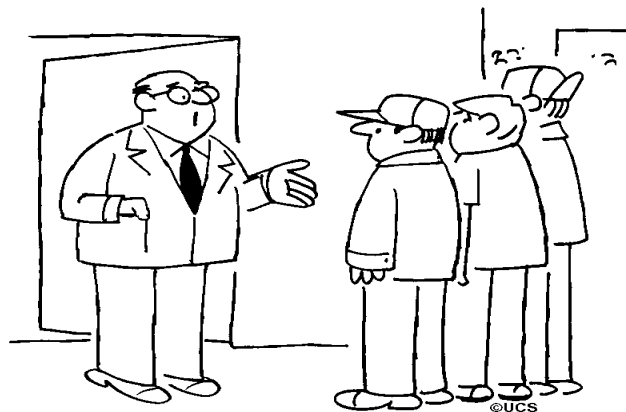
According to Secretary Husted, online voter registration has saved other states between 50 cents and \$2.34 per registration. Ohio could have saved between \$3.7 million and \$17.3 million from 2011 to 2016 had online voter registration be in effect.

Ohioans wishing to register to vote or update their registration can visit MyOhioVote.com/VoterRegistration to get started.

2016 Cost of Living Increase

Inflation is the increase in the cost of things over time. Thus when there is inflation, it takes more money to buy the same things (food, gasoline, etc.) than it did in the past. Inflation is regularly measured on a monthly and yearly basis.

Inflation is important because it can effectively decrease your real wages. Over the past twelve months inflation has been 0.3 percent. This means that on the whole you will need to earn at least this amount in additional more money this year than you did one year ago in order to maintain the same purchasing power that you had one year ago. Your purchasing power should increase by anything you earn above this amount.



"So, you see, if I split my million dollar bonus among all 1,820 of you it wouldn't amount to much..."



"I am not a lazy bum! I am a potential workaholic with highly developed stress management skills!"

Illinois AFSCME Sets Strike Authorization Vote

It has been one year since Illinois Governor, Bruce Rauner, walked out on negotiations for a new contract with the state employees. The employees continue to make clear their willingness to return to the bargaining table and work constructively to find common ground. The Governor continues to reject compromise at every turn.

The Governor's conduct continues to worsen the state's fiscal woes and his 'my way or the highway' approach with negotiations are making matters worse.

The state's public servants stood ready to negotiate, yet the Governor is asked the Illinois Labor Relations Board to declare negotiations to be at "impasse." Of course, the Labor Board granted his request (since he appointed its members), thereby opening the door for Rauner to move forward to impose his own extreme terms on state employees, including the elimination of all safeguards against irresponsible subcontracting, a four-year wage and step freeze and a 100% increase in employee health care premiums.

The wage freeze combined with such a steep health care hike will mean a \$10,000 pay cut for the average state employee.

AFSCME has appealed the Labor Board's decision and successfully secured a temporary stay that prevents the governor from imposing his terms for the time being. However, the stay could be lifted at any time.

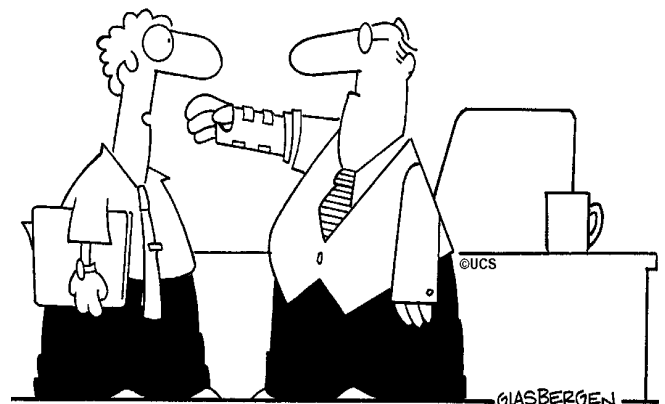
In a recent effort to break the twelve-month stalemate, AFSCME made a proposal in which employees would get no base wage increase for four years—and pay a modest increase in their health insurance costs. Yet, the Governor still refuses to make any compromise whatsoever, calling the proposal "superficial" and greatly exaggerated their potential cost to the state. In other words, the Governor is creating "alternative facts" of his own.

The only recourse left for AFSCME members is to decide whether or not to authorize their Bargaining Committee to call a strike. The Strike Authorization Vote will take place in each local union through February 19. As you know, a 'yes,' vote does not necessarily mean there will be a strike since the Bargaining Committee will continue to make every effort to reach a fair settlement. On February 19, state employees will know if they need to be prepared to go out on strike if the negotiation efforts fail.

Union Membership Continues to Drop

Gallup Polls continue to show strong public support for American unions, who earn about \$200 per week more than non-union workers. Nevertheless, union membership has dropped from nearly 12.5% in 2008 to 10.7% in 2016.

According to the AFL-CIO, "There are millions of working people who want and need a union but who are being prevented from forming one by their employer*** our outdated labor laws have made union avoidance nothing more than the cost of doing business."



"With all due respect, sir, it's hard to feel sorry for someone who got carpal tunnel from counting his money."