



A Union of Professionals

1274 Newsline



North Suburban Teachers Union – Local 1274, CFL, IFT/AFT, AFL-CIO

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Election 2016: The Push Is On

With Governor Rauner flexing his muscles in Springfield and Donald Trump making a run for the White House, there has never been a greater threat to working people and their families in America. The AFT, the IFT and NSTU are urging members to get out and vote for candidates who will protect the middle class, uphold workers' rights and give everyone an equal shot at the American Dream.

At the top of the ticket, the union has endorsed Hillary Clinton, shown on the right speaking at the AFT convention this summer. Her experience, coupled with her deep understanding of the challenges working families face every day, makes her the right choice for America.

For the open U.S. Senate seat in Illinois, we are supporting Tammy Duckworth. She has proved time and time again in the U.S. House of Representatives that she is committed to education and building an economy that works for all, not just those at the top.

For Illinois Comptroller, we urge a vote for Chicago City Clerk Susana Mendoza. She will be the independent watchdog we need in Springfield. We need a fighter in that office who will take on the Governor, and Mendoza has shown herself to be a tireless defender of the people of Illinois.



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"We're stronger when every child has the chance to live up to his or her full potential. And public education gives our kids that chance." – Hillary Clinton

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Statewide Races



U.S. Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth, running for the open U.S. Senate seat.
<http://tammyduckworth.com/>



Chicago City Clerk Susana Mendoza, running for Illinois State Comptroller.
<http://susanamendoza.com/>

Illinois General Assembly

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This year the Illinois General Assembly is of particular concern. Two years ago, when Bruce Rauner ran for governor of Illinois, he did so explicitly on an anti-union platform, blaming “government union bosses” for the state’s problems. Since he was elected, he has continued his anti-union campaign, holding the state budget hostage to a slate of measures that would weaken the power of labor, including proposals to gut workmen’s compensation, create right-to-work zones, and undercut pensions. The result has been a lengthy budget stalemate that has endangered the funding of schools, universities, and critical social services.

In this battle between the governor and labor, it has been members of the General Assembly, both in the House and the Senate, who have held firm against Rauner, supporting the rights of workers, their families, and their unions. On the is a list of candidates who represent many members of the NSTU, and who deserve and need your vote. They have stood up for us, and we need to stand up for them. ■

Endorsed Candidates:

Ann Williams - 11th House District, Chicago

Kelly Cassidy - 14th House District, Chicago

Laura Fine - 17th House District, Glenview

Robyn Gabel - 18th House District, Evanston

Lou Lang - 16th House District, Skokie

Merry Marwig - 20th House District, Chicago

Marty Moylan - 55th House District, Des Plaines

Michelle Mussman - 56th House District, Schaumburg

Ira Silverstein - 8th Senate District, Chicago, Lincolnwood

Laura Murphy - 28th Senate District, Park Ridge

Don't know your legislative district? Go to www.elections.il.gov/InfoForVoters.aspx. and enter your address.


EARLY VOTING starts in Illinois on October 24th. To find locations and times, go to:
www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections/earlyvoting/Pages/EarlyVotingLocations.aspx

One Hundred Years of the AFT: On the Right Side of History

This past summer it was my honor and pleasure to lead a 10-member delegation from our local to the AFT convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (See picture on page 5.) Attending our national, biennial convention is always inspirational, but it was perhaps more so this year as the AFT celebrated its 100-year anniversary.

With tributes to the past woven into the business of the present, delegates had a chance to learn about or relive the events of our union's history, our struggles and our successes. Reflecting back on those times, one cannot help but be proud to belong to this organization because those 100 years tell an unbroken narrative of our union advocating not just for the professional dignity and economic security of its members, but for fairness and equality in the greater society in which we work and serve.

The modern teachers union movement began in Chicago in 1897 with the formation of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, which made great strides in the early 1900's under the leadership of Margaret Haley, an elementary school teacher working in the neighborhood of the Chicago stockyards. One of Haley's big battles was against the corporate elite of Chicago who used their clout with city hall to avoid paying their fair share of taxes, denying the schools of needed funding. Sound familiar?



Above, Margaret Haley



Above, Margaret Haley

Haley and the CTF won an important, if mostly symbolic, victory when the courts ruled in their favor in their case against the city's unfair tax policy. The CTF affiliated with the Chicago Federation of Labor in 1902 and set the stage for the

Chicago Teachers Union to become Local 1 of the AFT.

The AFT also has a storied history of fighting for racial equality. In 1954, it was the only union to file an amicus brief for the plaintiffs in the landmark case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*. But before they could fight against segregation elsewhere, the AFT needed to address that issue within its own ranks.



The AFT prepares an amicus brief in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954.

In 1948, the AFT became the first union to stop chartering segregated locals. Though that was a bold step for those times, it did not confront the segregated locals that were already a part of the union prior to 1948. The issue came to a head at the 1956 AFT convention where a resolution was passed to expel all segregated locals. Being on the right side of racial justice cost the AFT 14% of its membership, but saved the soul of the union.



The history of the AFT is full of battles for fairness, freedom, and dignity – on issues large and small, such as the case of four teachers from the West Suburban Teachers Union in Illinois (Local 571) who were fired for getting married. Or the case of Paul Finot in the early 1960s who was fired for growing a beard.

But the biggest battles came in the 1960's and 70's as teachers unions across the country, including the Niles Township Federation of Teachers, began to win the right of collective bargaining (see page 6 and 7 of this newsletter). Perhaps that is a right that our generation in Illinois takes for granted since we have known no other reality.



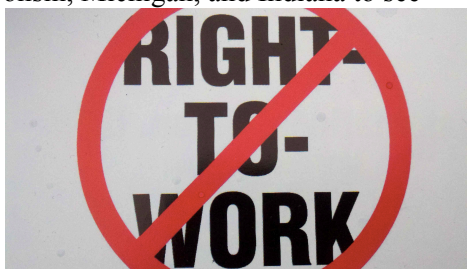
There was a time when teachers, like these from the western suburbs of Chicago, could be fired for getting married.

But at the AFT convention we met with colleagues from across the country that live in so-called right-to-work states and have little or no rights to influence their own wages, hours, and working conditions. And all we need do is look at our neighbors in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana to see

how quickly and easily those hard-earned rights can be taken

away. Indeed, with Governor Rauner making

it his mission to do the same here to us – and willing to hold the state hostage to get his way – we know that our battle is far from over.



In fact, reflecting on the history of the AFT one realizes that the battle is never over as the same issues and challenges face us from generation to generation. That could be taken as a dispiriting sign but in truth it is anything but. The history tells us that while there will always be forces of prejudice, greed, and unbridled power at work in society, there are also organizations like the AFT, and the other unions and agents of social justice with whom we partner, to stand up for those who need a voice.

As AFT members we are indeed a part of a greater movement that is ALWAYS on the right side of history, fighting for fairness, equality, and the dignity of workers.

In Solidarity,

History tells us that while there will always be forces of prejudice and greed, there are also organizations like the AFT and other agents of social justice to stand up for those who need a voice.



AFT Convention: Celebrating 100 Years

The 2016 AFT Convention, held from July 18-21 in Minneapolis, ushered in a year of celebration for a century of achievement for our union.

One hundred years ago, on May 9, 1916, the AFT was founded in Chicago, when eight local unions were granted a charter by American Federation of Labor President Samuel Gompers. In the early years the union operated out of a five-



room bungalow, but signed up 174 locals in its first four years.

Some of the consistent themes over the last century include support for free and equal education, as embodied in public schools; safe and sanitary working conditions; tenure for teachers; collective bargaining; and women's and civil rights.

You can find highlights of AFT's history at: <http://www.aft.org/timeline/100years/>



A delegation from the NSTU was present at the AFT Convention in July to help celebrate the 100th anniversary. Pictured on the top row, from the left, are Elise Gould, Cindy Williams,

Cathy Peach, Steve Grossman, Jane Relihan, Sharon Swanson, and Hope Nelson. On the bottom row, from the left, are Pankaj Sharma, Aaron Melnick and Fred Schlessinger.

40 Years Ago: The Monday Night Massacre

On Monday, September 27, 1976, the Niles Township High School Board ceremoniously fired 267 striking teachers, reading their names out, alphabetically, one by one until past two in the morning. As their names were called, each teacher rose and walked to the front of the auditorium in protest.

The teachers of the NTFT (Niles Township Federation of Teachers) had won their first contract in 1967, after a short strike. In 1973, they struck again for a contract. When that contract was about to expire in 1976, Superintendent Wesley Gibbs saw an opportunity to rid the district of both the contract and the union that protected and enforced its provisions. He and the board hoped to capitalize on declining enrollments, the recent departure of two key union leaders, and the general fear among teachers of losing a job.

What was the administration's strategy? First, they refused to bargain. Then they began to spread rumors that they would fire teachers in the event of a strike. Next they started to recruit replacement teachers. Finally, on the day before school was to start, they repudiated all the items they had agreed to in previous negotiations and presented a brand new proposal that stripped all protections out of the contract. In the view of union members, it was a calculated insult intended to trigger an immediate strike.

Knowing that replacements were ready for the first day of school, the union decided to wait until the "scabs" had mostly gone elsewhere to find work. Three weeks after the start of school, the teachers struck for the third time in our history, ushering in an epic and emotionally jarring battle.

Unfortunately, the faculty was split two-to-one over the strike. About 130 teachers continued to teach. They were assured that they would not have to worry about bad feelings or reprisals from the union, since the strikers would never return.



Above, one of many headlines. The 1976 strike was front-page news in Chicago.



Strikers walking the picket line.

The Monday night massacre occurred seven days after the strike began and after a weekend of bargaining in which the board's chief negotiator and the union team had reached a tentative agreement. That night at the union office, expecting to get a call confirming the board had accepted the agreement, the call that came was from a union member at the board meeting saying, "Get over here, they're firing us."

Gibbs and the board gave the teachers a deadline of Thursday at 8 a.m. to end the strike, and assured them that if they went back to work they would be rehired. Not a single striking teacher crossed the picket line. On Wednesday night, with no sign of teachers giving in, and with disorder rampant in the schools in the absence of enough competent staff, the board gave in. They agreed to a new three-year contract.



Despite the pain, say many of those who lived through it, the union emerged stronger than ever

and survived three more strikes – in 1979, 1985 and 1996. Today, we honor the struggle and sacrifices of all the teachers and support staff who have fought for fair contracts that protect us from arbitrary firings, but we especially remember the 267 teachers, from Albani to Zorn, whose names were called out in 1976.■



Niles pact!

No teacher firings

Union leader James Dougherty is hugged by teacher union members who were waiting for him at Niles North High School Thursday. Striking teachers and the school board reached tentative contract agreement early Thursday after all-night negotiations. Story below. (Daily News Photo/Charles Krejci)

On the left, the press announces the end of the strike, with a picture showing a striker hugging Jim Dougherty, President of the NTFT at the time.

According to a former math teacher, the strike was "a defining moment in the history of Niles Township High Schools, of the union movement in education, indeed in the growth of the collective bargaining concept." It left scars, however, on those who struck as well as those who crossed the picket lines. As a history of the NTFT put it, "of all the conflicts we have experienced as teachers, this one is the most remembered, and the most despised. The enormity of our rage has caused many of us to give up trying to explain to others what it felt like, how angered we were, how bitter our resentment."

"Of those of us who went through this test of our resolve, the scars will always be with us. Of all the conflicts we have experienced as teachers, this one is the most remembered, and the most despised."

From: *What We Came to Be: A History of the Niles Township Federation of Teachers*

Attention: ERO Refunds!

The Early Retirement Option, which allowed teachers to retire by age 55 without a penalty, expired on July 1, 2016. The ERO was last reauthorized in 2013, with a sunset date of 2016, but since then the mood of Springfield made it unlikely that it would be continued and it was allowed to automatically expire. In addition, the program was not widely used, with only 112 members retiring under the ERO in the last year.

Between 2005 and 2016, teachers were paying 0.4% of their paychecks toward the ERO program. With the expiration of ERO, payroll deductions for the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) have dropped from 9.4% to 9%.



But what happens to the money teachers have already paid into the ERO? The TRS will be offering three options:

- ♦ You can get a cash refund, but you will have to apply for it. When the application is approved, you will receive a check, which will be subject to federal income taxes.
- ♦ You can apply to withdraw the money with the intention of rolling it over into a retirement plan, such as a 401(k), 403(b) or an IRA.
- ♦ You can do nothing and apply for a refund at a later date. There is no deadline for asking for a refund, but no interest accrues if you leave the money where it is.

The TRS will contact members later this year if they are eligible for a ERO Sunset Refund, and applications will be available

beginning in December. **Until then, the TRS will be unable to provide information on whether individual members are eligible and how much they will receive.** However, you can do a ballpark estimate by adding up your earnings between July of 2005 and July of 2016 and multiplying by 0.004. Please note that you will receive no interest.

Retirees will not receive refunds. If a retiree did not retire using the ERO, he or she received a refund at the time of retirement.

For more information, go to the TRS website at www.trs.illinois.gov and follow the links. ■

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