



IN STRENGTH & UNITY

COLLEGE STAFF GUILD

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS LOCAL 1521A

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SPRING 2012



Butler Named Distinguished Woman in Education

A highlight of the CFT Convention in San Jose came on April 15, when Velma J. Butler received the Distinguished Woman in Education award for 2012. President Butler was recognized for leading the Staff Guild for 12 years, as President of the statewide Council of Classified Employees and CFT Vice President, and for numerous other community and labor activities.

In her acceptance speech, Butler focused on the importance of education in her life and, as she received a standing ovation, thanked her family, Local 1521A and CFT members. She dedicated the award to all union members who make a difference for our students.

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Staff Guild Prevails on Shared Governance

Classified employees across California have made steady progress toward being full partners in their community college districts since 1988, when the State Legislature passed AB 1725 setting Shared Governance as a goal. The Staff Guild has been a constant force for shared decision-making, but LACCD commitment to the process was cast in doubt last year by an unauthorized District email conveying different goals.

After months of rallies by classified employees and other pressure by the Staff Guild, Chancellor Daniel LaVista has reaffirmed the central role of shared decision-making. An agreement settling a June 2011 grievance emphatically states, "any Local 1521A member serving in any capacity on a selection/hiring committee/panel(s) shall



Classified employees and retirees packed the Jan. 25 Trustees' meeting.

only be appointed by the Staff Guild."

The District also agreed in the April 25

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Support Tax Initiative

Californians Must Invest More in State's Future

One of the biggest decisions facing California voters on the Nov. 6 ballot will be raising taxes on the wealthiest Californians. The choice recently became clearer when the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) agreed with Gov. Jerry Brown to work together for a unified progressive tax initiative. The alternative is cutting billions more in education programs and other vital public services.

The Restoring California coalition and Gov. Brown agreed to significant changes in their previously independent ballot measures, including how long the sales and income tax increases would remain in effect. The goal was to offer voters a simple, direct choice in the General Election: Should the wealthiest invest more in the state's future, or not?

"This is a compromise," CFT President Joshua Pechthalt said, "but it remains a



JoAnn Haywood of WLAC and other CFT delegates demand that wealthy Californians pay their fair share of state revenue.

very progressive tax measure. Overall, this is an important step forward for California, and we are pleased to lead the fight for its passage in November."

The "Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act of 2012" – based largely on

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CALENDAR

JUNE

- 5 **Primary Election**
- 5 Personnel Commission District
- 6 Board of Trustees District
- 20 Board of Trustees District
- 27 Executive Board

JULY

- 4 Independence Day holiday
- 11 Board of Trustees District
- 18 Executive Board
- 25 Board of Trustees District
- 26-30 AFT Convention, Detroit

AUGUST

- 8 Board of Trustees District
- 13-17 CFT/Union Summer School, UCLA
- 22 Board of Trustees District

AFT College Staff Guild

The American Federation of Teachers College Staff Guild is an affiliate of the CFT/AFT, AFL-CIO.

The AFT College Staff Guild Local 1521A represents more than 1,200 clerical and technical employees of the L.A. Community College District.

President: Velma J. Butler

First Vice President:
Dorothy Bates

Second Vice President:
Curtis Smith

Treasurer: Dorothy Tyus-Rowe
Interim Treasurer: Luz Nuñez

Secretary: Mary Van Ginkle

Grievance Secretary:
Fern Reisner

Executive Secretary:
Sandra Lepore

Communications Consultant:
Steve Weingarten

Open Letter on Pension “Reform”

Dear Governor Jerry Brown:

How are you doing during these trying times, Governor? It must be hard deciding the future of all Californians. I’m writing on behalf of the classified employees of the L.A. Community College District. You remember us. You were once an LACCD trustee.

I want you to know that we stand with you on the “Schools and Local Public Safety Act of 2012.” We agree with you that public education and services need more support, and that wealthy Californians must pay their fair share.

We also believe that some pension reform is needed. Spiking, for example, and other methods of artificially inflating a pension are wrong.

But while we support fair efforts to clamp down on fraud and abuse, we do not agree with several proposals you are making in the name of “pension reform.” Creating a 2-tier system or raising the retirement age, for example, would be disincentives for young workers to build their careers in public service. We need equity, not division, among the labor force.

Your proposals go way beyond pension

reform, and would limit our bargaining rights and undermine retirement security for millions of public employees. Every Californian deserves a secure retirement. Please note, Governor, that the average public pension in the state is \$26,000 a year, and that half of CalPERS retirees receive \$18,000 or less in annual benefits.

Public school employees have done our part. We are under-staffed, pay more of our healthcare costs, and haven’t had a pay increase in years. Yet we continue to provide support for 140,000 LACCD students, and we have served the District for up to 40 years.

We call on you to support a fair pension reform. We pay into our pensions, we volunteer and contribute in our communities – even after we retire – and our pensions and pension fund create jobs and bring billions of dollars into the economy.

In closing: Do the right thing for California public employees, Jerry.

In Strength and Unity,




Staff Guild members kept up the pressure at Harbor (left) and East L.A. colleges.

Shared Governance...

Continued from page 1

settlement to communicate to all college presidents and LACCD administrators that Local 1521A has the exclusive right to appoint members to selection/hiring panels and other Shared Governance bodies.

President Velma J. Butler said the Staff Guild places a high priority on Shared Governance, and that the District’s reaffirmed respect for the union’s role in shared decision-making “preserves our long history of progress.”

The settlement followed months of union members mobilizing, beginning with a Jan. 25 meeting of the LACCD Trustees when more than 100 classified employees picketed outside District headquarters, then

packed the Boardroom.

Chapter Chair JoAnn Haywood of West L.A. College told the Trustees that administrators “cannot pick and choose when Shared Governance is important. It’s important all the time.”

AFT Faculty Guild President Joanne Waddell strongly supported classified employees. “Shared Governance is real,” Waddell said. “It’s the way we do business, to tackle challenges and thrive, not just survive.”

CFT President Joshua Pechthalt told the Trustees, “There are many challenges facing public education. I’m sure you can find better things to do than exclude classified employees.”

“Special Exemption Initiative”: Attack on Unions

Big Business is coming after working people again in an effort to silence our voice and clear the field of any opposition to its agenda. This latest attack comes in the form of a November ballot initiative that claims to limit “special interests,” but would only silence workers.

The initiative has been described as “a remake of so-called ‘paycheck protection’ measures rejected by voters in 1998 and 2005. The new version tries to be clever, purporting to restrict corporate money as well. In fact, it would gut only one side’s

ability to play in politics – organized labor.”

The initiative would bar union members from setting up automatic donations for political activity through their paychecks, but a giant loophole in the measure would allow for unlimited corporate spending on political campaigns.

Corporations already outspend unions 15-1 in politics. The measure would silence opposition to their agenda, including outsourcing jobs, slashing wages and health benefits, and attacking retirement security. We must protect our collective voice.

Invest in State’s Future...

Continued from page 1

the CFT Millionaires Tax – will generate \$9 billion in additional vital funding in the next fiscal year (\$2 billion more than the governor’s previous initiative). About 85% of the revenue will come from the highest income tax brackets.

Individuals earning below \$250,000 per year will pay no additional income tax; single filers with income above \$250,000 would pay 1% more; individuals earning \$300,000 and up would pay

2% more; and those with income about \$500,000 would pay 3% more.

Brown also agreed to reduce his proposed increase in the sales tax from a half-cent to a quarter-cent, reducing the burden on working families. CFT held firm for this change.

The California budget has already suffered huge cuts in every program, from education and childcare to public safety programs for the needy.

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Tax Initiative At a Glance

- The initiative will raise income taxes on the highest earners by 3%, with smaller increases on lower incomes.
- Individuals earning below \$250,000 and families earning below \$500,000 will pay no additional income tax.
- Single filers earning at least \$500,000 yearly would pay 3% more; those earning from \$300,000 to \$500,000 would pay 2% more.
- It also increases the sales tax by one-fourth of 1%.
- These revenue increases are all temporary, with the income tax provisions lasting 7 years and the sales tax provisions lasting 4 years.

June 5 Primary Election Guide

The California Federation of Teachers, L.A. County Federation of Labor and/ or AFT 1521A have endorsed the following candidates and ballot measures. The Staff Guild, however, cautions members that **State Senate and Assembly members whose names are in red voted against classified school employees last year by approving the Diastat Bill (SB161).**

U.S. Congress

- District 25 Lee Rogers
- District 27 Judy Chu
- District 28 Adam Schiff
- District 29 Tony Cardenas
- District 30 No Recommendation
- District 32 Grace Napolitano
- District 33 Henry Waxman
- District 34 Xavier Becerra
- District 35 Joe Baca
- District 37 Karen Bass
- District 38 Linda Sanchez
- District 39 Jay Chen
- District 40 Lucille Roybal-Allard
- District 43 Maxine Waters
- District 44 Janice Hahn
- District 47 Alan Lowenthal

State Senate

- District 25 Carol Liu
- District 27 Fran Pavley
- District 33 Ricardo Lara
- District 35 No Recommendation

State Assembly

- District 38 Edward Headington
- District 39 Richard Alarcon
- District 41 Chris Holden
- District 43 Mike Gatto
- District 45 Bob Blumenfield
- District 46 Adrin Nazarian
- District 48 No Recommendation
- District 49 Ed Chau
- District 50 Betsy Butler
- District 51 Jimmy Gomez
- District 52 Norma Torres
- District 53 John A. Perez
- District 54 Holly Mitchell
- District 57 No Recommendation
- District 58 No Recommendation
- District 59 Reggie Jones-Sawyer
- District 62 Steve Bradford
- District 63 Anthony Rendon
- District 64 Isadore Hall
- District 66 Al Muratsuchi
- District 70 Bonnie Lowenthal

Local Government

- L.A. County District Attorney**
Carmen Trutanich
- L.A. County Supervisor #2**
Mark Ridley-Thomas
- L.A. Superior Court #3**
Laurence Kaldor
- La Puente City Council**
Dan Holloway, Charlie Klinakis
- Long Beach City Council**
#2 Suja Lowenthal
#4 Patrick O'Donnell
#8 Al Austin
- Torrance City Council**
Pat Furey
- Whittier City Council**
Nick Donovan, Craig Lebow,
Lupe Garcia-Sahagun
- Long Beach Unified School Dist. #2**
No Recommendation

Educators Endorse Barack Obama

THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE OUR UNION STRONG

An Advocate for Student Success

Beautiful new buildings sparkle on LACCD campuses, but classified employees had to fight for space in the new worksites. At East Los Angeles College, Chapter Chair Laura E. Ramirez and AFT Local 1521A members raised the roof when they discovered that plans for the Administration building didn't include a lunchroom for 40 staff, with similar problems at ELAC's South Gate satellite campus. Both shortcomings were addressed after the Staff Guild took action.

"The incident showed me how deeply ingrained the belief is that only faculty and administrators matter. Without daily union activity, administrators would never even think about us," Ramirez said. "We have to change that entire culture."

Staff Guild members have made great progress changing that perception in the fight for a voice in all Shared Governance decisions. Classified employees rallied at ELAC – with strong student and faculty support – when the LACCD Board of Trustees met there on March 7.



Ramirez and Olita Tulifua march with CFT delegates in San Jose against budget cuts in public education.

"My chapter members felt proud and empowered, and that we deserve to be part of Shared Governance. Classified make a difference when we act together. I want to give staff all the tools we need to make things better."

Ramirez began at ELAC as a student-worker in 1996 and joined the bargaining unit in 2000. The native of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, is now a specialist in Special Funded Programs and began serving as Chapter Chair last year. The campus has more than 300 classified staff.

As she has gotten more involved with union activity, Ramirez said, she has a new appreciation of the diverse roles that classified employees play from one end of the campus to the other. "Serving on the Budget, Work Environment and Shared Governance committees has shown me what an important contribution we make to

students' success, and how often administrators overlook us."

Administrators could avoid many problems, she said, by communicating openly with classified employees. "For example, students come to us to register for classes and set up financial aid even before they see a professor. You would think that administrators would want to listen to our feedback on how we can be more efficient."

Ramirez is herself a successful student. Thanks to the Staff Guild contract, she has been able to continue her studies, and has almost completed the Master's program in public administration at Cal State University Northridge.

One of her guiding principles, she added, remains constant: "Know your rights and fight for them."

Tax Initiative...

Continued from page 3

More than \$4 billion in new cuts are being proposed this year. Without new revenue, schools, universities and public safety will face an additional \$5 billion in cuts.

"Our students, our jobs, our communities depend on passage of this initiative," said Velma Butler. "Everyone must help get out the vote, then get out to vote themselves."

Chapter Chair and Delegates Election

Members have voted and the ballots have been tabulated. The results are available at www.local1521a.org



We're online at www.local1521a.org

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