



OPEIU LOCAL #9

Newsletter



For Bulletin Board Posting

FEBRUARY 2014

Candy Johnson, President - local9candy@sbcglobal.net

Dawn Martin, Business Manager - local9dawn@sbcglobal.net

414-771-9730, 1-800-870-9499, FAX: 414-771-9732

PLEASE NOTE MEETING LOCATION

**General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, February 18, 2014
5:00 p.m.**

**SEIU
Member Meeting Hall #1
2229 South Halsted Street
Chicago, IL 60608**

February Meeting

Our February meeting is one of three that is held in Chicago. We will meet at the SEIU offices as listed above. Refreshments will be served.

How Hard Is It to Vote?

The following article shows that obtaining a government-issued photo identification in order to be able to vote is not the simple process supporters claim it to be. This clearly shows the challenges voters can face and why a less determined person might give up and not vote.

By Jim Wright, former Speaker of the US House of Representatives.

The first indispensable test of a "democracy" is equal inclusion of every adult citizen in the fundamental act of voting.

Here in the USA, the past century has seen enormous progress, beginning with women's suffrage and hastened by the Supreme Court's ruling that opened all public schools to students previously denied because of race.

In my state, too, there's been heartening progress. In the late 1940's, Bernard Rapoport and I were branded as dangerous radicals because we wanted to abolish the poll tax, let women serve on juries, and admit black students to the U.T. law school. Each of these things has long since been accomplished, and nobody thinks of them as "radical" today.

Last Fall, however, I experienced the unexpected effects of Texas' new voter identification laws. Other states have made similar changes.

Texas voters were considering several amendments to the state's somewhat antiquated Constitution, and we in Fort Worth were voting on three local bond issues.

A new law passed by our Legislature was in effect for the first time. On the surface it seemed innocuous. We'd always been expected to have a current voter registration certificate. Now, in addition, we must show a current, government-issued photo.

That seemed fairly simple. I'd always carried my Texas driver's license even after voluntarily letting it expire when my aging eyes became no longer safe for driving. Too bad. Not current. My TCU faculty photo ID was "current" but not governmental.

Okay! I'll just go by and get one of those photo ID's the Public Safety Department issues to non-drivers.

Not so simple, I learned. Although the folks who issue these IDs knew exactly who I was, they insisted the new law requires them to demand proof. My old U.S. passport wouldn't do it. It, too, had expired.

Do I carry my Birth Certificate? Well, no—but I have a photographic copy at the office. Won't do they say. No copy. The real thing.

My assistant rummaged through old boxes and files of family treasures and found a certified copy of my birth certificate. That, happily, sufficed.

But now, I had to prove that I actually lived at the home address I'd given. I was stumped. "Want to come out there with me," I asked, "and I'll show ya through my house?" Not necessary, I was told, "Just show us an envelope mailed to you at that address from a company sending you a utility, auto insurance or property tax bill."

Well, I found something that satisfied them and walked away with a printed copy of my new "government-issued" photo ID.

The folks who administered all these requirements were not rude, nor unpleasant, just doggedly insistent on enforcing the new voting laws to the letter. But it took several days and was doggone exasperating.

Joyously, I voted. But I discovered that others also had experienced a pile of petty details.

The two leading candidates for Governor of Texas—Democratic State Senator Wendy David and Republican Attorney General Greg Abbott—both had their ballots put in a "provisional" pile because of petty discrepancies in the printing of their names on their voter registration cards and their photo ID cards. Wendy had used her maiden name on one of these documents but not the other; while Greg (his abbreviated middle name) had written "Gregory" on one of the two cards. Happily, they both finally managed to vote.

Lest all of this be but a foretaste of things to come in the November 2014 nationwide Congressional races, I plead that all who value highly the rights of working men and women, and who want once again to see a Congress that is responsive to average Americans—will make certain that we learn the local rules in advance and persist in making sure that each of our individual votes is counted.

For that is the price of a free country!

Your Work Computer is NOT Private

There is a lot of talk about computer security breaches, viruses and spyware. If you're worried about protecting your privacy on your computer at work, it's not a computer hack, but your boss you need to worry about.

If you are taking a few minutes at work to send a friend an email or visit a web site, it's easy to be lulled into a false sense of privacy. Don't be fooled. Over ¾ of employers monitor the web sites their employees visit and over half review the emails sent and received by staff. Software has become increasingly sophisticated to allow management to keep an eye on your computer use. There are programs that can monitor emails for certain key words (profanity, your boss's name, etc.)

Federal law clearly states computers at work are the employer's property and management has the right to monitor all emails and internet activity. Employees in the public sector have even less privacy. Their emails can be requested by any citizen under the Freedom of Information Act. Before you write that next email or visit another website at work, imagine your boss is looking over your shoulder—even if you can't see her or him, he or she probably is.

As always, if you have any problems do not hesitate to call or email the office.

/gb,dalu 24111, afl-cio