



United Nurses Associations of California
Union of Health Care Professionals

PEOPLE

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE ONE
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President's Message

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PEOPLE Recruiter
Spotlight

A MESSAGE FROM

UNAC/UHCP PRESIDENT

Denise Duncan, RN

On behalf of the State Officers and UNAC/UHCP, thank you for advancing our work through your commitment to the AFSCME PEOPLE Program as an MVP. This year, the stakes are higher than ever when it comes to defending our union from federal legislation and policies that threaten to dismantle it. As union members, we're set to face multifaceted attacks on our interests—both inside and outside of the workplace.

Twenty-eight states have enacted so-called "right-to-work" legislation across the country. These anti-union policies and practices disempower workers from unifying to exercise a strong, collective voice—a critical component to gaining better working conditions and negotiating stronger contracts. Not surprisingly, reports have proven that workers in right-to-work states are less likely to earn competitive wages, benefit from employer-sponsored health care, and receive retirement security. This anti-worker agenda seeks to decimate labor unions while offering no discernible boost in business investment or job growth.

In the next few months, we'll know the results of *Janus v. AFSCME*, a U.S Supreme Court case that's being funded by special interests to destroy public sector unions. As an affiliate of AFSCME, we stand in solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of public sector union members that this ruling will ultimately impact. As a private sector union, we know that we could very well be the next target of right-to-work advocates.

Just as it is our responsibility as union members to hold management accountable to our contracts, it's equally important that we lend our expertise and participation to efforts that influence our ability to have a voice on the job. Union members who are well informed of the legislative policies and processes that impact their professions and workplace environments represent a serious threat to corporate interests' hold on political power. Because of the direct challenges it imposes upon those interests, our PEOPLE program is more than just a political action fund—it's a vehicle for our members to engage in the political and legislative process.

If you haven't yet signed up to become a PEOPLE MVP, please consider doing so by contacting the Political/Community Affairs Representative in your region today. We can't win this fight without you.



THE PEOPLE PROGRAM

A QUICK INTRODUCTION

The PEOPLE program is AFSCME's bipartisan political action fund that serves as an engine to advance the union's legislative goals. As an affiliate of AFSCME, UNAC/UHCP members benefit from and contribute to the growth of this vital program, which provides the resources necessary to support our collective efforts to address the issues that impact us at work. Through PEOPLE, AFSCME engages in the political process by funding strategic member-to-member communications, grassroots lobbying, and voter mobilization efforts. In addition to issue advocacy, PEOPLE contributions are also directed to pro-union candidates, elected officials, and issue campaigns nationwide. As a labor union, UNAC/UHCP has an

obligation to endorse political candidates and support elected officials that will serve in our members' best interest when it comes to the issues that impact their profession and the health care industry. Our support is determined by our member-driven Political Endorsement Committee, which meets regularly during election years to inform and interview prospective candidates and elected officials about our issues as health care professionals. Ultimately, the Political Endorsement Committee's recommendation to endorse a candidate is based on their platform and voting record as it pertains to workers' rights and workplace protections—not their party affiliation.

HOW **PEOPLE** HELPS YOU

Politics impact policy at every level of government, and those policies have the potential to affect our wages, retirement security, and overall workplace experience. As nurses and health care professionals, federal and state laws affect each aspect of our professional lives. Our contributions to the PEOPLE program and commitment to political engagement allow us to build the power we need to win stronger contracts, secure better benefits, and pass legislation that positively impacts our working conditions.

OUR VICTORIES

OVER THE YEARS, UNAC/UHCP HAS PROTECTED AND STRENGTHENED THE PROFESSIONS OF ITS MEMBERS THROUGH POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE POWER.

1998

PASSED
Assembly Bill 1208
Needle Stick Safety

1999

PASSED
Assembly Bill 394
Nurse-to-Patient
Ratios/Safe Staffing

2010

DEFEATED
Senate Bill 1111
Posting of Nurses' Home
Addresses on the Internet

2015

PASSED
Senate Bill 327
12-Hour Shift
Preservation

2016

PASSED
Senate Bill 1299
Workplace Violence
Prevention

2017

PASSED
Senate Bill 17
Drug Rate
Transparency

A person with long blonde hair, wearing blue scrubs and a gold watch, is seen from the side, working at a desk in a clinical or office environment. The background shows various items like a printer, a bottle of hand sanitizer, and some papers.

RIGHT-TO-WORK

What it Really Means and How it Impacts Labor Unions.

The term “right-to-work” originated from ***Dent v. West Virginia***, an 1889 Supreme Court case stating that Americans retained a fundamental right to pursue an occupation of their choosing. Essentially, the final ruling prohibited state legislatures from regulating or restricting people’s chosen professions. “Right-to-work” wasn’t fully reinterpreted until years later, when a *Dallas Morning News* journalist began an anti-union press campaign that defined the concept as “the right to work in a unionized business without paying dues.” As a result, the term has taken on a deceptively different meaning.

Under federal law, no American worker can actually be forced to join a union. However, most unions enter into collective bargaining agreements with companies and organizations that require all workers, whether they're union members or not, to pay dues to the union for negotiating on their behalf with management. Right-to-work laws that've been passed at the statewide level legalize these kinds of contracts, which means that workers in unionized businesses can benefit from the terms of a union contract without having to pay union dues. As a result, labor unions have historically fought against the expansion of right-to-work laws because of their ability to deliberately weaken the collective voices of workers.



The forces behind Janus v. AFSCME don't only aim to weaken public employee unions; ultimately, they're seeking to destroy the public sector and public ownership of resources as a whole.

Since the installation of the Trump administration within the last year, a broader, reinvigorated interest in passing right-to-work legislation at the national level has rapidly developed. Last September, the Supreme Court agreed to hear *Janus v. AFSCME*, a case that has the potential to significantly weaken public sector unions by curtailing their right to charge non-members an agency fee, which covers the protection and services the union is obligated to provide all employees within the bargaining unit. Oral arguments associated with the case were heard this February by the Supreme Court, and a final ruling is expected to be issued in June of 2018.

A ruling against AFSCME in the Supreme Court's decision will have severe, nationwide implications for union members and working families. The forces behind this case don't only aim to weaken public employee unions; ultimately, they're seeking to destroy the public sector and public ownership of resources as a whole. The implementation of right-to-work policy that could potentially result from this would completely decimate workers' power to negotiate for the funding and staffing levels needed to provide vital public services.

HOW WILL THE PEOPLE PROGRAM ASSIST US IN BUILDING OUR UNION'S POWER IN THE FACE OF RIGHT-TO-WORK?

As a private sector union, UNAC/UHCP must be prepared to confront the reality that anti-worker proponents will target our workforces next. However, we're all too familiar with the anti-union agenda they're attempting to advance. Since the implementation of their first contract in 1996, our SPNN members have faced the threat of right-to-work policies firsthand every day. As an open shop facility, Sharp Healthcare nurses were not required to join UNAC/UHCP as a condition of employment—yet, our union was still obligated to provide representation to nurses who were non-members. Sharp management exploited this at every turn by restricting union access to Sharp facilities, and distributing anti-union messaging at new employee orientations that depicted union membership as a “choice” rather than an advantage.

These tactics significantly halted union density and growth at Sharp Healthcare over the past 20 years. By 2016, only 35% of the nursing workforce were UNAC/UHCP members. Without any sort of substantial collective bargaining power, Sharp nurses were forced to contend with what the employer imposed upon them over that 20-year time period—below-market wages, inadequate retirement benefits, poor staffing, and high turnover. When they reached the bargaining table in June of 2016, SPNN affiliate leaders resolved to ratify a contract that included non-negotiable language that would implement a system-wide closed shop. To gain the leverage

needed in order to accomplish this, SPNN members launched an intensive 4-month internal organizing drive throughout all of their facilities. By November, they'd signed up 1,000 new members and increased their overall membership density from 35% to 60%.

In addition to developing their organizing skills, our SPNN members worked with UNAC/UHCP to build additional support for their cause by meeting with elected officials, labor unions, and community based organizations. Participating in legislative visits with federal, statewide, and local legislators provided SPNN with the platform to educate decision makers about the issues they were facing with the employer. SPNN reaped the benefits of UNAC/UHCP's PEOPLE program firsthand when elected officials began writing letters of support and making phone calls to Sharp Healthcare's executive leadership on their behalf. PEOPLE is more than just a political action fund—it's a vehicle that allows our union to participate in and benefit from the political and legislative process. Engaging external stakeholders during our SPNN contract campaign provided our members with the leverage they needed to impose additional pressure on Sharp Healthcare. Ultimately, their commitment to internal organizing, political engagement, and community outreach allowed them to shift the balance of power from the employer to their union—giving them the opportunity to ratify the strongest contract they'd ever negotiated.

PEOPLE

PEOPLE RECRUITER SPOTLIGHT : KSDHCPA

PEOPLE RECRUITER PROFILE

Congratulations to KSDHCPA for being the top-producing PEOPLE MVP affiliate of 2017! Over the past year, their affiliate officers and contract specialists signed up 160 new PEOPLE MVPs in San Diego.

“I believe we should all contribute to the PEOPLE program because we need our voices to be heard at the national level. We need to have our say in the decisions that are being made to affect us as health care professionals and as a union. We believe our success with the PEOPLE program here in San Diego can be attributed to the one-on-one conversations that we have with our members. We fully educate them on how their contribution will help—the donation may be small, but it definitely plays a big part in protecting our professional interests over the long term.”

Nicolasa Avey, RN

KSDHCPA Secretary



IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PEOPLE MVP RECRUITER, OR HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR PEOPLE PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT THE POLITICAL/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE WORKING IN YOUR AFFILIATE'S REGION.

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