



OPEIU LOCAL #9

Newsletter



For Bulletin Board Posting

MARCH 2013

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PLEASE NOTE MEETING LOCATION

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, March 19, 2013
6:00 p.m.

WISCONSIN STATE AFL-CIO
6333 W. Bluemound Rd.
Milwaukee, WI

Upcoming Elections:

Local 9 Elections

Nominations for President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary, three Trustees and six Executive Board members will take place at the regular membership meeting on April 16, 2013. The meeting begins at 6 pm at the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO office as listed above. If anyone is interested in running for a position but is not able to attend the meeting, please send a notice of intent to run and specify the position via letter or email to either President Johnson local9candy@sbcglobal.net or Secretary-Treasurer Martin local9dawn@sbcglobal.net prior to the meeting so your name can be placed in nomination.

OPEIU Convention Delegates

The OPEIU 26th Convention will be held June 3-6, 2013 at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront, San Diego, CA. The Executive Board has determined that the Local will send two delegates to the convention.

The President is automatically one of our delegates per the Constitution. This means that one delegate position will be filled at the April 16th membership meeting. The nominations and election will occur at the April meeting. In order to be eligible to be considered for a delegate position you must have been a member in good standing for one year.

Chicago Federation of Labor Delegate Positions Available

We are still looking for individuals to serve as Local 9 representatives to the Chicago Federation of Labor. Anyone wishing to serve as a delegate to the CFL should contact Candy Johnson to inform her. In the event there are more volunteers than positions open, there will be an election.

The Decline of Unions is Your Problem Too

Recently news came out that the share of America's workforce that is unionized hit a 97-year low. Now only 11.3% of workers belong to a union, and a great chunk of those are in the shrinking public sector. In the private sector, unionization fell to an abysmal 6.6%, down from a peak of 35% during the 1950's.

Most Americans paid little attention to this news. On one level that is not surprising since most Americans aren't in a union. It is a vicious cycle; as unions decline fewer people see their fates as bound with unions, which just accelerates the decline.

But on another level, American's non-reaction is striking. We remain in the wake of the Great Recession. Inequality and wealth concentration

are at levels not seen since just before the Great Depression. This would seem as ripe a time in modern memory for a revival of organized labor. Instead, a basic assumption now shapes most American's mindset about labor: the belief that the death of unions isn't my problem because I'm not in a union. That assumption is wrong in two critical ways.

First, the fact is that when unions are stronger the economy as a whole does better. Unions restore demand to an economy by raising wages for their members and putting more purchasing power to work, enabling more hiring. On the flip side, when labor is weak and capital unconstrained, corporations hoard, hiring slows, and inequality deepens. Thus, we have today both record highs in corporate profits and record lows in wages.

Second, unions lift wages for non-union members too by creating a higher prevailing wage. Even if you aren't a union member your pay is influenced by the strength or weakness of organized labor. The presence of unions sets off a wage race to the top. Their absence sets off a race to the bottom.

Unfortunately, the relegation of organized labor to tiny minority status and the fact that the public sector is the last remaining stronghold for unions have led many Americans to see them as special interests seeking special privileges, often on the taxpayers dime. This thinking is as upside down as our economy.

This country has gotten to today's level of inequality because, ironically, those who work for a living think like atomized individuals. While those who hire for a living, organize collectively to rig policy in their favor. Today's 97 year low is the result of decades of efforts to squeeze unions and disperse their power.

Some have argued that unions bear part of the blame for their own decline by sometimes being less adaptive to change. That is why some national labor leaders from Service Employee's

International and elsewhere, have launched a "Labor 3.0" project to reimage unions. It is significant that innovative forms of worker organizing are now going on.

Whatever form it takes, organized labor keeps an economy healthy. Some conservatives argue for a higher federal minimum wage on the notion that when companies pay their employees enough to live, the employees will rely less on government assistance and participate more in economic life. Precisely the same case can be made for unions. Consider that workers at non-unionized Wal-Mart constitute the largest bloc of food stamp and Medicaid recipients in many states. If we want a better economy, then, we need a better story about how the economy works, in which a union worker is not a cost but a customer. The weakness of labor is everyone's problem—and its revival is everyone's opportunity.

Organized labor is responsible for:

- Social Security
- The 8-hour day
- Overtime pay
- The 5-day workweek
- The Employment Discrimination Ban
- The Federal Minimum Wage Law
- Paid Vacations
- Cost-of-Living Allowances (COLA)
- Employer paid Health Plans (Fringe Benefits)
- OSH Act (Workplace Safety)

Who benefits from these? Everybody, that's who. Union and non-union alike. What has the non-union side of labor done for you lately?

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

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